



Entrepreneur Incubator

Reference Article

GET RESULTS FROM PRESS RELEASES

Sending out press releases, to no avail? Follow this advice to get your name in the media.

Don't assume you've failed if you haven't heard anything from the people to whom you submitted your release. Stories sometimes appear in major publications months after the press releases were initially submitted. But if you truly feel nothing has happened, try again with a new newsworthy angle for the readership of the publication.

There are two primary things to consider when sending out a press release. One is who the press release is being sent to, and the other is how newsworthy the press release is. The job of an editor is to produce a publication that will please its readership. If the readership wants news, your press release should be newsworthy. If the readership wants relevance to a particular subject or topic, your release should be the same. In each case, put yourself in the editor's shoes and write to please the audience.

BE ATTENTION GRABBING

Editors typically get bombarded with press releases, especially with today's electronic communication. Simply writing a standard press release from a template will not motivate journalists and editors to line up and publish your information. If the item is not newsworthy or doesn't grab their attention quickly, the release will literally be trashed.

FIND A NEW ANGLE

Provide journalists with sizzle that relates to the niches they cover. Give them something they can use to attract and build their readership. Unless you are Tokyo Sexwale or Bill Gates providing big news from big players, you must create an angle.

BE CREATIVE IN THE WAY YOUR RELEASE IS PRESENTED

Put some major thought behind the news you are communicating. Use flair with your written communication. Avoid buzzwords; editors tend to edit the release to fit the audience's needs. Make the release attention-grabbing to the point where the editor will keep on reading. This takes some thought and planning, but it can be done. Don't let your release get buried among all the other releases the editor receives.

TRY THE Q&A APPROACH

One approach that stands out and works is the Q&A approach. For example: Information Security at the Forefront of Business: An interview with Industry Expert John Smith. Questions are asked that are newsworthy, and the answers are communicated by the company MD. Editors like hearing from experts, and they like interviews on a timely topic that is different. It had flair, it served the readership.

The other thing to consider is how you approach an editor. Did you blast-email, blast-fax, mail or phone to communicate your information? What works well



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depends on the editor's requirements and desires.

REMEMBER, NO PROMO COPY

A US survey of more than 100 newspaper editors found their most common criticism of press releases was, "sounds like promotion". You need to use the same objective tone about your business that a journalist would use. Editors hate promotion; they love news. If you try to sneak promotion through, you will get caught. Take the time to develop the news angle. Feed them an angle on your business that their particular audience will perceive as news, entertainment or useful information.

CUSTOMISE FOR EACH MEDIUM

TV targets the masses. Radio hits a particular demographic crowd by the nature of its format. Specialty magazines hit the specialised audience. Each one of these mediums is competing for the audience's space and time. Thinking about how your news affects each of these audiences will help you decide where to send your release.

GET TO THE POINT

Finally, don't ramble, and make sure you communicate why your news is important.

*By Al Lautenslager, author and award winning marketing and PR consultant.
Take from Entrepreneur magazine, September 2008.*