

How to Write a Press Release

75 percent of journalists still find well-targeted news releases with high-quality content useful. 79.4% want it by email. -Adapted from "Theprcoach.com"

1. **Write the headline.** It should be brief, clear and to the point: an ultra-compact version of the press release's

Your Farmers Market offers best selection of local farms and artisan foods.

See how that works? Now you want to know more!

- News release headlines should have a "grabber" to attract journalists, just as a newspaper headline is meant to grab readers. It may describe the latest achievement of an organization, a recent newsworthy event, a new product or service.
 - **Headlines written in bold!** A bold headline also typically uses a larger font size than the body copy. Conventional press release headlines use the present tense and exclude "a" and "the", as well as forms of the verb "to be" in certain contexts.
 - **FIRST word capitalized.** As are all proper nouns. Most headline words appear in lower-case letters. Do not capitalize every word.
 - **Extract important keywords.** The simplest method to create the press release headline is to extract the most important keywords from your press release. From these keywords, try to frame a logical and attention-getting statement. This will be simpler for journalists and readers to get the idea of the press release content.
2. **Write the body copy.** The press release should be written as you want it to appear in a news story. REMEMBER: journalists are very busy, and don't have time to research your company's big announcement, so much of what you write for your press release will be what the journalists use in the story. Whatever you want them to use, say it here.
 - Start with the date and city in which the press release originates.
 1. The city may be omitted if it will be confusing
 2. For example: If the release is written in New York about the company's Chicago division
 - The lead (first sentence) should grab the reader and say concisely what is happening. It expands the headline enough to fill in some of the details, and brings the reader further into the story

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- The first paragraph (two to three sentences) should sum up the press release, and the additional content must elaborate it. In a fast-paced world, neither journalists, nor other readers, would read the entire press release if the start of the article didn't generate interest.
- Avoid using very long sentences and paragraphs. Avoid repetition and overuse of fancy language and jargon. Strive for simplicity, and no wasted words.
- Bullet points help reporters on deadline to see important facts/figures
- Deal with actual facts-events, products, services, people, targets, goals, plans, projects. Try to provide maximum use of concrete facts.

3. **Communicate the "5 Ws" (and the H) clearly.** Who, what, when, where, why-and how-should tell the reader everything they need to know. Consider the checklist in context with the points below, using the example above to generate our press release:

- ☐ Who is this about? **Name of a Washington State farmers market**
- ☐ What is the actual news? **Farmers market opens for 5th season on Saturday**
- ☐ When does this even happen? **May 6, 2017**
- ☐ Where does this even take place? **Public library parking lot on corner of 5th Street and Elm Ave.**
- ☐ Why this is news? **Shoppers can buy local produce, meats, and dairy from 15 farmers**
- ☐ How is this happening? **Community farmers market staff, volunteers, and sponsors**
- With the basics defined, fill in the gaps with information about the people, products, items, dates and other things related with the news.

If your company is not the main subject of the news, but is the source of the press release, make it clear in the body.
- Keep it short and to the point. The length of a press release should be no more than three pages. If you are sending a hard copy, the text should be double-spaced.
- The more newsworthy you make the press release copy, the better the chances of it being selected by a journalist for reporting. Find out what "newsworthy" means to a given market and use this knowledge to hook the editor or reporter.

4. **Include information about the farmers market organization.** When a journalist picks up your press release for a story, he or she would logically have to mention the farmers market organization in the news article. Journalists can then get the market information from this section. The title for this section should be: *About XYZ Farmers Market.*

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- After the title, use a paragraph or two to describe your farmers market with 5 or 6 lines each. The text must describe your market, who runs it, how long it has been open, how many vendors sell, length of season. If your market already has a professionally written brochure, presentation, or business plan, etc. That introductory text can be put here.
- At the end of this section, point to your website. The link should be the exact and complete URL without any embedding so that, even if this page is printed, the link will be printed as it is. For example: http://www.your_farmersmarket_website.com, not Click here to visit the website.
- If your farmers market maintains a separate media page on your websites, then point to that URL here. A media page typically has contact information and press kits.

5. **Add Contact Information.** If your press release is really newsworthy, journalists would surely like more information or would like to interview key people associated with it.

- If you are comfortable with the idea of letting your key people be contacted directly by media, you can provide their contact details on the press release page itself. For example, in case of a specific event, you can provide the contact information of volunteer coordinator.
- Otherwise, you must provide the details of your media/PR person or whoever is appointed to act as a link between the media and your people.
- The contact details must be limited and specific only to the current press release. The contact details must include:
 1. The farmers market's full and official name
 2. Name of the person the media should contact
 3. Office or mailing address
 4. Telephone number with proper country/city codes and extension numbers
 5. Mobile phone number (optional)
 6. Timings of availability
 7. Email addresses
 8. Website address

6. If possible, include a link to an online copy of the same release. It is good practice to keep a log of all of your press releases housed on your own website. This can make providing such a link easier to produce, as well as keeping a record for historical purposes.

7. Signal the end of the press release with three # (hash) symbols, centered directly underneath the last line of the release. This is a journalistic standard.