

Writing an Effective Press Release

One of the popular ways to promote your Internet business is through a press release. With press releases there are two immediate benefits: the first is that people will read your press release and may be interested in trying your product or service. The second, is if you provide a link to your website from within the press release then you also get a one-way link from each website that displays your press release. If you create a good press release, this could potentially be hundreds of one-way links.

When you write your press release you must not write it like you would an advertisement for your business, instead you should write it aimed at a journalist or the reader of a magazine. You must stop thinking "what's in it for me?" and start thinking "why would XYZ magazine's readers be interested?". Also, since it's a press release, it must be newsworthy – you must actually have something important to write about.

When you're writing your press release you must remember these important points: -

1. Make sure the information is newsworthy.
2. Tell the audience that the information is intended for them and why they should continue to read it.
3. Start with a brief description of the news, then distinguish who announced it, and not the other way around.
4. Ask yourself, "How are people going to relate to this and will they be able to contact".
5. Make sure the first 10 words of your release are effective, as they are the most important.
6. Avoid excessive use of adjectives and fancy language.
7. Deal with the facts.
8. Provide as much contact information as possible: Individual to contact, address, phone, fax, email, website address.
9. Make sure you wait until you have something with enough substance to issue a release.
10. Make it as easy as possible for media representatives to do their jobs, so lay things out so they are easy to follow.

Here's what you do

Write "Press release" on company-headed paper. Then write the date. Put a headline on the left - six or seven words in bold type. The headline will be active, understandable, convey the main point of the story and make people want to read on.

The first paragraph, the intro, expands on the headline. It concentrates on what has happened or will happen, who is involved and where. It conveys the whole story in a nutshell and its interest and relevance to the readership. It would still be understandable if the rest of the press release was deleted.

Tailor the intro to the publication - a trade journal is attracted by what a new product can do for its business audience, a local paper is interested in local jobs, prestige or human interest.

Subsequent paragraphs give the how and why - the explanation and development of the terse first paragraph or two - and the when.

A quote from you is essential.

Keep everything tight and clear, with short sentences. Don't make it sound like an ad. Write the release like a newspaper report. Refer to your business in the third person - "it" not "we".

Write "end" and then name yourself as a contact, with phone and email details. A "note to editors" can give background or more detailed information.

If the editor is working to a tight deadline, or your news story has just broken, it will be quicker to get the editor's email address and send it directly.

Getting Coverage of Your Press Release

Once you've written your press release, your aim is to get it covered by your target media organisations. Find out their copy deadlines. Send the release to the editor, news and features editors and possibly the reporter who might write the piece. Check if they'd like an email version. Newspapers and magazines might just cut and paste most of a well-written release. Check the release has been received and if further information is needed.

Photographs can boost your chances of getting your story covered. Try to include at least a head-and-shoulders shot of the person quoted in the press release. Or get an agency to take a picture of the person at its premises. If you're lucky, a publication might send along a photographer.

Once you've written your press release you can submit it yourself to various news

agencies by sending a physical hardcopy to them, or pay a Press Release Newswire service to do this for you. Perhaps the largest Press Release service on the web is PRWeb (www.prweb.com) who specialize in Internet press releases to distribute your press release for you.

Sample press release for a local newspaper

Anytown Construction Ltd
20 Grove Road, Anytown TZ10 5ZT
Tel 01234 567890
email pr@anytown.co.uk
Fax 01234 098765
Press release 01/01/05

Anytown firm builds business on email

Anytown Construction is using a new email and telephone system to tackle the problem of contacting your builder whilst a job is in progress.

Anytown Construction is handing out a special email address to all new and prospective customers. They can use it to query progress and the date and time of work, and send in comments, suggestions and requests for changes in the work being carried out.

And for those people who don't have email at home or work, Anytown Construction has set up a phone and voicemail service to take messages and requests.

"Customers have a right to know exactly what's going on. They need a quick answer and they need to get it from the boss," said Anytown Construction managing director Andy Peters.

The service is aimed at both private and commercial clients. "Builders have often been blamed, sometimes unfairly, for bad communications. That was often because they were out and about on various sites and you couldn't expect the employees working on your project to know all the answers.

"But you haven't got the same excuses with modern technology. Mobile phones and email have transformed the picture. I can now be contacted anywhere and give an instant answer," Peters added. The new service has meant extra investment by Anytown Construction - and a new member of staff to manage the service. Lisa Wright, 24, who lives in Anytown, has joined the company to take on the new role of customer service manager.

"Customer satisfaction is our priority and I'm confident this service will more than pay for itself," said Peters.

And the benefits of technology to the building trade don't stop with email. Peters is now working on an Anytown Construction website which will have everything from pictures of completed projects to advice on planning your loft conversion or new offices.

end

Contact: Andy Peters at [tel number, land and mobile - email address].

Notes

to

Editors:

1. Photographs of Andy Peters and Lisa Wright enclosed.
2. This press release can be sent to you by email.
3. Anytown Construction Ltd is a family firm founded in 1964. It is involved in housing and commercial building in the county. Its most recent large project was the Lansdowne Community Hall in Derwent Drive, Anytown.

