

HOW TO WRITE THE PAINLESS PRESS RELEASE

Getting the Word Out While Keeping Your Sanity

Press releases – every organization needs them but it can be a pain to write them. Not only are they fussy, stuffy, and annoying, once you send them out into the universe, they are never seen or heard of again.

Is that true?

It can be, if you do your press releases the wrong way. Most people assume they must be done one way – formal, with details that include everything but the kitchen sink. Who needs that?

Do them the Painless Press Release way and you'll be home on time and chances are your release will end up on the blog, social media, or publication of your choice.

It really can be that easy. *Really*. But like all good things, there are a few simple rules you should follow to reach Press Release Nirvana.

KNOW WHY YOU ARE WRITING A RELEASE

A press release is a one-page announcement of something important that influencers in your industry/community need to know. Here are examples of why you might want to send out a press release:

- A new executive joined your management team
- Your company launched a new product or beat sales projections
- Your organization is holding a fundraising event
- Your business is partnering with another company to achieve a community goal
- Your association is launching an exciting new initiative
- Your non-profit received a prestigious award

You need a press release when something important is happening or about to happen. When something minor is happening, you don't need a press release, because, frankly, no one will care.

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

Know who you're writing for --- that will influence your angle, as well as the journalists and bloggers you are pitching.

WHAT DO YOUR READERS NEED TO KNOW?

Consider your press release a story. What do your readers (and bloggers/journalists) need to know? Why will they find your release interesting? *What's in it for them or put another way, what's your angle?*

Journalists and bloggers get hit with dozens of press releases every day. Most of them end up in the trash folder. The story you are telling should offer an exciting piece of news that people can use, benefit from, or participate in.

WHAT EVERY PRESS RELEASE NEEDS: A CHECKLIST

1. The company or organization logo on top
2. A contact name and number aligned with the right margin
3. “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” and the date underneath – aligned with the left margin
4. An exciting headline that will lure the reader in
5. A smaller sub-headline that offers more essential details
5. A dateline (for example, *New York* –)
6. A first paragraph that introduces the most important piece of information in your story.
“Great Falls Hardware is launching its Black Friday sale, beginning at 9am on November 23.”
7. A second paragraph that provides more information that shows the bigger picture. *“Everything is on sale, starting at 30 percent off in housewares to 50 percent off washers and dryers. Don’t miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime Black Friday extravaganza!”*
8. Third and fourth paragraphs that give more detail (what exactly is on sale, brands, coupon offers, etc.)
9. A quote from someone associated with organization. The quote should not be empty – but instead add more information.
10. Boilerplate: information about the company and organization and what they do.

THE NITTY GRITTY

THE HEADLINE

The headline is the single sentence that announces what the story is about – or better known as getting your story straight. It should be direct and to the point. Examples:

Springfield Animal Shelter Enacts “No-Kill” Policy

Energy Firm LunaTech Wins Renewables Institute Award for Solar Efficiency Deal

Pleasure Glacee Introduces Four Exciting European Flavors to Its International Ice Cream Collection

Example of a Release:

PLEASURE GLACEE *company logo*
Luxury, one spoonful at a time tag line

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2022

Contact: Josh Hardin

715-555-4137

jhardin@pleasureglacee.com

PLEASURE GLACEE INTRODUCES FOUR EXCITING EUROPEAN FLAVORS TO ITS INTERNATIONAL ICE CREAM COLLECTION
headline

THE FIRST AND SECOND PARAGRAPHS

The first paragraph repeats the main message of the headline and adds new information.

Marin, CA — Pleasure Glacee, the country’s premium luxury ice cream brand, is introducing four new European flavors – Belgian Chocolate Hazelnut, Italian Espresso Mix, Swiss Meringue Strawberry, and Swedish Lingonberry.

The second paragraph gives background information, or the bigger picture.

These wickedly delicious flavors are the latest addition to Pleasure’s International Collection of ice creams, which include Mexican Hot Chocolate, Canadian Maple Walnut, French Café Au Lait, American Birthday Cake, and Argentine Chili Cream. Like all of Pleasure’s ice creams, they are made with only organic ingredients and are gluten free. These new flavors are now available in 3,000 supermarkets in the United States and in Canada, as well as 200 Pleasure Shops located across the U.S.

QUOTES

A quote should emphasize the story line and add additional information. There should be basically one quote or two, max. This isn’t about credit (or at least it shouldn’t be).

“We came up with our new flavors based on requests from our loyal customers,” said Katie Lane, Vice President of Marketing. “We’ve always taken our ice creams to the next level, and the demand for the International Collection has grown more than 150 percent since it was launched three years ago,” she noted. “So when requests started coming in for new flavors, we knew this was the right time to expand the line and give our fans what they wanted.”

ADDITIONAL PARAGRAPHS

These paragraphs should add the less important but necessary details. Don't add the kitchen sink – journalists are busy people and they are not going to wade through loads of detritus. The quicker they get the story, the easier it is to understand the release, and the more likely they will write a story.

Pleasure currently crafts 34 luxurious flavors of ice cream and four sorbets. Our ice creams are served in the best upscale hotels and restaurants coast to coast and were on the menu of the 2015 White House East Egg Roll.

Pleasure Glacee products have been consistent award winners in the industry since the company was founded in 2004, including the prestigious American Dairy Suppliers Ice Cream Awards. We are a community-engaged, socially responsible company that donates 5 percent of its profits to children's charities.

To learn more about our company and our products, please visit us at PleasureGlacee.com.

Pleasure Glacee makes America's premium luxury ice creams. The company was founded in 1999 by Emma and Jim Flanahan when they began to make hand-crafted ice-creams on their dairy farm in New York's Hudson Valley. They still bring that passion to all their products, which are organic and gluten-free. These delicious dairy delights are available at Carlisle & Donovan, Zurich Foods, and other fine food outlets.

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OK, SO NOW WHAT?

Imagine you are an editor. You work at a big online publication, blog, or magazine. Maybe you're the social media director at a lifestyle blog. You come into work, open your inbox and see a thousand (ok, several dozen) unsolicited press releases. What are you going to do?

Probably drink your coffee and move all these unwanted emails into the delete folder where they belong, that's what. You have work to do!

If you have sent the release out blindly – by yourself or through a subscription mailing service, well good luck to you.

Relationships are everything. You want to make friends, or at least business acquaintances with the right people, not an email address. **You also must target the right audience.**

For example, you wouldn't send your release about ice cream to an editor at Rolling Stone or GQ (although I'm pretty sure some of them eat ice cream.) You might want to send it to a specific editor or writer at Bon Appetit, Refinery29, Cook's Illustrated, Food52, or a suitable lifestyle blog or magazine. Or the style editors at big newspaper chains.

How do you find these people? Go to their website. If their editorial staff isn't listed, call and ask who in editorial writes about food or luxury items. Ask for the exact spelling of their name. Close doesn't count. Exact. Then ask to be connected.

If you are lucky enough to get the editor, introduce yourself and your company, and say you will be sending over a release --- and enough ice cream for the editorial team. And you will follow up on the release later. Pack your product in dry ice, send it via overnight, and call in the next day or two to see how they liked the ice cream and ask if they could find a spot to profile it or even tweet about it.

Because most content is scheduled in advance, you might have to wait until a slot opens up. But it's well worth the wait. If you have something that's truly time sensitive, then be sure to plan far enough in advance so that you're able to make the schedule on time.

And that's it! Follow these steps every time for success with a truly pain-free press release.

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