



COM Writing Center Creates How-To Guide

The Bare-Bones Basics to Press Releases

Boston, Mass. September 15, 2014 —The most important part of a press release is the first paragraph. This is the beginning of what is called the “inverted pyramid.” Your most critical information is located in these first sentences, and then subsequent information ‘narrows down’ to make up the following paragraphs.

Of course, there are other things to consider when writing a press release. What are you announcing? Why is it newsworthy? Who is your audience? No matter what you are writing about, you must keep in mind these basic principles:

1. **Be objective – announce** the news of your product/event/company, **don’t** sell it.
2. **Keep it simple** – use short, concise writing.
3. **Tailor your writing to your audience** – an editor is more apt to publish something that already fits.

A good press release is one that seems as if a reporter wrote it, and good reporters use quotes to get their points across. Quotes are where you can insert subjective statements because it is reporting on what someone said. “Half of news stories begin as press releases. This makes them a very useful tool for PR practitioners,” said Professor Y.

Finally, use your headline and sub-headline as attention grabbers. They should be short, informative, and relevant. Additionally, press release formatting differs from company to company, but short paragraphs and boilerplates are standards of the industry.

Don’t forget at the bottom to include a “for more information” paragraph. There is a wealth of resources on how to write a good press release. If you are stuck, check the websites of some major companies to get real world examples.

About Boilerplates:

A boilerplate is an informational paragraph attached to the bottom of every press release that a company sends out. It is simply a summary of what the company or organization is/does. Also included is the contact information. This is essential, for the obvious reason that if a reporter or editor has questions, they can contact your business.

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