**Press Release**

A press release is the quickest and easiest way to get free publicity. If well written, a press release can result in multiple published articles about your firm and its products. A press release announcing an event is more likely to contain errors than any other type. One reason for this is that people confuse a press release with a business flyer, which is more informal. Keep in mind that the purpose of a press release is not to provide readers with every possible detail. The point is to provide just enough information that a reader will follow-up. It should be direct, to the point, and answer the questions who, what, when, and where within the first paragraph.

**Lead Paragraph**

**T**he lead paragraph should answer all the 5 W’s & 1 H (Who, When, Where, What, Why, How). The start should be engaging & capturing to hold the reader’s attention. The first paragraph should not match the summary and must highlight the message so that readers can easily grasp the idea of the press release through the first paragraph itself

**Always Speak in Third Person**

In body of press release using third person in a press release makes it sound more professional and formal, even when a person is referring to himself or herself. He, she, it, and they are all examples of third person words to use when discussing a person or event. Press release writers should take care not to slip into using first person terms like me, my, and I. Direct quotes are the only exception to this. They must contain quotation marks and an attribution, so the reader knows who is speaking.

It’s also preferable to use proper names when possible rather than frequently reverting to he or she. It’s only necessary to state the full name of the person speaking or providing information one time. After that, referring to him or her by only the last name is fine.

**Have a newsworthy story**

To get your message communicated through the publication, you need to convince the reporter/editor that your message (or the story surrounding it) is newsworthy.

**Formatting the Press Release**

Catching the attention of journalists and other media professionals starts with a great title. It should contain no more than eight words and get directly to the point. The main body of a press release follows a very specific format. It starts with the city and two-letter state abbreviation followed by the date in long format. It is written in italics with one dash after the state and two dashes after the date. After that comes an opening sentence to inform the reader what the remainder of the body will cover. Here is an example:

*Minneapolis, MN – December 1, 2015*– ………………………….

The body of the press release should contain a minimum of 300 words broken up into even paragraphs when possible. Most media outlets prefer 500 words and may reject anything longer than 700 words. However, online outlets may have longer word count requirements. The purpose of the body of the press release is to provide additional information on the who, what, when, and where highlighted in the opening paragraph. Depending on the specific event, expounding on why it’s being held or its history may be helpful here as well.

If the press release is to be posted online, limit the number of outgoing links to only those that are necessary. Having too many links decreases the professionalism and may have a spam-like appearance to those who are reading it.

**Boilerplate Information**

The boilerplate is the short paragraph that gives information about the company or organization. It is usually placed in the last paragraph of a press release. The boilerplate includes the client’s contact details, which is typically a telephone number and email address. This is for people to get in touch with the subject of the press release to request additional information. The final section also includes a few sentences about the organization sponsoring the event.