

WINNING PRESS RELEASE HOOKS

for Media Attention



CREATING GREAT HOOKS FOR YOUR PRESS RELEASES

What Is A Press Release?

You've undoubtedly heard about press releases. Maybe you've even written or issued a few of them in your career. The Press Release was created to control information given to the media. The first release was issued in 1906 when a train crashed and the railroad wanted to make sure that the public received accurate information about the incident.

The original press releases were formal in both tone and style. They're written in the third person and presented the facts of the story. Today, much about a press release has changed, however, some of that formal style and structure still remains.

Today's Press Release

Today press releases are still written in the third person. They are still primarily fact based. However, they also integrate many social media elements. They can be distributed online, via email, and published on your website.

A press release can include links to products or more information. They also often include video and supporting images. And as the press release has evolved, it's also used for more than what you might consider to be "hard news."

You can issue a press release if you are hosting an event, launching a new product or when your organization has achieved a milestone. They can be used to let people know you're going to be giving a webinar or online learning opportunity.

Here's just a short list of opportunities to write a press release:

1. Launching a new business or business model
2. Introducing a new product or service
3. Announcing publication of a book or information product
4. Partnership announcement
5. Receiving an award or recognition
6. Participating in a charity event
7. Announcing a TV appearance
8. Launching a new or updated website
9. Announcing free information available
10. Announcing that you've reached milestone
11. Announcing research results
12. Hosting a workshop or seminar

As you can see, you probably have had many opportunities to write and issue a press release. They can be a fantastic content marketing tool to help build both awareness and credibility for your business. The key is to approach them strategically. That means identifying the right opportunities to issue a press release and then taking steps to write a release that grabs attention and achieves your goals.

Why Use A Press Release? What Are the Benefits?

With so many other marketing tactics, why would you choose to use a press release? What benefits or value does it offer over other tactics? When used with a well thought out strategy, a press release can actually provide a number of significant benefits.

Exposure and Awareness

A press release is an excellent tool to help bring new awareness to your company. There are several opportunities with a press release, to reach a much larger audience. You can use a distribution service and grab the attention of bloggers and media outlets that may link to your release, republish it, or cover your news story in their publication or media outlet.

If you share your release via email to your list, you can encourage subscribers to forward the release and share on social media. And when you issue a social media press release then you can get exposure and awareness from social shares.

Increased Website Traffic

You have the opportunity, within your press release, to embed and integrate links. When your release reaches your audience, many of them will click on the links and visit your website or blog. It's important to make sure that the links in your press release support your goals for the release.

For example, if you want to drive traffic to an opt-in page and build your list then the link in your press release should go to your opt in page. It's a common error to link to the home page or even a media page or about page.

Increased Sales

If you're leveraging a press release to launch a new product or service, then you'll likely see an increase in sales. However, you may experience this benefit even if you're not specifically trying to increase sales.

An announcement about an event, for example, may attract the attention of people who in the process of learning more about your event, decide to make a purchase from you. You may tap into buying triggers like credibility, authority, and likeability, and see an increase in sales.

Here's an example of a Press Release issued by Hallmark to market their Father's Day gifts. In the screenshot, you can see how they integrated links to drive sales to specific sales pages:

- ▶ Hallmark Garage is a unique assortment of automobile-themed items that are inspired by the classic automobiles and cool customs that start car enthusiasts' pulses racing. The collection includes Ford and Chevrolet® die-cast metal cars, stamped-metal wall signs, mugs, magnets and other must-have accessories offering up the perfect present for Dad. (\$2.95 – \$29.95)
- ▶ Kiddie Car Classics, detailed smaller-scale, die-cast models of classic pedal cars, are cruising back into Hallmark Gold Crown stores just in time for Father's Day. First introduced in the 1990s, the cars quickly became popular and highly collectible. Reintroduced two decades later due to consumer requests, each car is individually numbered and includes a special collector card. There are also corresponding complementary Hallmark Keepsake Ornaments of each design. (Keepsake Ornaments \$19.95, Kiddie Car Classics \$49.95)
- ▶ Hallmark has partnered with Life is good® to create Father's Day gifts that are genuine, life-affirming and relevant. From mugs, bottle openers and picture frames, to golf ball sets, cutting boards and BBQ towels, the collection is full of gifts that are as cool as he is. (\$9.95 – \$44.95)
- ▶ The kids can show their love by selecting one of the Hallmark itty bittys® for Dad, like Superman™ from DC Comics™. (\$6.95 each)

these gifts instant classics. ”

Improved Branding

There are many opportunities to strengthen your brand with a press release. Through the use of storytelling and case studies or testimonials in your press release you gain credibility. Depending on the information being provided in your release, you can establish your authority in the industry. Additionally, it's a great opportunity to communicate your message through additional information, links, and supporting content.

Media Coverage

Let's not forget that if the media decides to pick up your story and cover your company, you then have tremendous opportunity to increase your branding, exposure, and sales. For many, that's the ultimate goal for a press release and a solid PR campaign.

Easy to Use

Finally, it's important to point out that press releases are easy to use and integrate into your marketing strategy. Distribution services make uploading, tracking, and achieving your goals much easier than you might imagine. With a solid plan, you can really make press releases work for you and your business.

The important part of any press release is to ensure that it makes sense within the context of your business, your audience, your goals, and your marketing. You'll have a much larger return on investment and you'll reap the discussed benefits, and more, when you're able to successfully integrate your releases into your existing marketing.

Integrating Press Releases into Your Marketing

What marketing tactics are you using right now? What does your current sales funnel look like? Your sales funnel and your existing marketing strategy can help you get the best return on investment for your press release efforts.

Your Sales Funnel

What products or services do you offer right now? Where do the majority of your customers enter your funnel? Take a look at your existing catalog and look for opportunities. For example, can you update products or services to increase sales, interest, and issue a press release as part of the re-launch?

Also explore where your customers enter your sales funnel. For example, if they enter your funnel with your opt-in then it makes sense to heavily promote your opt-in. You can update it, add an additional piece to it, like a coupon code, or you can completely overhaul it and create a new opt-in offer. Then, leverage press releases to promote your opt-in offer, grow your list, and increase sales.

Your Existing Marketing Tactics

Each marketing channel that you currently use is an opportunity to promote your press releases. It may also offer you an opportunity to create a press release. Let's look at examples of both concepts beginning with channel integration.

Social media and press releases go hand in hand. If you're using social media to market your business you can integrate press release marketing into your social media. Here's a screenshot from a Press Release issued by General Motors.



You can see at the bottom that people who view the press release have an opportunity to tweet it, like it on Facebook. LinkedIn and Google + are also represented. Adding social share buttons not only gets more exposure for your release, it also helps you build your own social media audience. You can see the [full press release here](#).

Another way to integrate social media and press release marketing is to share your press release directly on social media. For example, you might share the headline of your press release along with a shortened URL. Some experts recommend letting people know it's a press release with a hashtag #pressrelease. You might test that tactic to see which option works best for your audience.

Email also provides an opportunity to market a press release and vice versa. We've already discussed using a release to build your list. You can also distribute your release to your subscribers.

What about using your marketing tactics to create a press release opportunity? If you make significant changes to your social media channels, or you add a channel, then that's an opportunity for a press release. Events and hangouts are also opportunities. Create a Facebook event or group, for example, and distribute a press release announcing it.

There are a few key considerations to make as you begin to integrate press release marketing into your business marketing strategy. Make sure that every press release has a goal and that it fits logically into your marketing mix.

When you make an announcement with a press release, you'll make it a stronger event or promotion if you also promote the news through your other marketing channels. Also take steps to align your press release goals with your overall marketing and business goals.

Finally, it's important that your press release is top notch. There is a lot of competition out there. Depending on the press release distribution site that you look at, several thousand are issued every day. That means that only the best press releases grab attention and achieve their goals.

What Makes A Great Press Release?

Writing a press release isn't difficult. You can even download templates and essentially fill in the blanks. However, writing a great press release, one that gets attention and hooks your audience, takes a little skill and practice.

A great press release...

Has A Compelling Headline.

The headline is the most important part of your press release. If the headline doesn't do its job, then no one will read, share, or publish your release. Your headline must:

- Be short and sweet. Generally, the rule of thumb is between 60 and 80 characters. Some distribution services have a limit.
- Be information based. No hype! Take a look at this screenshot for a website that sells gifts.

Survey Results Reveal The Gifts Celebrity Dads Want for Father's Day

This Father's Day season, GroomingLounge.com, the nation's premier resource for men's grooming, set out to help dad get the gift he really wants -- be it classic sneakers, a fancy safety razor or just a nap. Dads were asked questions about their personality and then categorized with the celebrity dad who shares their interests.

Washington, DC (PRWEB) June 05, 2015



While the press release goes on to essentially list the results of the survey, which isn't a great approach, the headline is pretty effective. It announces survey results and taps into curiosity. Readers might ask, "What do celebrity dads want for Father's Day?"

The paragraph right under the headline is called the summary. It's a great place to include keywords and to pull the reader into the content. If you use a distribution service, many of them will only include the headline and the summary in their thumbnail. This makes it important information and worth extra time and attention.

- Include Keywords. While you aren't optimizing your release for keywords, you do want to make sure that your audience sees the words that they're looking for.
- Grab Emotions. Emotions cause reactions. Used correctly, they can cause the reaction that you want your readers to take. One approach to tapping into emotions is to write a provocative or controversial press release.

You do want to be careful with this tactic because you have to back up a controversial headline with relevant information. News releases aren't opinion pieces. They must contain facts.

Here's an example of a controversial and potentially emotional headline.

- New Report Analyzes Online Degree Programs and Finds them Superior to Traditional Classroom Education.
- Report Reviews and Analyzes Online College Degree Programs

You can see the difference between the two headlines. The first one stirs controversy by using the word "Superior." It also engages curiosity. The second headline leaves readers flat. It doesn't really make anyone care about the news.

Headlines are important and they may be the last thing that your reader sees, if they don't catch the reader's attention. However, they're not the only important component of a good press release. We've already mentioned the summary portion of a release so let's talk about tapping into reader's emotions.

A Great Press Release Also Leverages Emotions to Hook Your Audience

There are different tactics that you can use to grab your audience's attention and pull them into the news you're sharing in your press release. We've already talked about a headline and how that may be the first, and last, element of your release that someone may see. There are other tactics to consider.


Quotes

Interview people and try to get interesting quotes from them. Quotes can lend personality to an otherwise dry topic. Most press releases tend to have quotes like "We're very proud of our product launch." Or "We're thrilled to know we can help our customers their hard earned money." These quotes, while possibly genuine, are not interesting and they lack a bit of personality.

Here's an example of how a media company launched a new publication and used a quote from one of their articles in the press release. You'll also note that they quoted a celebrity which is a great tactic if you can achieve it. It lends interest and credibility to your press release information.

In an exclusive interview with donor advocate Katherine Heigl, readers are urged to consider organ donation and speak with their family regarding their wishes well before dealing with tragedy. Heigl stresses, "All anyone needs to do to be convinced that this is right is to talk to a family whose loved one is waiting for an organ to survive."

This campaign was made possible with the support of Katherine Heigl, Amy Purdy, Novartis, United Network for Organ Sharing, Porter Adventist Hospital, American Society of Transplantation, Mended Little Hearts, University of Kansas Medical Center, University of Maryland Medical Center, UW Health, Gift of Life and many more.



“ All anyone needs to do to be convinced that this is right is to talk to a family whose loved one is waiting for an organ to survive.

”

You can read the [full press release here](#).

Take your time finding relevant people to interview. They should be connected with your news and relevant to your audience. Don't try to fabricate quotes. Let them be organic. Interview your potential clients and staff. Try to get a good quote that will give your press release interest and personality.

Video and Images

Today's press releases are much different than they were even ten years ago. Today you can include links, images, and video in your release. Visual content adds interest. It keeps your reader engaged. It gives the media the information that they like to access.

Media reps tend to respond to video more than any other type of press release content. It makes their lives much easier when they can click on a video to learn more about your news and your organization. Images are important too. Include images that support your content.

Here's an excellent example of the use of video and images in a press release.

The New York Inventor Exchange approves the Climb In Design Doors for licensing and trading intellectual property rights.

Miami, Florida (PRWEB) June 05, 2015

World Patent Marketing, a vertically integrated manufacturer and engineer of patented products, announces the Climb In Design Doors, a door patent that strengthens an off-road jeep's chassis.

"The Auto Parts and Accessories Industry brings in global revenue of \$2 trillion annually," says Scott J. Klepper, CEO and Creative Director of World Patent Marketing. "The market has a consistent 12 percent revenue appreciation and therefore, it will continue to show aggressive growth over the next several years."

"This door patent will change the face of off-road vehicles," says Collye Bello, Director of Product Development for World Patent Marketing. "Going through rocky, uneven terrain is a thrill most off-road enthusiasts are familiar with. However, to fully appreciate the vehicle, various accessories are used. The Climb In Design Doors is one of the best accessories a vehicle owner can buy or their price."

Using an off-road vehicle can make for a grand entrance as it is fun and exciting to use. However, to use it on really rough and uneven terrain, the vehicle will need plenty of modified parts such as suspensions or wheels. The Climb In Design Doors provides added stability and structural integrity to the vehicle without doing any permanent modifications. This door patent ensures that the back doors are still in good condition after you are to sell the vehicle afterwards. This is a door attachment with hinges.

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In the above screenshot, if you look to the far right side, you'll also see "attachments" and "past news releases." This information is useful for media representatives who may want to dig a little deeper as they explore your news and your organization.

If your goal is to get media attention, consider how you can add information to make your release more appealing to journalists and make their life easier. Also keep in mind that these elements are only available if the distribution service you're using offers them.

The above release was distributed by PRWeb.com You can find the [full release here](#).

So a great press release, one that grabs attention and hooks your audience, has a captivating headline. It embraces emotions, it leverages quotes to create personality, and it embraces visual content. What else should a great press release include? What about an effective call to action?

What Do You Want Your Readers To Do Next?

When writing your press release call to action the first important element to consider is your goal for the release.

For example, if you want the press release to drive traffic to an opt-in page then your call to action needs to support that goal and invite readers to visit the page. Beyond that initial goal, a well written CTA is one that solves a problem, or promises to solve a problem, for your audience. It should meet a need and deliver value.

Your CTA doesn't have to hit readers over the head. It can be subtle. A gentle, "Visit [LINK](#) for more information," may be more effective than a "Buy now."

Here's a simple CTA from the Harvard Health Newsletter in a press release promoting the newsletter and motivating people to subscribe. You can also see an invitation to read the full article a few short sentences above the final call to action. You can read the [full release here](#).

For people who aren't able to make dietary changes, or those with genuine deficiencies in one or more nutrients, a supplement may be helpful. Look for a multivitamin with B vitamins (especially folic acid), vitamin D, iron, magnesium, and calcium. Choose a well-known brand that's been around for a long time and is likely to have been carefully tested, says Dr. Sesso.

Read the full-length article: "[Should you get your nutrients from food or from supplements?](#)"

Also in the June 2015 Harvard Health Letter:

- [Tips to stay healthy while caregiving](#)
- [How to choose and adjust to a walker](#)
- [Working more chocolate into the diet](#)

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You can leverage testing and analytics to assess what your audience best responds to. Include a call to action in your release and take advantage of this opportunity to hook your audience and keep them engaged.

We've talked about what goes into an attention grabbing press release, why press releases are a beneficial marketing tactic, and how to use them. We've also discussed different opportunities to write and leverage a press release. Before we conclude with tips for writing attention grabbing press releases, let's talk about two important considerations; distribution and analytics.

Press Release Distribution

The majority of the press release examples shared in this report were distributed via PRWeb.com. This is a distribution service. A distribution service enables you to upload your press release. They then distribute it to the various news outlets and news wires. This means that your release can be sent to local media outlets like your local newspaper and global media outlets like CNN or the New York Times.

It also hits the major search engines. Depending on the service you can often receive free distribution to a limited number of outlets or you can pay for premium distribution and gain more

targeted outlets or a broader reach. Some distribution services also provide varying degrees of features.

For example, if you want to include social media sharing buttons in your release that may come with a premium price. The benefit of a distribution service is that it allows you to reach a wider audience than you can on your own.

It also provides you with an abundance of analytics. This information can include how many people shared your release, clicked on it, and reposted it and so on. It's valuable information because it helps you create a stronger press release campaign.

It should be mentioned, that in addition to press release distribution services you can also begin to develop relationships with local media. Learn what types of stories they're looking for. If media attention for your company is your goal, you can send a personalized pitch to a few relevant journalists. If you choose this approach, make sure to send them the release at least a week or two before you distribute it with a service. Give them a bit of lead time.

Press Release Analytics

Whether you choose to use a distribution service or you simply post your release on your available marketing channels like Facebook and your email list is up to you, you're goals, and your budget. However, it is always a great idea to implement tactics to measure your results. Evaluate clicks. Learn what information your audience responds to in terms of shares, comments, and reprints. This information will help you make each press release better than the last one.

Tips for Writing Attention Grabbing Press Releases

We just talked about analytics and sometimes small improvements in your press release can reap big results. You might learn that including your business name, for example, in your headline always generates better results. The following tips, however, will help you hit the ground running and write better press releases from the start.

Spend Time on the Headline

Consider writing your headline last. Write the release first and then spend an equal amount of time on your headline. It's the most important part of your release.

Include Quality Quotes

The quotes in your press release add personality and can improve the overall quality of your release. Your quotes should support your news and information while branding your business at the same time. And remember that quotes can be tweeted and shared on social media as standalone content.

Add Attachments and Links

Leverage supporting content to keep readers engaged with your business. Include links to your own research, facts, and follow-up information.

Include Video

Video appeals to media representatives and your audience alike. It provides a means for readers to learn more about your company, your news. It gets them involved and it's another piece of information that they can share on social media.

Leverage Visual Content

Images are shared more often on social media. They can be optimized for search engines and they add value and visual interest to your release.

Integrate with Social Media

Build a community, extend the information, and engage your audience by adding social media share buttons and links.

Include Keywords in Your Headline and/or Summary

As mentioned previously, many distribution services and newswires only display your headline and summary. Make sure important keywords are present in those pieces. For example, include your business name in the summary to increase brand awareness and to motivate clicks and shares.

Edit Your Release

Grammar and spelling errors are a sure sign of unprofessionalism and they'll kill your credibility fast. Do everything possible to make sure your release is free from errors. And double check those links too! Make sure they go to the intended pages.

Tell Stories with Numbers

Back up your information and news with relevant facts and research. For example, if you're talking about a nutrition trend then share numbers that support the trend. If you're talking about a charity event, show how many people's lives have been or will be improved from the event.

Enhance the release with relevant facts and data to add interest and build credibility and authority. Plus, it gives media reps the information they're looking for and makes their lives a little easier.

Format it Correctly

We haven't talked much about formatting a press release. This is because most press release distribution services provide a template to work within, which makes your job a little easier. We also haven't discussed format because it's fairly standard and simple. You can review any of the press release examples shared and see the basic format for a press release. There are a few considerations to keep in mind.

Write it in third person. Don't use "I" or "You." Instead use "He/she" "Them" and formal styling rules. For example, if you're quoting someone then you'd include their full name and title.

Make it easy to read. Press releases are distributed and shared online. This means they need to be easy to read online. Use subheadings, bullets and short easy to read paragraphs.

Follow the basic structure of a press release. The structure of a press release can vary a little bit depending on the distribution service as well as your own press release goals and topic. However, a basic guideline is as follows:

- Headline
- Summary
- City, State/Country - Month Day, Year
- Body – Generally three paragraphs each with one main idea that supports your headline.
- Company/organization info
- Contact Information
- ### This indicates the end of the press release.
- Your release is generally one page in length, about 400-500 words.

Writing a press release is a skill but it's a skill that can be learned. Practice and integrate what you've learned. Study other people's press releases. Look at how they grabbed your attention, what information they included, and so forth. Make notes of these things so you can create a swipe file to reference when writing your own releases. Most importantly, pay attention to how your audience and the media respond to your releases. It's the best way to make sure that the information you share with your audience is information that they value and respond to.



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