Press Release Basics

Writing
Sending
Tracking

Your Press Releases
Back to School
with Press Release Basics

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Press Release Basics
1. Remove redundancy

Avoid double-teaming terms like “a period of one week,” “end result,” “free gift,” and “personal opinion.” Watch for phrases that echo the quality in question: “oval in shape,” “larger in size,” “shorter in duration,” and the like. Omit redundant words that are already implied as part of an abbreviated term, such as machine in “ATM machine.”

2. Reduce phrases to words

Replace a descriptive phrase following a noun with a one-word adjective that precedes the noun. For example, “People who are experienced at traveling know better than to label their luggage,” can be revised to, “Experienced travelers know better than to label their luggage.”

A modifying phrase, similarly, can be reduced to a simple adverb. For instance, “Sympathizing with her concerns, he nodded in response to her complaint,” is more concisely expressed as, “He nodded sympathetically in response to her complaint.”

Delete extraneous phrases such as “which is” and “who were,” as shown here: “We drove down Lombard Street, which is considered the most crooked street in the world” is easily simplified to, “We drove down Lombard Street, considered the most crooked street in the world.”

3. Omit gratuitous intensifiers and qualifiers

Use sparingly those adverbs that intensify or qualify. “They had an extremely unpleasant experience” isn’t accurate unless a subsequent explanation justifies the intensifier extremely, and “I was somewhat taken aback” isn’t necessarily an improvement on “I was taken aback.”

4. Expunge expletives

“There are” or “there is” is a weak way to start a sentence. “There is a telling passage toward the end of the story” lacks the focus of (and the more vivid verb in) the sentence of, “A telling passage occurs near the end of the essay.”

5. Negate nominalizations

“The report gave an analysis of the accident” uses a phrase in which a single word suffices. (This is known as a nominalization, or smothering a verb.) When you see a “(verb) a/an (noun)” construction, convert the noun into a verb and replace the phrase with it. In this case, “The report analyzed the accident” is the more concise result. As with deletion of expletives, a stronger verb is an additional benefit.

6. Delete superfluous phrases

“At the present time,” “for all intents and purposes,” and “in the event that” are a few of many meaningless phrases that clutter sentences. Trim them to tighten your writing.

7. Avoid clichés

Likewise, “face the music,” “litmus test,” “tried and true,” and other timeworn phrases add nothing to your writing but words; they’re useful only for padding a word count, but instructors and editors (and readers) will notice.
The Future of Public Relations College Video Contest: Have the Answer, Vie For Lunch With Warren Buffett

Business Wire's 50th Anniversary Launches, Viewers May Indicate Their Favorite on Facebook and Twitter

NEW YORK—(BUSINESS WIRE)—To celebrate Business Wire's 50th year as a prominent force in the Future of Public Relations and Communications, college students were invited to ponder "What is the Future of Public Relations and Communications?" and submit three-minute videos that answered the question.

Today, Business Wire announced the ten finalists and posted the videos on Business Wire's Facebook page. The winner will receive $10,000, a trip to New York City to meet Warren Buffett, Chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, and Cathy Baron Tamraz, CEO of Business Wire. The winning student will join Business Wire opening bell luncheon at the New York Stock Exchange on September 30.

"One lucky student will soon be on the way to share lunch with Mr. Buffett," said Jessica Lieck, Marketing Associate at Business Wire, "and came up with the contest idea. "The caliber of these submissions will make him proud."

The student finalists hail from all corners of North America—from the Midwest and Deep South to Queen's University in Ontario, Canada. The videos were judged on their originality, creativity, and appropriateness to theme.

Comments on social media outlets are invited through August 31, with the winning video chosen by an executive committee that includes Business Wire CEO Cathy Baron Tamraz and President Gregg Castano and announced on September 1. Finalist videos may be viewed on Facebook and comments are encouraged. Support can also be demonstrated by tweeting comments using the unique hashtags assigned to each finalist below on Twitter.

In alphabetical order, the finalists are:
Good content, well written, appropriately distributed and tracked.

Interesting, influential, unusual, "whatever an editor (OR INDIVIDUAL) thinks"

News is typically defined as information that may have an impact on people in their communities. We all know that today more markets, more niches, more channels exist than ever before. For the purposes of our press release discussion today, and without getting too philosophical, I suggest we focus on the definition of news as at the minimum including something that is NEW. It’s not called olds, it’s called news.

In 2007, the Pulitzer Center posted a video on YouTube asking viewers, “What is news?” Answers ranged from “anything that’s interesting” to “providing the information necessary to function in a democratic society.”

**Man bites dog (journalism)**
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Jump to: navigation, search

The phrase **man bites dog** describes a phenomenon in journalism in which an unusual, infrequent event is more likely to be reported as news than an ordinary, everyday occurrence (such as *Dog bites man*). The news media generally consider an event more newsworthy if there is something unusual about it: a commonplace event is unlikely to be taken as newsworthy. The
The Five W’s and the H

Who?  
When?  
How?  
Where?  
What?  
Why?

Inverted pyramid

product, service, office opening, financial results, partnership, customer win
Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, 1602:

This proverb implies to go straight to the point and not beat around the bush.

The proverb 'brevity is the soul of wit' means that articulate and intelligent communication (speech and writing) should use few and wisely chosen words. It is best associated with the play 'Hamlet,' by William Shakespeare.

FOOTNOTE
In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the lines are spoken by Polonious, whose advice is often also quoted in his parting remarks to his son Laertes elsewhere in *Hamlet*, which ends with *This above all: To thy own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

which has been guiding advice for millions of people since. Given the context of the play, however, we find this advice to be wrong.

In Shakespeare's day, 'wit' principally referred to intelligence, and the essence or soul of being intelligent is to convey your thoughts as briefly and efficiently as possible. Here is the context of the line:

*LORD POLONIUS*

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Read more: [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_does_'brevity_is_the_soul_of_wit'_mean#ixzz1VVXu8EL7](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_does_'brevity_is_the_soul_of_wit'_mean#ixzz1VVXu8EL7)

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Replace a descriptive phrase following a noun with a one-word adjective that precedes the noun. For example

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Keep it Brief

Company XYZ executed an analysis of the data. X 8 words

Company XYZ analyzed the data. ✔ 5 words

The reason he left his post at the company was his health became an issue. X 15 words

Failing health compelled him to leave his post. ✔ 8 words

Terms of the lease were not disclosed. Lease terms were not disclosed.

The Company announced on February 15, 2011 an engagement with BMO Capital Markets Corp. to act as the Company’s Investment Banker and sole financial advisor.

Currently, there is significant activity in the car rental industry due to the Hertz/Dollar Thrifty proposed transaction and the potential divestiture of Hertz’s operating subsidiary Advantage Rent a Car.
### Keep it Brief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of</th>
<th>Consider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a large majority of</td>
<td>most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has the capacity to</td>
<td>can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whether or not</td>
<td>whether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are in agreement</td>
<td>agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prior to</td>
<td>before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsequent to</td>
<td>after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at this point in time</td>
<td>now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>due to the fact that</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the event that</td>
<td>if</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a new initiative</td>
<td>an initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nearly unique</td>
<td>unique/rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plays a key role in</td>
<td>is essential to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both cultures were equally affected</td>
<td>the cultures were equally affected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Author of Writing Intelligible English Prose for Biomedical Journals*

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John Ludbrook, author of WRITING INTELLIGIBLE ENGLISH PROSE FOR BIOMEDICAL JOURNALS
Flex Your Verbs

Located near Bamboo Beach within view of historic Luna Cove to the north, the marina will provide access to the Atlantic through nearby Cortez Inlet to the south.

Perched on Bamboo Beach, the marina gazes at historic Luna Cove to the north and provides access to the Atlantic through nearby Cortez Inlet to the south.

Number of Towns Affordable to First Time Buyers is at its Highest Since 2003

http://www.ems.psu.edu/~schall/Verbs.html

Action Nominalization to regulate
to analyze
to occur
to understand
to investigate
to delineate
to perform
regulation
analysis
occurrence
understanding
investigation
delination
performance
**Active Voice Beats Passive**

The accounting error by Company XYZ is regretted.  
Company XYZ regrets the accounting error.  

Nuts, seafood, milk and wheat are all things that people are commonly allergic to.  
Nuts, seafood, milk and wheat often activate allergies.  

Girls today are faced with an onslaught of influences daily, most of them negative.  
Girls today face an onslaught of influences, most of them negative.  

http://cgi.duke.edu/web/sciwriting/index.php?action=lesson1#principles

It should be noted that Club USA, a brand within the Club World Group has just received the Casinomeister 2008 Casino of the Year, US-Friendly Award.NO

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“The NucleusOne® is a valuable data recovery tool and helps us to offer exclusive and unparalleled data recovery options. The sleek and unique design of The NucleusOne® workstations is another enhancement to our new state-of-the-art facility,”

I plan to continue this legacy of providing innovative products and services to our customers. With over 30 competing companies for our customers to choose from, we have some challenges ahead. I am confident that we can meet those challenges successfully. And the first step is the release of our new app.

"President and CEO John Johnson believes the release of the new app will provide customers with the communications tools they need, setting XYZ Company apart from more than 30 competitors."

“The NucleusOne® is a valuable data recovery tool and helps us to offer exclusive and unparalleled data recovery options. The sleek and unique design of The NucleusOne® workstations is another enhancement to our new state-of-the-art facility,”

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Buzzwords, Jargon

The most jargon-packed press release ever?

"Business Technology Solutions and Services to Help Accelerate Better Business Outcomes"

According to the press release, the "new solutions and services" will "help CIOs accelerate better business outcomes." Want specifics?

"The solutions and services include a platform that simplifies the management of information" and helps "enterprise customers manage business service demand and IT project portfolio decision making." It goes on like that for another 650 words.

http://www.squidoo.com/businesscliches

Make Your Message Unintelligible

WSJ business tech blog

http://www.squidoo.com/businesscliches

However, scientific writers sometimes needlessly inflate their writing in length and complexity in an effort to "sound scientific" or convey intelligence. In truth, it takes a deeper understanding to explain a complex topic simply and succinctly. It was best put by Shakespeare: "Brevity is the soul of wit." The best scientists can communicate complicated results to intelligent readers outside their field. Long, complex writing doesn't imply good science.

Focus on the Headline

Write for robots and real people

The 50/50 Rule of Headlines
According to some of the best copywriters of all time, you should spend half of the entire time it takes to write a piece of persuasive content on the headline.

80/20 rule-8 out of 10 will read the headline but NOT the rest of the story.

Writing for robots and real people

**Good headlines**
- Summarize the story and grab attention
- Are clear and succinct, making every word count
- Are accurate, easy to read
- Use active verbs
- Emphasize the main point of the story
- Favor short words over long words
- Don’t repeat words in a headline
- Avoid double meanings
- Avoid puns
- Avoid confusing acronyms or abbreviations
Good Headlines

• Are clear and succinct, make every word count
  Company XYZ’s Second Quarter Results Beat Analyst Estimates

• Use active verbs
  Coupon Print Growth Explodes on Websites Powered by Grocery Shopping Network

• Emphasize the main point of the story
  Dover Motorsports, Inc. Declines 2012 NASCAR Sanctions for Nashville Superspeedway

• Use your Key Words
  Company name, how you want to be found via search

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Sending
Your Press Release
How the Wire Works

From **writing to distribution**, the wire disseminates your news to the most vast audience around the globe.
Circuit Choices

• Local (Metro City, State)
• Industry Corridors
• Regional
• National
• International
• Global

--Industry Corridors are an abbreviated version of the national distribution targeting areas across the U.S. where that market is mostly prevalent (such as technology, entertainment, bioscience and energy)
--Regional circuits includes such examples as Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Pacific Coast, etc.
--When you issue a release, you can see where across the globe, you are receiving the most visibility.

--With the internet and search engines, you can receive exposure even outside the distribution circuit you ordered.
To help you better decide which domestic circuit you want to order, you can also see by the NewsTrak report where in the U.S. you are getting the most visibility.
You can choose from more than 130 industry categories, which are all included complimentary with your domestic distribution. We also offer outreach to trade press on international and global circuits.
Formatting Tips

• Headline length, sub head and first paragraph
• Press release length
• Slug line
• Social Media/Sharing

--Focus your most important messages in the headline, subhead and first two paragraphs. Not only do many readers only skim the first few paragraphs of a press release, but search engines focus almost exclusively on this early content to index your release.

--clear headline of around 20 words

--4-500 words

--Our newsroom slugs your release to the appropriate editors, such as business, technology, lifestyle, entertainment, sports, etc. You can let our newsroom know who you want us to address your release to, though many newsrooms don't have such very defined titles, so keep it simple.
More Sending Tips

• Link to keywords, email, websites
• Use more than one quote so pull quote is interesting
• Use bold, italic, underlined and bulleted text
• Feature the company logo
• Always include complete, accurate contact information, Twitter handle or other social media details.

--Hyperlinks and anchor text helps search engines better index your release by associating its content with other sites. It also helps provide context for readers. Be sure to link the first instance of the brand and/or product name to the homepage of your website. Link the names of spokespeople in your release to their company bio page or even their LinkedIn profile. Business Wire's XHTML capabilities provide unlimited linking for any release.

--media to follow up with you with any questions

--Twitter handle or other social media profile, which is becoming increasingly popular
Other Sending Options

--Topic series follow what is on an AP calendar

--They are sent well in advance to accommodate deadlines
Multimedia = 5X More Clicks

Photos & Multimedia Marketing

Photos and videos make your headline more likely to be clicked — as much as five times more likely. Get more viewers with the Smart News Release.

Smart News Release Features

Including a photo or video with your press release increases the likelihood of journalists, consumers and social media users clicking your headline. The Smart News Release helps you capture those viewers by distributing your press release and multimedia to more sites and more people using the latest technology in the industry.

By placing your Smart News Release on BusinessWire.com, EON, Enhanced Online News, Dow Jones Marketreach and other news sites, Business Wire provides more opportunities for your release to be clicked, viewed and shared on the most visited sites on the internet.

Press Release Basics

Press releases with multimedia are more than five times more likely to viewed and used as media are always clamoring for photos, graphics, etc.
"Tuesday mornings are the best time to send a press release, according to 215 professional communicators..."

When to issue your news?

- Time and day of the week is dependent on the topic
  - Early morning/first half of the week

--if sending globally or international, give us time for translation (most languages take between 24-48 hours to translate)
Email, Fax, Social Media?

“Today, tech PR pros still conduct the majority of pitches via email, but phone “follow-up” is in danger of following the fax.”

--if you have a list of shareholders, board members, analysts, special media, etc., we can house the list for you and issue the release to your list after it crosses the wire
Tracking the Release

On BW, you find your report by logging on to BW Connect or viewing your release while logged in.
Tracking the Release

Press Release Basics: Writing, Sending and Tracking Your Press Releases

Business Wire’s Free August Webinar Sends PR Pros “back to school” with Three-part Session on Press Release Basics

NEW YORK – BUSINESS WIRE Business Wire’s educational free webinar series will send PR professionals and other communicators back to school with a three-part tutorial on writing, sending and tracking your press releases. The webinar takes place Thursday, August 25.

“We’ll be taking a holistic approach to writing, sending and tracking press releases,” said Joseph Miller, EDN Product Manager and one of three presenters of the program. “This webinar will be useful for old pros and neophytes alike.”

Business Wire’s educational webinar series, launched in 2007, has enlightened thousands of professional communicators, garnering three awards from the Society for New Communications Research.

Details and registration for the webinar follows.

Thursday, August 25
Back to School with Press Release Basics: Writing, Sending and Tracking Your Press Releases
11 a.m. Pacific / Noon Central / 1 p.m. Eastern
Registration: https://us01web.zoomus.com/j/84275253352

Summer’s over and it’s time to address getting your press releases found, seen and shared. This webinar will revisit the basics of writing, sending and tracking your press releases to make the most of your news.
The Dashboard provides an overview of your release’s key stats broken out over time and source.
User interaction with your release is tracked in the form of link clicks. See which links got the most activity.
Reading Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tweets of Your Release</th>
<th>Search for Your Release</th>
<th>Top Search Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| [Image]                | [Image]                 | http://www.businesswire.com/newsroom/ (239) |}

As well as search and social elements such as tweets and search terms.
Reporting Tricks

While BW reports give a lot of info, there are always ways to supplement what we provide.

If you or your client is particularly concerned with social, you can use Topsy.com to get a detailed view of who is tweeting your release.
Reporting Tricks

Then pump those Twitter accounts through a service like Klout to get a rough “score” of the Twitter user’s influence.
Google Alerts, if you aren’t already using them, can give you quickly updated reports on release pickup.

If you set up alerts in the past, be sure to go check on them because the options have changed.
The 50-40-10 Rule of Optimizing Press Releases

Spend about 50% of your time optimizing your headline. These days, we are inundated with information and being compelling from the outset is often crucial to getting your message heard by an audience of journalists, bloggers and newsreaders that have no shortage of articles to read at any time. Your headline is the most important element in your release from an SEO perspective as I’ll discuss in a minute.

Dig deep to craft a headline that incorporates important keywords while also conveying your key points and hopefully even grabs the reader’s attention from the start.

With your headline written, now spend the next 40% of your time optimizing the body of your release. While ensuring that your release continues to deliver on the promise of the headline, repeat your most important keywords or related words multiple times. Also be sure to link to key webpages using relevant anchor text closely matched to the content of the destination page. Use your body optimization time to find the balance of readability and optimization.

Finally, use your last 10% to optimize your multimedia elements. I recommend allocating a significantly smaller amount of time for this because there are no headlines, links or body copy to deal with here. Simply write unique and compelling descriptions of each attached photo or video multimedia element. Incorporate relevant keywords into each description, give each element a unique file name and you are done.
Like I said, headlines are the most crucial element of your release from an SEO perspective. Headlines are what people see first, whether on your site, Business Wire or a partner site.

Always try to use your most important keyword in your release headline. If possible, squeeze in one or two extra keywords if you can.

The release headline becomes the Title tag, which as we’ve mentioned is read by search engines and is weighted very heavily in search rankings, and is also used as the linked text in search engine results.

Also, shoot for 80 characters or less. Search engines are usually going to clip your results around that number, although they read the whole headline of course.
Optimizing Headlines

- Keep your headline between 2 and 22 Words
- Use Company name
- Don’t Use Proper Dates (eg 1/1/2011)
- More at http://bizwire.pr/goognews

JOSEPH

In addition, Google News has it’s own optimization rules. Violate them, and you won't get into the Google News index. You'll still appear in normal results though.

Make sure you stay under 22 words, first and foremost. Also, be sure to use your company name to ensure your release is properly sorted and classified, and avoid proper dates as well.
• First 100 words most important.
• Always use top your three keywords.
• First 140 characters used as default description for Business Wire site display, ~155 for Google.

JOSEPH

So now that your headline is optimized, let’s move to the body of your release. Search engines will digest all the text on your page, but special importance is given to the topmost body text. Therefore, it’s important to start using and re-emphasizing your important keywords early on in the body of your release first, and then continue on incorporating it into the rest of your release.

Also, it’s worth noting that, in most cases, the first portion of the release body will be used as the “meta description”, which is often used by the search engines as the description for each search result. While the meta description doesn’t really affect search rankings, keywords will be highlighted and more clickable for readers.

Google usually uses the first 140 characters of the meta description.
Optimizing Multimedia

• Write a great caption & filename for image or video
• Ex. Joseph Miller, EON Product Manager at Business Wire, reacts to receiving 10 Berkshire Hathaway shares for his birthday

JOSEPH –

Optimizing multimedia elements is easy. Simply write a brief, unique description of each element with a keyword or two for good measure and create a descriptive file name as well. If you’re unfamiliar with how we treat multimedia, Ali is going to give an overview right now
Thank You!

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