



## Press Release Checklist

### Preliminary

Gather information for Press Release (product or service).

Identify what it is you are announcing.

- Is it a new product, service or company? Upgraded product or service? Joint venture? Success, such as award recipient or record profits? TIP: Creating an annual event, "Hall of Fame" or repeatable event is a good way to create repeat news and drive visitors to your site.

Identify the 'Five W's' and H. (Tie it in to current news events if possible.)

- Who, What, When, Where, Why and How?

Craft your Unique Selling Point (USP).

- Your USP is why people care about what you are announcing. What sets you apart from your competition? Why is it newsworthy?

Perform Keyword Research.

- Carefully research keywords that would most appeal to your target audience and be the most likely searched on search engines. This will increase your chances of a high search engine ranking.

If you will be writing and submitting the press release yourself, go to the Writing section.

If not, submit details to professional press release writing and submission service.

### Writing

#### Introduction

If local, start with the City and State.

If international, include the Month, Day and Year the press release is to be distributed.

Write a strong opening paragraph with strong emphasis on why this is newsworthy and of interest to the audience.

#### Body

Answer the WWWWWH. Be as specific as possible with names, dates, times and locations. For times, include the time zone if the press release is for international distribution.

Use quotes from experts to enhance your credibility.

Use your keywords in the body whenever possible.

Avoid complex jargon unless necessary. Use market data to emphasize your company, product or service's position and strengths.



Whenever explaining the features of a product, service or company, explain how it will benefit the audience or target market. Always think from your audience's perspective, not yours.

Bring in your USP as soon as you have introduced the product, and how it will benefit the target audience or market.

### **Call to Action**

Be specific. Tell the reader exactly what you want them to do.

A URL to a landing page with e-mail opt-in is the best way to generate leads to convert and capture visitor information. This should be a separate page so you can track conversions.

Alternatively, a contact number (for localized press releases) will allow you to talk to callers directly, establish rapport and convert leads.

### **Contact Information**

Include a short statement about the company/person.

Add a link to a website.

Include your trademark or copyright information.

Do not include an e-mail address (e-mail harvesters will send you spam).

### **Summary**

Summarize the article in as few words as possible.

Place at the bottom of the article for those who prefer to scan.

Write a summary of the facts and a compelling benefit. Include a reworded Call to Action.

### **Headline**

Do not write this until the end.

Write between 30-50 headlines and then narrow it down.

Summarize the core point of the headline yet grab the attention of the reader.

Include the keywords in the headline where possible.

Do not write as an advertisement. Write as a newspaper headline – summarize and inform.

## **Submitting**

Revise your press release to 500 words.

Proofread and edit your press release before submission.

Choose manual or automatic submission.



## Manual Submission

Identify the sites you want to submit to. Aim for high profile, high readership sites and niche sites. Those with offline publications may also publish your article in their offline edition.

Prepare individual and personalized e-mails for each site. In the e-mail:

- Introduce yourself or your company.
- Provide a short summary of your press release.
- Explain why you have chosen their site and why they should publish your press release.
- Offer to promote their site on yours if necessary.
- Attach the press release as a fully-compatible .doc file.

Send the e-mail and request confirmation for a reply.

## Automatic Submission

Research the most cost-effective article submission services. Many are free.

Utilize multiple submission sources. Pay for RSS submission if available.

- Multiple circuits, especially RSS syndication, greatly increase the chances of your article being picked up by blogs and published, which increases your backlinks and thus search engine ranking.

Sign up for each submission site and submit your article according to each site's requirements.

Track your results and listings in the major search engines.

Put copies of your articles in an easily accessible archive on your site.

Also, you can use your articles as the core of your autoresponders.

## Appraisal

If you are receiving traffic and leads from your press release and you are happy with the level of traffic you are receiving, congratulations! You have successfully created a traffic-driving, lead-generating press release.

If not, go to the Optimization section.



## Optimization

### Identify ways to optimize your Press Release:

#### **Jump Page**

Offer a limited number of tips or trends in the press release. In the Call to Action, entice the reader to visit your opt-in or sales page to learn more.

#### **Copy and Headline Analysis**

Re-examine the headline and copy. Maybe get friends or colleagues to read it. Ensure it is compelling, easy to read and does not bore the reader.

Split paragraphs into smaller chunks.

Bold certain words for emphasis.

Ensure benefits are emphasized wherever possible.

#### **Professional edit/re-write**

Post the press release on a copy critique board for analysis and critique by users.

Take feedback on board and incorporate it into the press release.

#### **Value Added**

While issuing a press release, make sure you allow the reader the freedom to search for more options like research paper downloads, free trials, web seminars, reports and newsletters. This will definitely carry forward the interest of the reader.