



# *Effective Publicity Release Writing*

Or How I Learned to Love The Media



# *Leadership Seminar*

District A-15



# *Making It Happen*

***Writing a news release is an art,  
not rocket science.***

***Yet, it is not as difficult as it may  
seem.***



# How Important is a Press Release?

- Publicity increases interest and name recognition
- Compared to advertising, publicity is very, very inexpensive to acquire
- Inform people and generate interest
- Speak to an audience that can satisfy your needs



# *Making It Happen*

## **A Successful NEWS RELEASE to be effective answers three questions for the media:**

- *How many people in my readership/audience are going to be interested in this?*
- *What's in it for that readership/audience?*
- *How easy is it for the editor to use this information?*



# The Six PR Essentials

- 1. A Call For Action**
- 2. A Real Story about Real People**
- 3. The Value to the Audience**
- 4. Contain Crucial Information**
- 5. Offer Highlights of Qualifications**
- 6. Access to Key People**



# THE MAGIC FORMULA

***DPAA+H***

**or**

**Dramatic Personal Achievement in the  
face of Adversity, plus a little Humor**

*Source: Trashproof, A Definitive Guide to Writing News Releases That Really Work  
by Paul J. Krupin*



# Vexed over Magic Formula?

Can't think of personal achievements or adversity to enhance your press release?

*Ask yourself: Who can you help? How can you help them?*





# Know Media's Needs

- The three key questions the media asks when they receive a news release are:
  - 1. How many people in my audience will be interested in this?
  - 2. What's in it for my audience?
  - 3. What is the cost, time and effort to create what I need?



# It's a Business

So you must demonstrate that your event, product, or business will:

- 1. Interest, even expand the media's target audience;
- 2. Give a unique added value;
- 3. And can be easy to verify, trust, and work with.



# Media Outlets

- The list of prime media includes:
- Daily and Weekly Newspapers
- Magazines
- Radio Stations and Shows
- TV stations and Shows
- News Services and News Syndicates
- Freelance Writers
- Internet media counterparts to all the above
- Media columnists
- Media Blogs



# The Reality

The Reality is that a Lions Club, unless it is in a major population centre, will deal with small to medium size media outlets:

- Local weekly and/or daily newspapers
- Local radio stations and/or television stations
- Local cable television outlets



# Additional Outlets for Press Releases

- Interest Groups
- Associations
- Clubs
- Institutions
- Foundations
- Support Groups



# Schmooze the Editor

The single most important rule in getting information into print or broadcast is to know the organization and know the editor who will deal with your press releases.

The simplest effort is to ask what they want from you to meet their needs.

If you can, go for coffee and let the editor know what you can do for his readership or viewership.



# Make It Local

*Key elements that ensure local story angles get played:*

1. Local event
2. Local impacts or consequences identified
3. Local people, families, or residents involved
4. Quote from the local person of interest
5. Local person offered for interview
6. Story about a local person or people
7. Direct media access to the local people involved
8. Local innovation, breakthrough, or accomplishment
9. Local problem, challenge, issue, or concern



# The Simple 3-I System

Try this simple three-step process for press releases:

- 1. **IDENTIFY** a successful PR model;
- 2. **IMITATE** the structure and content of the success model;
- 3. **INNOVATE** with your own information.

The presentation of this information varies, depending on whether you're trying to get into print or broadcast media.

*Source: Trashproof, A Definitive Guide to Writing News Releases That Really Work  
by Paul J. Krupin*





# Why News Releases Fail

## **1. You wrote an advertisement.**

If you write an ad when you want a feature story and interviews, don't be surprised if someone tries to sell you ad space. Educate, inform and forget the selling.

## **2. You forgot to put the five W's up front.**

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and WHY the media's audience will be interested. The first four W's are equally important but it's the last W that matters most. Clearly write *why* the audience will be interested in your event or fundraiser.

## **3. You are the centre of attention, not the media's audience.**

You describe yourself or the club instead of targeting an audience. Shift the perspective.

## **4. You wrote for a minority, not for a majority of people in the audience.**

You can't compete with other publicity releases that address a larger demographic. Focus on an issue that will interest more people.



# Why News Releases Fail

## **5. You included logos and or non-persuasive graphics.**

You distract the editor from your message by using fancy fonts or graphics that become gobbledygook when using a fax machine. Include only easily transmitted graphics and typefaces.

## **6. You place too much information on one page.**

Your one-page news release has a font size so small an editor needs a magnifying glass to read it. Make it legible.

## **7. You are too wordy and text is dense, hard to read.**

You focus on details instead of important ideas, issues, facts or a news angle. Focus on the most newsworthy information.

## **8. You wrote a personally biased item.**

Forget the soapbox and make your pitch objective.

## **9. You forgot to show what it means to real people.**

If there's no real human interest, it falls flat. Tell a story using real people.



# Why News Releases Fail

**10. You wrote about someone else's fame and glory.**

Don't stand in the shadow of someone else. Tell your own story.

**11. Your press release responds to something that just happened.**

Too late. It's now history; not news. Get in front of your news.

**12. You put in too much hype.**

Editors want substance, not hype.

**13. You referred to prior media coverage.**

Editors and reporters want to break news, not repeat it.

**14. You tried to impress or be clever.**

If you're too clever, you will sound petty, not like an authority.

**15. You wrote vague and/or unsubstantiated claims.**

Be clear in what you say and, if it's controversial, back it up.



# Why News Releases Fail

## **16. You write as someone else.**

Readers and viewers can detect a fraud.

## **17. You ranted or raved.**

Know the difference between a letter to the editor and a problem-solving-tips article that's worthy of a feature story.

## **18. You aren't credible.**

If you're not an authority, get someone who is to support your item.

## **19. You provided poor contact information.**

Provide one key person, one phone, no fax, one email address, and one URL without a long string address.

## **20. You did not include a clear media call for action.**

You didn't tell the media what you want them to do with your news release. Make a clear suggestion and offer the media incentives to comply, like free review copies, free test samples, interview questions and answers, media kits with story angles and stats and data, relevant photographs, etc.



# Why News Releases Fail

## **21. You didn't offer a way to respond.**

You need to include something that motivates an editor to publish or mention your contact information. Give him/her something of value to the audience, something the editor feels good about mentioning like a free problem-solver or offer.

## **22. You sent the press release to the wrong media.**

Target your media. Know what your audience read, watch, and listen to be receptive to your news release. That can ensure a willingness to take action on your message.

## **23. You rely on a single contact method – a single fax or email to produce all media calls.**

Follow up and you can triple or quadruple your response rate. Once you have editors on side, ask: "What can I give you to support a feature story and meet your needs?"

## **24. Have realistic expectations.**

Count one or two quality media responses as a success.