

HOW TO DO YOUR OWN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Press Releases

A press release contains a newsworthy announcement that you send to the press be it local, radio, tv or national newspapers. You can also send it to press agencies such as the Press Association.

A press release **should**:

- * be newsworthy
- * have a great headline
- * have a great intro
- * read like a news story not an advertisement
- * be simple and grammatically correct
- * have quotes from a person high up in the business
- * be timely if a reactive release
- * if you're launching a new service or product link it to something that's in the news right now
- * stick to just one subject
- * provide the reporter with the angle, don't make them have to work to find the story in your release
- * have your contact tel numbers and email

A press release **should NOT**:

- * be filled with industry terminology or techno speak it should be written for everybody to understand it
- * be more than 2 pages long and preferably only 1 page and 500 words
- * just have a tenuous link to the news if it's a reactive release
- * simply be a sales letter about your business

Photocalls

If you're having an event, raising money for charity, handing over a charity cheque, etc, then you want to ask the press to come along and take photographs.

For this you want to send a photocall to your local media together with your press release.

Your photocall **should**:

- * be an invite to come along to take photographs
- * clearly state when, where, why and what is happening
- * have a great headline and introductory paragraph
- * include a short synopsis of what the event, etc is
- * include your contact details

However, you should always take your own pictures on the day to send to the press in case the photographer doesn't turn up. Be prepared to include the names, ages and where the people are from of all people in the photograph.

(see examples attached)

How a press release should look

PRESS RELEASE

RECESSION BUSTING BUSINESS FOR PARENTS

- headline

Cash strapped parents are being handed a lifeline by a company who wants to help them set up their own businesses and earn money straight away. **- introduction**

This year has seen parents handed a raw deal with child benefit and tax credit cuts as well as rising food and fuel costs. And in direct reaction to this a Sussex businesswoman has made the decision to help those who want to earn extra cash do so with the launch of her party plan business.

Parents can start their own eco toy business with less than £200 and be earning the extra cash they need right now within a week. And in one night they could earn more than £100, the businesswoman said.

Owner of Toys to You Julie Rae said: "The recession is particularly hurting parents now what with everything increasing in price and I wanted to help other parents become self-employed quickly and earn extra money quickly.

"That's why I set up Toys to You party plan. And it is correct our sales consultants can earn more than £100 for just a few hours work."

ENDS

- denotes end of press release

Toys to You is the UK's largest online ethical toy shop & wooden Santa grotto toy supplier. You can find us at www.toys-to-you.co.uk **- company information**

If you need images or require further information please contact me at:

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Email address

How a Photocall should look

PHOTOCALL

- *what this is*

Fashion Show to Raise Cash for Local Hospice

- *headline*

Mayfield Evening WI will be hosting a Fashion Show full of fun and frolics featuring summer clothes from Marks and Spencer.

The fashion show is a fundraiser for Hospice in the Weald.

We'd love it if you could come along and take photographs at our event:

When	Saturday 25th November 2011
Where	Mayfield Memorial Hall
Time	starts 7.30pm but models will be available for photographs from 7pm
What	Fashion Show

If you need more information please contact

Julie Rae

Moby

Home no

Email

We really hope to see you at our event.

How to Send Press Releases & Photocalls

Email is best but make sure you put your press release and/or photocall in the body of the email not as an attachment. Attachments won't be opened by reporters. Or you can still mail them to the media.

When emailing make sure you:

- * have an attention grabbing subject heading - DO NOT use your company name or the words press release in the subject heading
- * send it to the right person, most local papers have contact details in the paper for the relevant reporters
- * if necessary phone and ask for email addresses

If you're sending your press releases to local media then it's absolutely okay to telephone them after you've sent it. But it's always best to say you have more information (if you have something more to add) rather than to ask if they received the press release. When you phone, if you get a chance, tell them what you specialise in and tell them you're always available for more information if they're working on that subject.

If you're sending your releases to the national media DO NOT phone them to check they received them. Actually it's best to not phone them at all. They will phone you if they're going to use it and have more questions.

Other Types of PR

You can get publicity from more than just sending out press releases and photocalls.

You can:

- * become an expert in your industry
- * offer competitions to the media and ask for a small feature to go alongside it
- * local newspapers do 'focus' pages on things such as food, cars, finance, travel and home. If any of these are your business it's worth pitching a feature idea for these pages.
- * giveaway freebies in the local media
- * blog, Facebook, Tweet
- * become an agony aunt in your industry
- * puff features - otherwise known as advertorials. If you pay for an advert ask if they can also do a feature on you.

Basically, the more you can get your business name into the public domain the better. Because the more people who read about your business the better.

How to Pitch Other PR Types

The best way to pitch an idea to a journalist is to call them up.

Find out who the person is who deals with the section you want to write for and give them a call. Before you call them make sure you have your pitch/story idea fully worked out. It often helps to have it written down in front of you.

Your Pitch should:

- * be short and to the point
- * get your idea across succinctly
- * provide details such as who would you be writing about

- * provide info on who you think might be interested in reading it
- * contain details on why you think it would be good for that particular publication

Remember, if one publication doesn't want to use your idea, then take it to another one. One no, doesn't mean it's always going to be no.

Publicity Ideas

Chester Valuations - Reactive PR eg if there's a local or a national story about antiques being stolen they should send out a press release with advice on how to get your valuables valued and insured for their correct value. Suitable for both local and national media.

Mike could also look to become an antique expert or antique agony aunt for magazines such as Sussex/Kent Life and others throughout the UK perhaps even in the insurance quarterly's they often send out to customers.

Could even do features on how to sell your antiques if that's something antique owners want to know about.

How to do this - Telephone the publication and pitch them your idea. It must be a fully formed feature/story idea. eg. antique agony aunt - people send in questions about their antiques and I answer them be it valuations, are they antiques, best way to care for them, etc.

Recruitment - could be looking to write features for the jobs pages in the local papers and also specialist recruitment magazines and business to business media.

For this kind of industry it's also good to keep an eye on the news and to send out reactive press releases. Eg there's an IT brain drain in the UK, you write a press release either confirming it or negating it. For either of these to work you must have facts and figures or surveys to stand your story up. This type of press release could be sent to either local or national media depending on where your business is and where your customers are.

Also, any awards, nominations, industry recognition should be sent to local media and industry specific media including any relevant photographs you have.

When Steve Jobs died any company involved in IT should have sent out some sort of press release reacting to the news cos local media love to find a local angle to a national/international story.

Shop/Hairdresser/Beauty Salon - could raise money for a charity by holding a fundraising event at the shop (this works in two ways - gets people in the shop/salon and gets shop/salon in the local paper). Send out a press release and a photocall approximately one and half weeks before the event. No less than 3 days before the event. This is a local media event.

Then after the event send out a press release with amount raised and a picture taken on the day if press don't send a photographer.

Finance - become an expert in your specialist financial area for either business to business media or consumer to business. Local newspapers often have financial sections and will be desperate for financial experts to write features for them cos journalists don't usually have financial expertise and it's always good to get someone to do the hard work for you.

The ongoing recession is begging for local reaction press releases especially timely ones such as Secrets to a recession proof Christmas

Top 10 tips for saving cash this Christmas

Recession proof your borrowing

How to borrow in a recession

Graphic Design - Business to business media, business link (or their replacement) websites, etc. Again, this is crying out for an expert or agony aunt type of PR.

But you can still do reactionary press releases - when they announced the Olympic 2012 characters and logo, a graphic designer can respond to that in a press release. Think it's crap? Say so. Love it, say so too. Again, local papers love spinning a national story into a local story. You could also be timely with Rebrand on a Budget feature for business to business media.

Written a Book? - press release for launch and photocall. Then send out an after event release and your own photograph.

Doing business slightly differently? - as above.

Got famous faces buying from you? - as above.

Got a great new innovative product? - send it to the media, get it reviewed. Media will tell them where to buy it, make sure it's you and not your competitor.

All of the above are interchangeable with any business type.

Basically, if your business is doing something and you think local people should know about it then send a press release to your local media - newspapers, radio and TV. It might get used, it might not. But you'll never know until you try.

And remember, most local reporters are regular people waiting on a news story to happen. If you give them one on a plate they'll love you and they'll come back to you. Just make sure it is newsworthy, but in the world of local media newsworthy is easy.

Top Tips for PR

- * you know your audience and what they want, just spin that into a news story or feature
- * get into journalist's contacts books – the contact book is a reporter's bible, their go to for people to make a comment on a story they're working on.
- * remember you are an expert in your industry - you live it and work it every day - journalist's don't they need experts to help them put their stories together
- * All media love facts, figures, surveys and statistics especially if they prove something we thought we knew was wrong - remember Edwina's eggs give you salmonella story?
- * All media also love Top 10, Secrets to..., etc.
- * if you have a news story that's not related to your business pass it onto your local reporter, they'll remember you for that and contact you in the future to see if you've any stories.
- * If you sell products get them reviewed by sending them to media reviewers, blogger reviewers, etc.
- * when a reporter phones you or emails you make sure you give them a nice soundbite they can quote you on. No blandness, don't be boring, be controversial if possible.
- * If a reporter runs a story on you, send them a nice thank you card.

Further Information on Other Types of PR

Proactive PR – you have something newsworthy to let the press know about. Eg. For local papers this could be a charity event or an opening or an award has been won.

Reactive PR – you are responding directly to a news story with your press release. Eg. In response to a story about antiques being stolen you could issue a press release responding to this highlighting the importance of having your antiques valued and insured for their correct value.

Expert Advice – you become an ‘expert’ in the field of your business. The media loves to quote ‘experts’ and you are an expert in your industry. The media also loves to have articles written by experts as these articles hold more weight with the public. Eg. Local newspapers often have pages dedicated to certain subjects like jobs, cars, food. You could contact them offering to write them a feature on your industry to go in their next dedicated page. You must have an idea of what you plan to write so you’re pitching them an idea, not just the offer to write something.

Competitions – this is an easy one, you offer a publication a competition in return for them mentioning your company and giving you all the contact details of all the entrants. You can sometimes persuade them to let you write an article/feature to go along with it.

Tweet, Blog, FB – these can all be forms of PR is used in the right way. Remember, the definition of PR is “the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you.” If you’re getting people listening and then talking about you then you’re doing public relations.

Remember not a lot happens in local news and local newspaper reporters are often v v glad to get some story ideas.

Local Media

The Courier - weekly

The Express – weekly

Weekly local papers have deadlines but they are weekly deadlines dependent on the day they come out. A paper that comes out a Friday, deadline will normally be a Thursday morning.

Reporters on local papers are more than happy to have you phone them to check up on receipt of press releases or to pitch them a story/expert idea.

The Argus – daily evening

Still happy to talk to you but they are under more pressure as they are a daily. Daily deadlines will be lunchtime that day. Choose your time to call don’t call at deadline, nobody will want to talk to you.

John Connor Press Associates, Lewes – local press agency writing for the national daily papers

Work to national newspaper daily deadlines and will be busy but will still appreciate a phone call if you have a really good news story that is suitable for the nationals. They won’t be interested in puff, award winners, charity stuff. But they will be interested in politics, court, crime, news stories that are a little bit different. And if you get in their contacts book for your specialism, they’ll call you if they get a story in that industry that they need a quote for.