



Press Conference Information

Newsworthy Topics

- An award or other recognition
- Local interest topic or angle
- Association with a celebrity or expert
- Topic of mass interest (i.e. current hot topics)
- Conference, lectures, or classes
- Public appearances
- Public events
- Recognition in a professional field
- Tie-in to a publication's regular column
- Holiday or event tie-in
- Training classes
- Human interest angle
- An unusual event or occurrence
- An important event (either observed or participated in)
- Leadership or participation in an organization
- A Web site event

Helpful Hints

- Always schedule the conference in the morning when possible between 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
- Try not to schedule press conferences on Mondays or on weekends.
- The location should be accessible and support your story.
- The location should accommodate media and guests.
- Electrical outlets are essential.
- Make follow up phone calls to your media contacts the day before the press conference.
- Prepare and distribute a press kit at the Press Conference that includes press release (see template), facts sheets, copies of any prepared statements, graphs and charts, or other backup information.
- Distribute a media advisory to the press a week prior to the event (see template).

- Send a messenger with copies of the press kit to each media outlet in case they were not able to attend.
- Identify a primary spokesperson who will be the main point of contact .
- Develop a brief statement, no longer than 10 minutes, and a set of bulleted talking points.
- Visual aides can be very effective.
- Schedule a run-through rehearsal.
- Have your own photographer in attendance,
- Assign people to cut copies of news articles and make videos of any television news coverage,

Press Conference Check List

Facilities

- _____ Site satisfactory
- _____ Space adequate
- _____ Security available
- _____ Adequate parking, including handicapped spaces
- _____ Adequate seating

Equipment

- _____ Microphone/amplifier
- _____ Podium
- _____ Platform/stage
- _____ Visual aide equipment (screen, easel, chart, etc.)
- _____ Registration table

Materials

- _____ Sign-in sheets
- _____ Name Tags
- _____ Tent cards
- _____ Posters
- _____ Press Kits
- _____ Pads and pencils
- _____ Participant materials

Staffing and Setup

- _____ Speakers
- _____ Staff on hand
- _____ Photographer
- _____ Refreshments
- _____ Interpreter

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

The news release often is viewed as the public relations professional's bread and butter. But, because reporters receive hundreds daily, you must make sure that yours stands out. A news release highlights the essence of your story and is written to heighten the editor's interest. However, reporters' most common criticism about news releases is that they lack news. Therefore, these are the first questions you should ask yourself when considering a news release — *Is this newsworthy? What are the most important points? Is there any new data or statistics? Is there new information being presented? Are well-known experts involved from whom I can obtain a quote that reinforces our main message?* Follow these guidelines when writing a news release:

- Identify the essential points you want to communicate and write your release from them.
- Place the most important pieces of the news in the “lead,” or the first paragraph, in case the editor doesn't read any further. Ask yourself WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW, and place the answers to those questions in the first few sentences.
- The most important information you wish to communicate should be placed at the beginning of the release and the least important at the end.
- Write the release in easy to understand language; avoid jargon. Keep the release short. One page is ideal; two pages are acceptable.
- Include a closing paragraph, which describes the campaign, organization or program briefly.
- Try to write the release so it can be printed as is in a newspaper. Many smaller newspapers may actually print your entire news release. Larger media outlets will develop the story by using portions of the news release along with information gathered from your event and/or interviews.
- Place the news release on your organization's stationery. If your campaign is a multi-agency effort, devise a letterhead identifying participating organizations.
- Type the release on one side of the page only.
- Place a knowledgeable contact, including name and telephone number, on the top lefthand side of the release. Mark the top hand of the release—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or NEWS RELEASE. Include the date of release.
- Place a short, clear headline in all capital letters on the release above the first paragraph that will spark the editor's interest.
- Center “-more-” at the bottom of the first page if the release is longer than one page. Do not break a sentence from one page to another.
- Put “Page Two” at the top of the second page and all successive pages along with a key word from the headline in case the pages become separated. Use this symbol “# # #” centered at the bottom of the last page to indicate the end of the release.

NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Month, Day, Year

CONTACT: Name

NAME OF ORGANIZATION (If not on letterhead)
(XXX) XXX-XXXX or email@address.com

**TITLE OF RELEASE SHOULD SUMMARIZE THE CONTENT OF THE
RELEASE IN ONE LINE AND SHOULD BE IN CAPS, BOLD AND
CENTERED**

(MONTH, DAY, YEAR - NAME OF CITY IN CAPS AND BOLD) In the first paragraph of a news release, state the basic who, what, where, when and why information. A release should lead with the most important information and end with the least important. As a general rule, news releases should be no longer than two pages.

Indent all new paragraphs. Paragraphs should consist of approximately 3 – 4 concise sentences. The body of a news release should be double-spaced, where as the contact information should be single-spaced.

Print news releases on organization or company letterhead if available. Do not use bright colored paper for your news release. Even though you do want to get the reporters attention, use neutral colored paper. Provide at least one-inch margins on each side of the paper if possible.

Use three number marks (###) centered on the bottom of the page to indicate the end of a release. If an additional page is necessary, indicate that the release continues onto the next page using the following centered on the bottom of the first page: -more-. If you must continue your release onto the next page, never break a sentence up. Simply begin the next page with the entire sentence. Do not indent this sentence unless you are beginning a new paragraph.

In the “slug line”, use one to two words that summarize the entire release. These can usually be pulled from the title, and should be in all caps. Always place “Page 2” underneath. Slug line and date should be single-spaced. However, the remainder of the release body will be double-spaced.

There is no need to use letterhead for subsequent pages. Plain white paper will do fine. Your last paragraph should be separate and list contact information in case the reader would like more information.

For more information, contact _____, at _____. You can include telephone, fax, e-mail and/or address.

About your organization. In this paragraph, you may choose to briefly describe your organization. What is its mission? When was it established? Why does it exist? Once again, this should be short and to the point. Random facts and information should not be included. It can also be single-spaced and a smaller font if needed.