



## Press Release Writing Tips

### The basic elements of a press release

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1. **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** These words should appear in the upper left-hand part of the page, just under your letterhead. You should capitalize every letter.
2. **Contact Information:** Provide the name, title and full contact information (address; work, cell and/or home numbers; and email address) of your company spokesperson. This is for the editor or reporter, not for readers of the publication.
3. **Headline:** A statement that simply and clearly states the subject of the press release. Capitalize the first letter of all words in the headline (with the exception of: “a,” “an,” “the” and prepositions such as: “of,” “to” or “from”). The combination of upper and lower case makes it easier to read. A subhead (in regular sentence case) can be used to expand or clarify the headline.
4. **Dateline:** This should be the city from which your press release is issued and the date on which you are mailing it. It is usually italicized.
5. **Lead Paragraph:** The first paragraph should clearly convey the who, what, when, where, why and how of your message.
6. **Additional Text:** Develop the details in subsequent paragraphs. This will include descriptions of your products or services, benefits, unique features and quotes from staff, industry experts or satisfied customers.
7. **Company History/Mission Statement:** Do this in one short paragraph.
8. **For more information:** this is the contact information you want to provide to readers of the publication in which your press release will appear. This contact information may or may not be different than the contact information you provide at the top of the press release.

### Formatting: Keep it simple

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- Use 8 ½ x 11 paper.
- Use only one side of each sheet of paper.
- Use the basic, default formatting that comes with your word processing software and stick to clean, readable fonts and font sizes (don't go below 10 or above 12). Avoid using tabs, paragraph indents, odd spacing and margins.

*Continued on page 2*

- If your release is more than one page, use the word “more” between two dashes and center it at the bottom of the first page to let reporters know that another page follows.

– more –

- At the top of the next page  
**Abbreviated headline (page 2)**
- Use three number symbols, centered, immediately following the last paragraph to indicate the end of the press release:

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## Content Tips

Think like a reporter and develop story angles from a reporter’s perspective, not a business owner’s. Give them a story, not an advertisement and avoid hype, clichés and puffery.

Example: your company has just released the model X251 and the only difference between it and the model X250 is that it has a new right-angle flange and it’s blue. Ask yourself: what benefit does the right-angle flange give the X251 that the X250 didn’t have? Does the new blue color have any purpose, or is it just for looks? If the new right-angle flange allows the X251 to be used in hospitals at a fraction of the cost of what they are currently using, it’s news! Maybe the blue color prevents endangered birds from bumping into it when it’s used in the rainforest. Again, it’s newsworthy! On the other hand, if the right angle flange only has some obscure use and it’s blue because that’s the CEO’s favorite color, then it’s not news at all.

You can also pitch an idea to an editor or reporter to gauge interest before sending your press release.

Good Pitch Example: “As you probably know, obesity among children is growing at an alarming rate. Because of the ridicule they face from other children, millions of overweight young people are being marked with lifetime scars that can seriously damage their self-esteem. I host a unique website where overweight kids can anonymously express their feelings and discuss this issue. I think I’ve learned some important things about a very serious subject.”

Bad Pitch Example: “I have a website where overweight kids post messages. Would you like to do a story about me?”

## About the Author

Karen C.L. Anderson has more than 20 years experience as a communicator. Motivated, personable and professional, she is keenly perceptive and thrives on deadlines. She is able to capture ideas and personalities and put them into words that move and motivate others. She specializes business-to-business writing (press releases, newsletter, annual reports, brochures, web content, etc.), as well as in writing feature articles for both consumer and trade publications. For more information, call 860-444-7544, email [karen@kclanderson.com](mailto:karen@kclanderson.com) or visit [www.kclanderson.com](http://www.kclanderson.com)

1 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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3 Sample Press Release

*This sample press release has been prepared to better illustrate proper press release formatting.*

4 **Ledyard, CT. January 2008** - beyond the office and freelance writer Karen C. L. Anderson have partnered to create a press release primer to aid small businesses in understanding the proper construction and format of a press release. The goal is to help them create an effective, impactful press release that that attracts the media and gets results. This resource sheet is being released electronically and is available in its entirety on the web at [www.beyondtheoffice.com](http://www.beyondtheoffice.com).

beyond the office provides virtual business support to many small businesses and independent professionals. As part of its "New Year, New You" initiative, beyond the office is providing informational articles to assist with many of the common trouble areas faced by small businesses and independent professionals. The goal of this campaign is to enable businesses and professionals to find the tools and resources needed for continued success. These articles will be available for download on [beyondtheoffice.com](http://beyondtheoffice.com)

Since 2006, beyond the office has been providing a wide range of services to professionals from many different industries. "Our goal is to make your day run more smoothly," says owner, Terri Orlowski. "We custom tailor a solution for each of our clients, based on their industry, their needs, and their budget."

For more information, please contact beyond the office at 860-245-0812 or via email at [info@beyondtheoffice.com](mailto:info@beyondtheoffice.com). Additional information is also available on the web at <http://www.beyondtheoffice.com>.

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