



# Top Tips For Writing A Great Press Release

My name is Andy Hirst and I've been a journalist in Yorkshire for 35 years, including running busy newsdesks.

I'm based in Huddersfield and now write for the [Huddersfield Hub](#) website so if you are based in the town and want some news coverage then email your press release to me at [andy@ah-pr.com](mailto:andy@ah-pr.com).

Here are my top tips to writing a great press release.

- \* When you email the press release to media the subject box they see on the email must grab the news editor's attention so never just write 'press release'. Make them want to know more and make it relevant to that news organisation. So, a story about a Huddersfield company's research into cancer, for example, should say: *Huddersfield company's breakthrough in pioneering cancer research and how it could save lives* for local media.
- \* Then write a few lines of introduction at the start of the email to make it clear in a sentence exactly what the press release is about and why it's interesting for the readers of that particular media organisation so the journalist doesn't have to plough through the release searching for the best news angle.
- \* Paste the press release straight onto the email – never as a word attachment. Busy newsdesks don't want to be opening different files to see what a press release is about. Everything has to be instantly visible, clear and succinct.
- \* A great headline is all-important but nothing cryptic. It can be clever - perhaps a play on words - but must be instantly understood and be a torchbearer for what's to come in the story. A recent one I wrote was *Part of Huddersfield Narrow Canal Towpath Is Shut and It's Not Known When It Will Reopen*. It's of interest to a lot of people who will want to know where it's closed, why and what's the problem fixing it so there's enough in the headline to spark interest and for people to want to read on.
- \* Start with the strongest newslines in the first paragraph and within the first few paragraphs answer the 5 Ws all press releases must answer: Who, what, why, when and where. The important details need to be near the top of the press release with quotations, context and explanations further down.

\* Write in a straightforward, concise style using simple words so the message gets straight across. Never waffle. The ideal length is 500 to 700 words.

\* Include quotes from someone in the charity/community group/business or an expert to add meaningful insight and opinion such as how a new medical treatment will save lives. Facts and figures should be in the main story, not in quotes. Make sure the full name and job title of anyone quoted is included.

\* If you've several key points to make then use bullet points.

\* Submit a photo with every press release but make sure you own the copyright for the picture or whoever does have the copyright is fine for you to use it. Many a time publications have been asked to pay for photos they have used without clearance. The copyright will always remain with whoever took the photo even if those pictures are sold. It's OK to send the photos as attachments and they will need to be high definition. You can always send them via WeTransfer or something similar if they are huge files. It really is easy to do. Don't forget to include a caption naming who is who and their role with your organisation from left to right.

\* Think video as the vast majority of the media also publishes online and video is all-important to them. A story with a good video has more chance of being used.

\* At the end of the press release write Ends and then below it add any important information for the news editor under the heading Notes for Editors such as your contact information and background information on the business or charity – when it was set up, how many people it employs, other products etc. Always include your phone number so the journalist can get straight back to you to check anything.

\* When you've written your press release leave it for a while, ideally overnight. When you go back to it I guarantee you'll spot things to change and improve. You may even spot obvious mistakes as the eye at first only sees what it was expecting to see.

\* And, finally, spell-check it. Spell-checkers are very good these days and will pick up grammar as well as subtle spelling errors where a couple of letters may have been transposed and will also let you know if you've repeated a word such as the – something your eye will usually skip over.

**Should you need a press release writing you can always email me via [andy@ah-pr.com](mailto:andy@ah-pr.com) or call me on 07985 654822 for a quote.**