

## THE PRESS RELEASE – THE MEDIA INSTRUMENT FOR INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS

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**Abstract:** More and more companies use press releases to promote a new product or service or to announce a big project which can increase their competitiveness. Through this cheap instrument the actual organizations maintain themselves continuously active in the eyes of target groups. Writing good quality press releases requires experience and skill and knowing and respecting of some important rules.

**Keywords:** competitiveness, marketing media, press release, advertising, communication, public relations.

Bill Rivers, ex-professor at Stanford University describes the multiple varieties of the public categories: „ The number of the public categories it is equal with the number of groups with different political orientations, different religions, and different incomes per families. What is motivating and convincing a group category it’s possible for other category to be without importance.” An organization can not raise the curiosity of all public categories; it must capture the attention of its target groups. In the modern market, with a strong competition, the organization must choose the best instruments for attract its target groups and must penetrate only the channels connected to its target. Radio it’s not a proper channel for informing people about complex subjects, like the funds for endowment with equipments for a university, but newspapers and magazines are. When an organization wants tot inform all its public categories it must address to the publications and to other media channels like TV. The television it’s an expensive way of advertising, not all the information about an organizations deserve this kind of advertising. For example the inauguration of a new branch of one multinational financial institution can be announced both in TV and press because it’s an important event concerning the life of the organization and the allocated budget afford this kind of advertising, but an event like the opening of a new shoes store it won’t attract anybody for appearing in the news at TV and in press.

The reason organizations want to appear in media is double: first, the presence in an important publication or at TV gives the presented information a lot of credibility. The second, if a news release appears in a newspaper with an online agency, people can find that information in multiple places without other costs. The repetition is favorable. This article presents the advantages of using press release in front of TV because the budget is cheaper, and organizations have the certainty of appearing in the minds of people more than a date. It can be used by all kinds of organizations.

Press release is an official statement issued by companies to print media. It can be purely factual and address a specific issue or it may be promotional. Some press releases are made in house, by their own specialists, while others are generated by public relations agencies.

Nowadays, the access of the press at some important events can be restricted, so the press relies on these documents which are the only source for forming the factual basis for its articles.

Press release has a triple quality:

1. it has the capacity of maintaining the notoriety and the credibility of the organization
2. newsworthiness-there is a promise for the importance of the information and for the value of the article
3. it offers power and responsibility to the author

A wrong written press release may affect the relations with the press and the image of the organization, which can reduce the trust of the consumers and may increase the power of the competition.

### **The news**

The renowned consultant in public relations, Philip Lesly said that the communication channel decides, in most of the cases, what are the news that deserved to be published or not. There is not a unique opinion about news. The specialists in public relations know especially the practical aspects: news is what media is publishing. If an organization wants to appear on the first page of the newspapers, the information in their message must be very strong and influent. If the article has not value as news, the readers won't buy the newspaper. The value of the news stays the base criterion when it's establishing what is to be used or not. The reporter is looking for an interesting story for its readers and satisfying for the chief publisher. He is not necessarily interested in the products or services of the organization. He just wants to obtain the information for his article. In the case the story of the organization has a selling view there is a big probability for the article to be not published. The organization must outrun the impulse of selling its products or services through the press release; the solution is to tell the story in an objective way, at the third person style.

The press release can be sent alone, through email or fax or like an important part of a press kit. The journalists decide if the press release will be published in this form or it will be modified. The press release must be appropriate to the journalist's domain. For example, you can't send a lifestyle material to a chemistry and physics magazine, it's useless and it will not be published. Also, you can't send a lifestyle article to a lifestyle magazine later than the deadline for publishing. The press release must arrive in utile time.

Beyond these logical and simple rules, which can be known by all the people there are some important rules concerning the format of the press release. Without these rules the document has big chances to stay unpublished.

### **The structure of the press release**

The first paragraph is a summary of all the material and is calling the lead. The subject of the story must be presented from the beginning for increasing the curiosity of the readers. In a press release, the subject of the article is rarely the name of the

organization. For example, it's better to say "40% of the Romanians had watched at ProTV last Friday the show Dancing for you" than saying "ProTV had recorded last Friday a huge audience because 40% of the population had watched the show Dancing for you..."

A good press release can not be written well without a good lead and for that the writer must identify what is the most important thing concerning the organization. For example Citibank had opened in the summer of 2005 a new division which is addressing to the local successful enterprises, with turnover of 2 – 50 millions USD, leaded by powerful and skillful entrepreneurs.

The press release of the Citybank was informing the targeted people on the launch of Commercial Bank Division and its products and services and was building its positive brand image, as powerful and trustful counselor and partner.

The most important thing is the fact the new division is beginning its activity. The action is the news. In the lead the readers must find the answers of the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

The next paragraphs must describe: the advantages- what is different, what is new; the applicability and the utilization way; informations about context, other specifications. Next paragraph is about the organization and its called paragraph corporate. Through these paragraphs can be introduces quotations of the representatives persons from the organization.

The final rows are dedicated to the name of the writer, the date and other informations about the public relations agency or organization and represent a declaration of identity.

Check list for the press release:

1. The introduction is direct and strictly connected with the subject? Does it contain the most important elements of the subject?
2. There were answers in the first paragraph at the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
3. Are the phrases short and concise?
4. The quotations are naturals, originals?
5. The orthography and the punctuation are correct?
6. The affirmations were checked?
7. The press release is dated? There are noted the names of the authors and the contact details?

If all this points are checked the writers can send the press release to the press for publishing. The advantages of the check list are: it assures a good control of information succession, it assures the writer/writers there is not a lack of information (the journalists don't have to call and ask for supplementary details), and it offers a structure with seven paragraphs.

### **The types of press release**

The seven types of press release are described below:

1. The press communicate in seven steps is dedicated to launching new products and services. It's better to be written on a single page.
2. The press release with background information. Its goal is to maintain the journalists well informed and to maintain a good relation with them.
3. The technical press release with summary. The technical product and services require sometimes communicates of two or maybe three pages.

- The journalist can be helped conceiving an article which may contain some technical aspects.
4. The explicative press release. The annual reports of the organizations, some documents and speeches must be presented together with a short communicate which presents the most attractive information for calling the readers. There is the risk that receiving the report, the journalist won't read the report without a press release.
  5. The developed photo explanation is a hybrid between the press release and photo explanation. Choosing the right photo is more important than writing some paragraphs in some cases. The photo tells the hole story and the writer must add only a few words to complete the article.
  6. The short news. For a sample promotion of a manager or for a changing address of an organization is using a single paragraph.
  7. The retort press release. Sometimes, the news can appear from others sources than public relations or organizations. For example a group of consumers can write a critical report about a service from a company. In this situation the journalist can ask to that company a retort in which must be presented the position of the company.

### **The type of writing**

There are some writing rules for the press release and its fulfillment can drive it direct to publishing area. The characteristics of the modern journalism are shorter phrases and paragraphs, the avoidance of the superlatives and the factual information. It's recommending a single page for classical press release and avoiding wood language. The presence of the numbers (numbers from 1 to 9 in words and numbers bigger than 9 in ciphers) and statistics can increase the degree of responsibility of the organization. If there is an event which can interest different kinds of publications, like: business, media, central press, it's better for the organization to write more press releases with different angles of view. The goal of the organization is to increase its competitive advantage on the market and to gain more and more clients. Showing respect to the journalists and to the readers of the newspapers, the organization increases the chances of a good communication with them. The health of a good communication has the key in good using of the press releases.

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