

Ask SCORE

Press Release Basics for Small Business Owners

A press release is a smart awareness-generating marketing tool when done right. Start by following these press release basics to better your chances of getting the attention of media and creating positive news coverage for your business.

A press release is an important tool for businesses looking to create awareness about a new product, service, milestone, or any other timely event. The traditional process includes writing a press release, distributing it to a specific group of reporters and writers, and encouraging them to share the news with their audience.

The real benefit of writing a press release and receiving news coverage is two-fold. One, you create greater awareness for your company and the benefits you provide to your customers and your industry or community. Second, each article written about your business builds brand credibility over time. This third-party validation of your company and products can ultimately help you generate greater revenue.

One of the basics of press release writing is focusing on the story you are trying to tell and giving the media a piece of news that will be of interest to their readers or viewers.

Do not try to pass off a sales pitch as newsworthy content. The media will see right through it and your release will end up in the trash. You will also likely lose credibility with that reporter which can hurt your chances of your next press release making the cut.

Be selective in what you regard as newsworthy content. Some examples of what warrants a press release from your company to the media include:

- The launch of a new product
- An update to an existing product
- The opening of a new location or facility
- Events, such as an open house or celebration
- A milestone or anniversary
- A new member joining your team
- Support of a larger industry event or initiative
- News-worthy changes within the organization

Follow these press release basics to improve your chances of securing media coverage

Keep Your Release Short and to the Point: When you are communicating with the media, you need to keep your release short and succinct. Start with an informative headline and spell out the Who, What, Where, When, and Why of your news immediately in the first paragraph. Reporters are deadline-driven and it is unlikely they will read past this point before deciding if your news is a fit for their audience.

(Continued on page 46)

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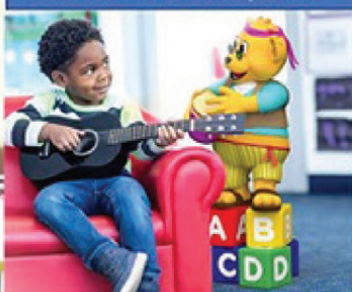
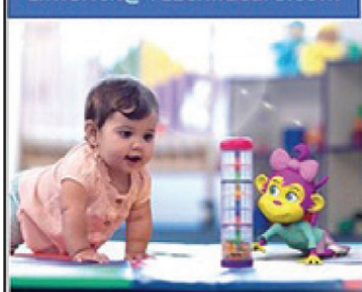
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(Continued from page 45)

If you have not captured their attention in that first paragraph, your news may get brushed aside.

Build a Carefully Targeted Media List: Your news is more likely to be picked up by a reporter and turned into a story if you put it immediately into the right hands. Do some research before sending out your press release. You will want to find the writers, editors and newscasters who are most likely to find your news interesting and valuable. These may be journalists who cover your industry or editors who are familiar with the topic in your release.

Follow-up with a Phone Call: Writers are busy. Do not assume they read your email just because you sent it to their inbox. After a day or two, give your contacts a call to check-in. Offer them the opportunity to speak with your CEO, customers, or any other stakeholders who could help them write a compelling story.

Don't Forget About Additional Distribution Methods for Your News: Sending a press release to your media list is just one method of getting the word out. Take advantage of your social channels to share your news, as well as email platforms and any other ways you communicate with customers, partners, and industry members.

Seeking guidance from other business owners and marketing professionals is always a smart move. Most business owners are not marketers and writing about your own business can be an understandable challenge. One way to make the process of writing a press release easier is with help from someone who has done it all before, like a SCORE mentor. A SCORE TriCounty

mentor will work with you as you write and connect you with marketing professionals who can offer their support. To request a mentor at SCORE Tri-County, you can call 610.327.2673, email tricity@scorevolunteer.org, or visit our website at www.tricity.score.org. We are currently helping many small businesses in the Tri-County area and beyond. Someone will return your call, email or request quickly.

Since 1964, SCORE "Mentors to America's Small Business" has helped more than 10 million aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners through mentoring and business workshops. More than 11,000 volunteer business mentors in over 320 chapters serve their communities through entrepreneur education dedicated to the formation, growth and success of small businesses. For more information about starting or operating a small business, contact SCORE TriCounty.

Today at SCORE, we are on the frontline fighting to keep Main Street America in business. If you believe that you can help a small business with your experience, advice and mentoring please think about joining us. Email us at tricity@scorevolunteer.org, call us at 610.327.2673, or to learn more. To submit an application to be a SCORE TriCounty volunteer, visit our website at <https://tricity.score.org/become-volunteer-2>.

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