

**Traditional Press Releases**  
**A Credible Way To Get 'Free' Publicity**  
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How can you get **free publicity** in nearly any newspaper in the country? The correct, simple answer is, of course, "Write a press release". Many small business owners already do this. Unfortunately, this has become common knowledge. I use the word 'unfortunately' for a reason, as you shall soon see.

A press release IS a great way to get 'free' exposure in newspapers. However, it is unlikely that you will get that exposure, at least to the degree you expect. In direct mail marketing, corporations expect to get a rate of return that averages 1/2 of 1%. This means that if that particular company sends out 1000 pieces of direct mail, they expect to get 5 responses. This is not good, but it is realistic and has proven to be true. When you send out a press release your numbers will be a little better, but not by much. However, there are some key things you can do to get that release printed.

Many factors influence your chances of getting that particular release in the hands of the reading public. Let us look at two scenarios.

**Scenario One**

You write a **press release** and send it to the newspaper. You ask them to run it. Your letter to the newspaper looks like this:

**To: Daily News**  
**From: J. Doe**  
**Re: Press release**

**Please run the following press release in your newspaper.**

**Thank You**  
**J. Doe**

They either run it or they do not. Period. It is the newspaper's decision.

**Scenario Two**

I write a **press release**. However, my letter to the paper looks like this . . .

**To John Smith, Editor**  
**From: Don McCauley ICM, CH**  
**Editor, The XYZ Magazine**

**Dear John,**

**Attached please find a press release from my friend and associate, J. Doe. She is doing some great things with the ABC program and would like to get the word out.**

**I have proofed and edited this for your convenience. I have also attached 2 specific sizes specific to your newspaper, an eighth page and a quarter page.**

**If you need to have this resized or edited for content, just drop me an email and I will get it to you today. Feel free to call me at 123-4567 if you need additions.**

**Thank You**  
**Don McCauley**

My **press release** provides exactly what the newspaper might need, and comes from an industry peer. It also generates third party influence and makes an offer that makes it extremely simple to print.

Now, which **press release** do you think has a better chance of being printed? Yours?

Or mine?

I am an editor. I sit in a chair and RECEIVE press releases. I decide what makes the cut and what does not. If you were to sit in my chair for one single day, you would completely change your mind about how you structure your press release. I also review books for self published authors. These are the worst and so I shall use these as my example.

I receive tons of these releases every day. When I open my email client, here is what I see . . . .

**'STUNNING NEW BOOK REVEALS.....'**  
**GRIPPING NEW NOVEL DETAILS.....'**  
**REVEALING NEW BOOK EXPLAINS.....'**

Over and over, on and on. As I mentioned in another piece on this site, this is somewhat similar to that slick dude in the bar. You know the one. The one that says exactly the same thing to every girl he meets. The loser.

Getting some serious help may greatly work in your favor. By serious help I do NOT mean go out and buy one of those 'how-to' books written about developing press releases. No offense, but it is these books that help to CREATE this problem. If you do this, your release will surely make a very fast exit from the 'inbox' to the 'trash' bin.

A **press release** is a fantastic resource you can use to get 'free' publicity, but you must understand that editors have a tendency to treat **press releases** the same way we treat spam. Their mailboxes are flooded with them! But it is worse than this, for nearly every piece of THIS spam starts out using nearly the same words! Let us look at how the editor 'thinks' for a moment.

### **The Editor**

When I use the term 'editor' I am referring to the person who makes the decision regarding whether a particular release will run. This is not always the editor's decision but we can make some general statements here.

The editor looks at a release from a perspective that may be very different that you might believe. The editor most likely does not know you personally. Therefore there may be no reason to implicitly trust that what you say is true (in 'Creating Trust - Using Words That Sell' I covered this topic in detail. You will most likely wish to read that article, located on this site).

In addition, what you believe to be important, important to YOU, is not necessarily important to the editor at all! The editor cares about one thing and one thing only - the editor cares about the READERS of his newspaper or magazine.

Your new invention may mean great things to your company's bottom line. This is extremely important to YOU. But it will not be interesting at all to the editor unless it impacts his or her READERS in some important way.

This is key to getting your release printed. If you can determine that your there is value, NEWS VALUE in your release, your chance go up dramatically. Tying that release in with current events is an absolute must.. If you cannot tie that event in with current news, you have a problem.

You must also understand that the editor receives tons of releases every day from companies, individuals, authors, publicity professionals and even grandma holding a garage sale. How is a particular release pulled out to be considered?

When developing a print ad, we understand that (a) the image is used to capture the eye, (b) the headline is used to capture to the attention and then (c) the body of the ad is read. Press releases work in nearly the same manner. As regards press releases:

(a). **The headline captures the eye** - It must be short, powerful and deliver the entire message instantly. It must be newsworthy. No ALL CAPS or **BOLD** or worse yet **EXCLAMATION POINTS!!!!!!!**

(b). **The first paragraph captures the attention.** Now in my articles regarding article submission I stressed that, if you wish to create action, you must leave the reader hanging. This causes the reader to take action to satisfy the curiosity you create. Same here. You must intrigue in the first paragraph. This causes the reader (the editor) to continue reading to satisfy the curiosity.

(c). **The body of the release is read.** If the body of the release contains information that is newsworthy to the local community at large, your changes go up dramatically

### **The Benefit**

Suppose that a quarter page ad in your local paper costs \$200. I send this email to your local paper and the **press release** runs.

**You have just gained \$200.00 in free exposure.**

Now suppose that I, using my self-developed list, send this to say, 300 newspapers in your state. A modest 2% decide to run the **press release**.

**You have just gained \$1,200.00 in free exposure.**

Now suppose that I send this email to perhaps 1000 newspapers all across the country. Again, a very modest 2% make the decision to run the **press release**.

**You have just gained \$4,000.00 in free exposure.**

Some marketers have come to realize that there is a great potential in press releases and so have begun to attempt to use this to their own advantage. Like many other things, they have overdone this. The end result is that editors are now on the defensive. This puts sincere people like yourself at a disadvantage in regards to getting your valid message out there. The rules have changed. Again I urge you to understand this key point and understand it well:

**The purpose of the press release is to present news. It is NOT a marketing tool.**

If your press release resembles an advertisement in ANY way, it will never run. Editors are people. Editors are very smart people. They are smart people who serve as gatekeepers. They will not only spot a hidden marketing message, they will actively be scanning FOR that hidden message. They KNOW you may be attempting to get a bit of free advertising. Remember that the editor in most cases does not know you. You might be one of those shady marketers.

That being said, you must also understand that PUBLICITY is not the same as ADVERTISING, but both serve the same end. Both create awareness of you, your company, your product or your service.

You believe in yourself and you believe in your product or service. This is commendable, but entirely useless unless you can become a master in regards to getting your message out to others. The press release can serve that end if you know how to craft the right message in a manner that is acceptable.

## Internet Press Release Services

I have not even touched the subject of submitting **press releases** to **Internet press release services**. This is a fantastic way to deliver your **press release** to literally hundreds of thousands of industry professionals and even direct consumers. Search engines can pick up on these **press releases** and deliver that message to a world-wide audience. I have not included the subject here for two reasons:

- a. It may require 10 articles of this size to cover all you might need to know AND
- b. most are not free.

That being said there are a FEW, just a few **press release sites** that may be worth exploring. For this reason these types of press releases will have an entirely different tone; a different feel and will be keyword optimized.

In addition I have not touched upon the wording of the actual release here. The wording of the release is paramount in getting that release printed in the media. It is imperative that this be done properly, as it can mean the difference between your **press release** being put on the front page or being placed in the trash can.

As regards wording you must not only satisfy the demands of the editor - you must in addition satisfy the demands of the end user - the reader. The release must be newsworthy enough to be printed and must be informative enough to be useful.

It would not be possible to do justice to either of these topics in a single article such as this. Future articles will cover these topics in detail. In January of 2008 I will present a mini seminar on my blog at

<http://freepublicitypro.blogspot.com>

The lessons on creating press releases will be presented weekly and are expect to run for at least four weeks. I will be covering this subject in detail and will attempt to present all the information you might need to know to create a press release that will accomplish your goals.

Feel free to [contact me](#) if you would like further free information on these services.

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