

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Don't let a limited marketing budget keep you from getting your firm's story in front of potential clients. An effective public relations program doesn't have to cost a lot of money. And probably the cheapest form of publicity is the press release. However, if an editor doesn't pick it up, you are definitely getting what you paid for. Why do some press releases get picked up and others don't? A successful press release will have the following three elements:

1. strategic placement;
2. relevant content; and
3. proper structure

While the main focus of this article is on how to write a press release, some mention should be given to the fact that if your "story" is sent to the wrong publication or is just another opportunity for you to pound your chest about another project win, it will end up in the waste basket under the editor's desk. Based on research, you should know which publications are most likely to find your story of interest. (It's also not a bad idea to know the name of the editor to whom you are sending the release. Editors like to know you cared enough to learn their name. They're funny that way.)

Okay. So now your story has reached the right person. After the editor picks up your piece, you have about 10 seconds to grab his/her attention and make him/her care about your story. An editor acts as a kind of screener of material for his clients – the readers. He knows what they want and if he wants to keep them as clients, he has to give it to them. That keeps everybody – the reader, the publisher, and the advertisers – happy. So an editor is very important to the survival of his respective publication. Make his job easy. Make your content relevant. Make the relevance obvious. Make him want to read on.

Obviously, if your piece doesn't have the first two elements in place, the structure doesn't really matter. However, for the sake of argument, let's suppose you got it right. How do you structure your information? Following are a few tips. These tips are followed by a sample press release taken from Mark Zweig & Associates [Insider's Guide to Getting into Print](#). Each of the following tips is illustrated on the sample.

1. Press release should be on your firm's stationery.
2. Contact information (name and phone number) should be at the top of the press release and repeated at the end.
3. It should be stated that the press release is a press release.
4. The headline is your chance to catch the editor's interest. It is the angle of your story.
5. The dateline includes the location and date of the press release.

6. The first sentence of this paragraph is called the “lead”. It tells what the story is about. The remainder of the lead paragraph should answer as many who, what, when, where and how questions as possible. It’s a good idea to get your client’s name and the name of your firm in here somewhere.
7. Middle paragraphs should quote authorities representing key parties (usually you or your client) explaining why the news is important to the readers of this particular publication. This is also a good place to tell how your firm achieved success (met client’s goals, developed new technology, etc.) with this project. Middle paragraphs should also summarize the facts and issues. What innovation did you bring to the project? What additional value to your client?
8. The final paragraph should be a concise statement of your firm’s services and mission.
9. End each press release with ##### in the middle of the page.

NOTE: Do not include in your EEA entry press release that your project has won another competition.

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Lorraine Mosher Interiors

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**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT:
Heidi Snowe
(301)555-7440

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NEW NURSING HOME INTERIORS PROVIDE MORE LIGHT, ACCESSIBILITY

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DECATUR, ILLINOIS – May 1, 1984 - Today the doors re-opened at Green Shores Nursing Home, displaying a brand-new interior upgraded to meet ADA requirements and redesigned to offer residents a lighter, airier space. According to Green Shores director George C. Hall, "The design by Lorraine Mosher Interiors now meets all accessibility standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and I gorgeous to boot. The residents love it."

"I can't believe the difference," said resident Leo Alberti 79, speaking fro a chair beside a bay window overlooking a sunny, flower-filled deck.

Mr. Alberti's roommate, Ted Barry, 84 , agrees. "There's light everywhere you look," he said.

Lorraine Mosher, designer for the project indicated that the previous interior had been haphazardly converted from a three-story Victorian home and had a somewhat random layout.

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-MORE-

If release exceeds
one page

“Some of the rooms were small and dark, others had large windows. Some of the doorways were wide enough to allow wheelchair access, other were way too narrow,” she said. “Our goal was to address these issues in a way that maintained the homey atmosphere – we didn’t want it to end u feeling institutional.”

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Each resident’s room is now roughly the same size and has a full ADA-standardized bathroom done in light pastel tile. Doorways and hallways have been widened and all walls and trim repainted in a sunny palette. Sun decks lined with flower boxes were added off the ground floor. The entire effect is one of spaciousness and light.

Lorraine Mosher Interiors is a design firm located in Decatur, specializing in residential and commercial interiors.

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For more information on the Green Shores Nursing Home or Lorraine Mosher Interiors, contact Heidi Snowe, (301)555-7440.

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