

# You're On In 3, 2, 1 ... Media Savvy

## Presented by PFCI at the 2014 AIFD National Symposium

### News Release Template

#### WHAT IS A NEWS RELEASE?

A news release (also called a press release) is a document issued to the media, financial community, trade and industry analysts and consumers to announce a product, partnership, to drive traffic to your Web site, an acquisition, event, personnel announcement, or other newsworthy item. A news release can be used to announce a variety of information, such as a new business, new product, an event, new partner, significant new customer and milestones.

Here is a basic template for a news release.

#### COMPANY LOGO HERE

**HEADLINE:** Your headline should include keywords and must grab the media's attention. Your headline should succinctly describe the advisory – some media members search only by headlines.

**SUBHEAD:** Not all releases need one, but if you're going to use one, make sure it's descriptive and builds on the headline.

**DATELINE:** Includes the city of origin, and the date of the release. When you issue the release over a newswire, the newswire's 'bug' will appear in the dateline to alert readers of its origin.

**LEAD PARAGRAPH:** This is the single most important paragraph in the whole release. If you don't draw your reader in here, you've lost them forever. This is your chance to set up your story in a single sentence or two.

**SECOND PARAGRAPH:** This is where you dive into more detail and set up story for the reader, giving some more background or context.

**BODY:** This is where you give all the relevant information for your reader, facts, stats, customer testimonials and other third-party information. Write with your audience in mind.

**BOILERPLATE:** This is the platform to tell your audience about your organization. Keep it brief; just who you are and what you do.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Make sure to include contact name, phone number, and email address for your readers to use if they require more information. This can go either at the top or the bottom of the press release. If you distribute the release over the wire, the contact information will appear at the end per standard formatting requirements.

**SOURCE:** The source is required. Who is responsible for the content of this announcement? Or, who is issuing this release?

#### [THINGS TO INCORPORATE INTO YOUR RELEASE]

**KEY WORDS:** Using strategically placed keywords throughout the release makes it easier for your audience to find the release when searching the web for information.

**QUOTES:** Having quotable quotes is a highly effective way of getting key messages out; keep them easy for readers to understand.

#### Customizable Sample Press Releases

SAF members can copy and paste customizable sample press releases from:

**[safnow.org/customizable-press-releases](http://safnow.org/customizable-press-releases).**

The press releases tout SAF's consumer research and public relations programs to help members generate positive local news coverage for their shops.

# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE FORMAT

[Your Logo Here]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (date)

## **[Title Here] (Example: XYZ Inc announces launch of new website)**

Description: (optional) This is a very short description about the press release. Many online PR distribution sites will ask for this.

[CITY], [STATE], [Date] – [This is the opening paragraph. It should contain about 3-5 lines and considered most important since this catches attention of news readers and journalists. Typically questions for questions of who, what, when, where and why answered here. Keep it short and highlight what the whole release is all about.]

[This paragraph goes into little depth. Give more details of product or any events taking place. This should contain about 2 comments made by spokespersons. For example, Mr. XXX said “xxxx.”]

[This paragraph focuses on where users can find detailed information about product or events. Give a contact or website site for more information so that more additional information can be found. This paragraph should be concluded within 5-10 lines.]

[The conclusive paragraph is known the “boilerplate” and can contain no more than 3-4 lines. A short “about” section, providing independent background on the issuing company, organization, or individual. Here you should explain future aspects, your or aim in meeting the current market or success. In general what you intend to do achieve.]

Contact Information:

[Company Name]

[Address]

[Telephone]

[Website]

###

(This mark lets the reader know that it is the end of the article.)

[Editors Note: optional]

To write a press release, just follow the press release sample template. It would be a good idea to publish your news release on your website along with the distribution service. Having press releases is a sure way of getting word out about your new products and services.

# HELPFUL POINTERS

## GETTING THE MEDIA'S ATTENTION

- In addition to the traditional press release, create a Social Media “event” invitation where information has been provided in advance.
- Keep it relevant, current and interesting.
- Create a contact list of media professionals in your area that are known for reporting stories relevant to your business. Cultivate a relationship with them. Know what they find interesting.
- Pitch the idea. Keep it concise, simple and relevant. A listing of bullet-point highlights is a good idea.
- Use an attention grabbing subject line or title that is catchy but not overly cutesy.
- Answer the questions “Who Cares?” and “Why Should I Care?”
- Don't oversell.
- Keep trying. It's not uncommon for reporters to receive over 100 email press releases a day.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU WEAR?

- Dress professionally.
- Your appearance should support your message.
- Wear solid colors or soft shades.
- Avoid high contrast, such as black and white, red, horizontal stripes, and small checks.
- Wear minimal jewelry.
- A burgundy scarf or jacket is often suggested because it reflects color in the face.
- Make sure your scarf or tie is straight.

- Your socks should be long enough to avoid a gap between your pant leg and the top of your socks when you sit or cross your legs.
- If it's an outdoor interview and you have long hair, make sure your hair is pulled back and pinned in place.

## DODGING BULLETS: WHEN THE INTERVIEWER ASKS HARD QUESTIONS

- Once you have decided to do an interview, think about the message you want to convey. Prepare two or three key points that deliver your message.
- Focus. Deliver your three key messages in a positive uplifting tone.
- Be passionate and truthful.
- If you get asked an unexpected question, don't answer right away. Collect your thoughts. Don't say “umm.”
- Rather than admitting that you don't know something, tell them that you will get back to them on that subject. It will usually be cut out of the finished story.
- Don't fall for the “Mike Wallace Pause.” You are not obligated to fill dead airspace with rambling and less than professional remarks or actions.
- Avoid “defiant” stances, i.e., arms crossed, or hands on hips.
- During the interview, use simple terms. Avoid long sentences and complex terms.
- Be enthusiastic. You know your subject better than anyone, and this is an opportunity to share your knowledge and insights.
- There is no such thing as “off the record” when talking to the media. Stick to what you know, and don't comment on areas outside your expertise.

[More →](#)

# HELPFUL POINTERS

## RADIO INTERVIEWS

- Avoid sounding a monotone. Smile to animate your voice.
- Talk directly into your phone; do not use speakerphone.
- If you're in the car while being interviewed, turn off the radio in the car, and close the car windows so the radio personality can hear you clearly.
- If you're interviewing in the radio station, maintain the same distance from the microphone to keep the volume consistent.

## TV INTERVIEWS

- The interview could take place in your shop, in the field or in the TV studio.
- Keep in mind the background if it's in your shop. Avoid distracting, busy or cluttered spaces.
- Don't talk to the camera unless you're asked to do so. Talk to the interviewer.
- Always bring your own cart to transport your product. Do not inconvenience the TV or Radio station staff.
- Anticipate what the reporter will be most intrigued by and have it on display.
- Your display should enhance the message and get your point across.

- The TV station does not provide props.
- Display your items on inverted empty pots or clear vases for risers. Create elevation using different size heights. Keep the taller items to the back and smaller things forward for the camera to view.
- For an extra pop of color, bring clean display fabric or decorative table runners. Solid color tablecloth that coordinates with the displayed items. No distracting patterns or seams.
- Highly reflective surfaces can cause "opportunities."
- Maintain good posture. If you are sitting, lean slightly forward.
- Project energy, and deliver your two to three key points in interesting ways.

## SUMMARIZE AND SHARE – BE READY FOR THE FOLLOW UP

- Provide a summary of the information with additional content as a source of reference.
- Provide links to informational pages online, i.e. Facebook pages, blogs, etc.