



Podcast #050

How to write a good Press Release

Hi there listeners and welcome to this week's edition of The Marketing Menu podcast. And today we're talking again about something we've touched on before, which is if you have a story that you want to share about your business, how can you get that into the news, make it newsworthy, and write a good press release? So Liz, who can write a press release?

Anyone. And what journalists are looking for is the story behind the story. So you may think that the launch of your new product or you've created a new service is going to be of world interest.

Because obviously, you've worked really hard on it.

Absolutely and invested a lot of money in it. However, you need to read the story from the perspective of somebody outside the business. Let me give you an example. I'm working with a cafe who are trying to go 100% recyclable. They've brought in some recycled cups that they're selling with a view to going 100% recyclable. That's not the story. The story behind it is that there were two students from the local arts university who've created something called the Coffee Cup Project, which is aimed at providing recyclable cups for restaurants, but they held a competition for somebody to design the cover of the cup. That's the story behind the story.

Okay, so the cafe is becoming less of the headline. The university and the student action is more of a headline, but it's underpinning the ethos of the cafe.

Absolutely. So, let's give the listeners some tips on writing the press release. First of all, you need a subject. Well, don't spend a lot of time thinking of a catchy headline because the editor may well change it. Just keep it to four to six words.

The first paragraph is going to outline what and when you're event or launch, whatever it may be, is taking place. Don't forget to include what's called the 5 W's, which is who, what, why, where and when, and then if it is a story, include something really eye-catching and interesting to hook that reader in.

The second paragraph then includes more details about what the story's about, about your business.

And then the third paragraph can include a quote, written in the first person, but then include the person's name and also their job title. Now that could be obviously the owner of the business or it could be a client or it could be a potential customer or it could be somebody who's benefited from your service.

Absolutely but it needs to be a direct quote rather than just written into the body of the text. The fourth paragraph can reiterate details of the event and all the benefit of the service or the product and provide a website address.

If you're attaching a photo, it's a really good idea to name the people in it as well and do that from left to right and try to ensure that the photo is a professional, high quality, high resolution one. Too often we take things on our phone, they're not going to be necessarily the quality that the publication is going to want.

And they'll come back to you and say can you send a higher resolution.

Then at the end you need some editors notes and that's where you'd put what we call your boilerplate and that's some standard background information to the business for the editors information which isn't included in the body of the press release, but it may generate interest from the editor to come and ask you more questions.

It's giving that background information about the business, the products or the people and also providing those important links to articles that may have more information or maybe who do statistical research that you can back it up.

So what are our top three tips for writing a press release?

Well, today's top three tips then are create a media database. So that's a little mini database of all the contacts locally that you can use to get your story out there.

And second point would be think about the story behind the story.

And the final point will be to design those boilerplates which you can use over and over again but that just means that background information is always out there and that you're saying the same thing, in the same way, each time.

So, that's our top tips about how to write a good press release. Do let us know if you have any news, we'd love to hear about it. You could always let us know about any of your news on our Facebook page. You can find us on Facebook at The Marketing Menu. Until our next podcast, it's the goodbye from me, Liz Gordon

And a goodbye from me, Nicky Matthews, goodbye.