# Writing a Press Release

We are asked to publish things all the time at the Daily Bee. Too many times the press release or information is incomplete. Hey, if it's free, don't expect the media outlet to track it down.
On the other hand, most media outlets welcome reader or business submissions, if they are complete. Nothing is more local than content from the community.
Press releases, if done well, can provide free marketing and visibility to your customers through various media outlets. Written press releases are a great start and from there you can move to audio press releases or sound bites and even video spots. Video will become more prevalent over the next few years.

**Here are the essential elements to make a press-release successful.**
Well written and spell checked content with quotes and detailed information.
Web addresses for additional information about the company or it's products (The point here is to have  them publish these web addresses)
A company logo in large enough format for reproduction (300 dpi vector art is the best – .eps or .pdf but a ,jpg will work)
Photo's of the product, person, or element that the press release is highlighting (300 dpi vector art is the best – .eps or .pdf but a .jpg will also work)
Business address
Business principals, owners, managers, etc with contact information including email and phone
Hours of operation
Web address and Facebook page address
Release Date – The date that the press release was sent (Helps determine timeliness)
Time sensitive (If a date for an event is involved make sure to highlight that date)

## Layout of a press release

### The top of the page should include

| Contact Information | Logo | Release Date |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | | Event date if applicable |
| Phone | | |
| Email | | |
| Facebook Page | | |
| Twitter account | | |
| Web address for website | | |

Make it look professional

## Next comes the headline

Headlines should be 80-170 characters long. Remember, the space that this press release is going to fit into may be small.
The headline needs to draw people in. Many print readers skim headlines until they see something they want to read. You need to tell the reader how it is going to benefit them or affect them.
It should use a larger font than the body of the press release and be centered.

### Sub-heads

These are another introduction or entry point, into the press release. It's another way to draw in the reader and should be about the same length as the headline but not repeat the same information.

Here is an example of a Headline and sub Head together

# Mac's General store adds Camping Gear

## Patagonia line offers camping "Must-haves"

Body of the story starts here......

### The Body

The first paragraph is the most important. Most readers will only glance or scan the headline, sub head and may look at the first paragraph. So you only have one shot to get it right. This is a short summary of who, what, when, where and why or how. Be detailed and concise, don't add a lot of fluff.

Write in a journalistic style. First, never use first-person. In other words, don't write this from your perspective using the words I or we. Write it as if being interviewed by a reporter. I would even suggest Googling AP style (Associated Press) which will show you how it should be written.

The key is to make it as close to ready as possible. The less editing the more likely it is to get in quickly.

**Including media**

Let's face it, a picture is worth a thousand words. Photos and video are more important today, in presenting your information, than ever before. Include photos in the body of the press release, with cutlines (Explanations).
Photos should provide the first and last names of anyone prominent or product or service names. They should also be sent as attachments.
If a video, include the Youtube location for the video or better yet, provide an .mp4 with the press release. This way the media outlet has the option of playing on their own website or media player rather than through Youtube.

Multiple shots of the same thing, from different perspectives is good. Also include both a portrait or landscape version. This gives the media outlet flexibility in how it is published.
The media outlet will typically credit the photo as courtesy photo. Don't expect them to put your name in the photo credit line. (Kind of a weird publishing industry thing about using named courtesy photos.)

**Include quotes**

Quotes are always good. In fact, seperate a couple of quotes from the body of the press release to highlight direct comment from one of the principals in the business. They may not get used but they are always good to include.

**The Boilerplate**

The final paragraph, in your press release, should always be a consistent message about your company and what it does. It should all be factual, never conjectured. This same information should appear in all your press releases.

*Example: The Bonner County Daily Bee began publishing in 1965 and is the daily newspaper serving Bonner County. It publishes Tuesday through Sunday and is also the legal newspaper for Bonner County and the cities of Sandpoint, Ponderay, and Kootenai. The Bee is owned by the Hagadone Corporation based in Coeur d'Alene with local offices at 310 Church Street in Sandpoint.*

**The final note**

This is simple "If you would like more information please contact blah, blah, blah at blah, blah blah.

**Some final rules**
- Keep your press release under 500 words
- Do not use first person such as "I", "We" or "You"
- Use a standard font such as Times Roman or Calibri
- The document should be single spaced with an extra space between headlines, body, quotes and boiler plate.
- Use standard 1 inch margins.
- Note if the press release is time sensitive but don't expect it to be published on a specific day.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread.

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