

Agility | PR  
Solutions



**PRESS**

**RELEASE**

**ANATOMY**

**GUIDE AND TEMPLATE**

GUIDE  
AND  
TEMPLATE

# DIVE INTO THIS GUIDE

to gain a thorough understanding of all the components that make up a press release, become familiar with a basic format layout, and then get started with our custom template!

GUIDE  
AND  
TEMPLATE



# ANATOMY OF A PRESS RELEASE 101

**REGARDLESS OF THE PURPOSE OF A PRESS RELEASE, MOST OF THEM FOLLOW A SIMILAR FORMAT.**



To get started writing your own, you'll want to have a solid understanding of the following components, and then decide which make sense to include in your release. While most of the components described below are common practice for press releases, there is lots of room for flexibility based on personal preference.

## LOGO

Anyone reading your press release should be able to tell who it's about and who it's from without reading a single word on the paper. Your company's logo should be nice and visible. Most people opt to put it in the banner at the top of the page, but if your branding or release design requires that it be put somewhere else, that's fine too. Just make sure it's easily spotted.

## HEADER

Something else you'll want people to be able to tell with little to no effort? The fact that what they are reading is in fact a press release. While it may seem obvious or redundant, an easy way to do that is to include the physical words "Press Release" or "News Release" as a header at the top of the release.

## RELEASE TIME

You need to let the reader know when the information in this release can be made public. This is where you'll most often see "For Immediate Release". This means anyone reading your release has the green light to publicly discuss or publish the information.

In some cases, however, you may not want journalists to publish right away. Perhaps your company will be doing an official launch in a few days but you wanted to give journalists time to process and consider all the information in your release so they can have a story ready-to-go when your organization makes the information public. If that's the case, you're writing a release that is "under embargo". This means that journalists cannot publish anything until the time you've specified.

Make sure this crucial info is included prominently on your release, usually right at the top. Some companies even opt to watermark the document with "Embargoed" as well as include it at the top of their release.



## TITLE/HEADLINE

Now for the fun stuff. Your headline is perhaps the most crucial aspect of getting your press release picked up. It needs to grab the journalist's attention while also conveying the most important part of the release's message.

## DATELINE

This little bit of info at the start of your release indicates the date your release is being made public, as well as the location. This lets journalists know when and where your info is coming from and helps them determine whether or not the information will be relevant to them.

## BODY PARAGRAPHS

This is where the meat of your message lives. While the title/headline should tell your reader exactly what the press release is about, the necessary supporting information lives in the body paragraphs of your press release.

### FIRST PARAGRAPH

- ▶ This should essentially answer the 5Ws for the reporter: Who? What? When? Where? Why?
- ▶ Don't "bury the lead"! This means, don't wait to reveal the most important information. A journalist should be able to stop reading after your headline and first paragraph and know exactly what you're trying to communicate.

### SUBSEQUENT PARAGRAPHS

- ▶ The subsequent paragraphs provide the supporting information of your release and are also where your quotes will live.

## QUOTES

Quotes are generally introduced in the second or third paragraph and are typically assigned to senior representatives of your company, and/or those directly related to the information being conveyed in the release. The quote gives the release a human element. It is the voice of the company, and usually reflects the tone of the piece.



*"We're very excited about this announcement..."*

*"We've been looking forward to this for some time..."*

## END NOTATION

This is a symbol used to signal the end of the press release. Two common end notations include -30- and ###. Consult your regional style guide to see what is most appropriate.

## BOILERPLATE

Boilerplate text is the standard description of your company, likely included across all your marketing materials. Essentially, your company's written elevator pitch. It typically includes your company name, who you are and what you do, as well as your website.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

The contact info included in a press release is the contact you'd like the media to follow-up with if they have questions, want to request interviews, or require more information.



## ADDITIONAL PIECES

### SUBHEADING

The subheading is sometimes used to expand on the release's initial title .

### SUMMARY BULLET POINTS

Some organizations like to include a series of bullet points at the beginning of the release that the journalist can skim if they don't want to read the entire release. The bullet points should give the reader a good overview of only the most crucial info included in the release.

### MULTIMEDIA

While not required, they are certainly suggested. Photos, videos, or any other multimedia to accompany your release can also be included in the body of the release. Multimedia is particularly effective at grabbing journalists' interest and provides them with valuable collateral they can use in their own piece. The less work the journalist has to do to get their piece written, the more likely they'll do it, so if they don't have to get in touch for visuals to use in their piece, all the better.

### STOCK MARKET ABBREVIATION/TICKER SYMBOL

Publicly traded companies will include their stock market ticker symbol in brackets following the first mention of the company name in the first paragraph.

*basic*

# PRESS RELEASE LAYOUT

*your logo*

*press release header*

*release time*

*headline*

*subheadline*

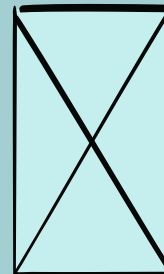
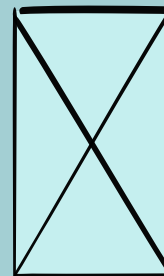
*bullet-points*

*dateline - first paragraph*  
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod.

*second paragraph + quote*  
Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip.

*third paragraph + quote*  
Duis autem vel eum iriure dolor in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse molestie.

*end notation*



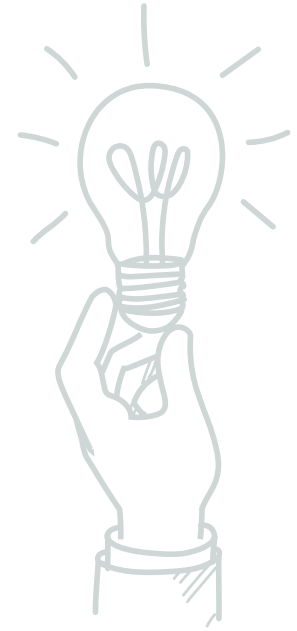
*multimedia*

*boilerplate*

*contact info*

- standard components*
- additional components*

# TIPS AND TRICKS FOR PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



Now that you have a good understanding of the individual pieces of a press release and how they're laid out, how do you go about getting started writing one (and a good one at that)?

## STEP 1: ASK YOURSELF, *"is your story newsworthy?"*

And be ruthless in your answer! Think long and hard about the message you're putting out and whether or not it is actual news. If you start sending press releases to journalists for every bit of information coming out of your organization, you'll quickly find yourself in their "Spam" folder and you can kiss future media relations efforts goodbye.

There are lots of other venues to communicate information with your target audiences, including blog posts, a social media thread, an announcement in your weekly newsletter...

Is a press release really the best tool for this message? If the answer is emphatically yes, then you'll want to...

## STEP 2: FIND YOUR *"Big Why"*

Why should anybody care about the message in your press release? And more specifically, why would a journalist and their audience care? The answer to this question is crucial and gives you your hook or story angle—the thing that will pique a journalist's attention and help them decide whether they cover your story.

Some things to consider:

- ▶ Does your story have a local aspect?
- ▶ Is it relevant to a particular topic or theme that's been popular in the news lately?
- ▶ Does it coincide with a related event, date, or holiday?
- ▶ Does it deal with a subject that an outlet frequently covers?

These questions will help you write your headline, position the messaging of the release, craft your individual pitches, and increase your chance of pick-up in the media.

### STEP 3: WRITE THE BODY OF YOUR PRESS RELEASE FIRST

Once you've found your "Big Why", you can start on the body of your press release. You can try writing your headline first, but generally speaking, it's easier to write the headline once the release is done and you have all the info in front of you.

### STEP 4: WRITE YOUR HEADLINE

Now you can start thinking about your headline. How do you take all the juicy info you've just written and boil it down to something that conveys exactly what your release is about and why anybody should care? Revisit your "Big Why" and the body paragraphs for inspiration.

### STEP 5: GET YOUR QUOTES

Often, you will be writing quotes on behalf of your organization, so you'll want to be familiar with your organization's policies. For most PR pros, quotes are drafted and then sent to senior management for approval. Once you've got the green light, they can be included in the release.

### STEP 6: STYLE YOUR PRESS RELEASE

Once you've got the meat of your press release (headline, body, and quotes), you can add all the other components and style them to suit your needs. Style will often dictate the placement of the logo, header, contact information, release date, and multimedia.

Where your press release is being posted should also be considered. Is it going to look different on your website? In your email pitches? Some of the format components are remnants of a time when paper copies were the way to go. In our digital world, this is less common, though many organizations will have a PDF copy that is fully formatted according to the guidelines above, and an online copy where not all the components are necessary. For example, in a copy being posted on your website in a section called "Press Releases", you can probably take out the "Press Release" header. You may also decide that an end notation and logo aren't necessary. Whatever works!

To finish it all off, it's a good idea to consult your regional style guide to double check and match your grammatical and stylistic writing standards to those used by journalists in the area.

#### SOME COMMON STYLE GUIDES INCLUDE:

*United States* [THE ASSOCIATED PRESS STYLEBOOK](#)  
*Canada* [THE CANADIAN PRESS STYLEBOOK](#)  
*United Kingdom* [BBC NEWS STYLE GUIDE](#)



# WRITE YOUR OWN

To help you get started, we created a [\*Microsoft Word template\*](#) that will allow you to plug in your own information for a quick and easy press release. Edit text, format, and add your own logos and multimedia.

## GO FORTH AND DISTRIBUTE!

And there you have it—everything you need to write your own press release and start chasing some well-deserved publicity.

Need some more help? Agility offers many tools to help you make the most of your press release including a media database to tailor pitches and do specific outreach, a newsroom to help boost your SEO efforts and give your release a place to live, a built-in newswire service for broader distribution, and media monitoring and social listening solutions for you to track your coverage. [Let us show you!](#)