

Sun Journal

Connecting you with your community

How to write a press release

(Or, congratulations! You've had something happen. Now what?)

Get it write down

- Start simply and keep the 5 Ws in mind: who, what, when, where, why.
- Speaking of space, shoot for 100 words or less. Should you run long . . .
- Get the most important information up high. If we trim for space, we tend to trim from the bottom.
- Anticipate: Is any part of your event/program/news potentially confusing to outsiders who aren't familiar with your industry? If so, add a quick line of context.

Before you hit send

- Indicate near the top, above the headline, whether your press release is for immediate release by writing, "For immediate release," or whether it has to be held for a certain date or time by writing, "Embargoed until (your date here)."
- Please include a name, daytime phone numbers and e-mail of a contact person that an editor can call if there are any questions. Any questions that we can't answer quickly can cause delays.
- Give it a last read for accuracy — are all the names, places, dates and companies correct? — and give it one last pass with spell check.
- If you're including a phone number or web address that is not yours, check it yourself to make sure the number/address is accurate.

Just picture this

- Did you include a photo? Awesome. We love that. Please make sure that everyone is correctly identified from left to right, and by first and last name, as well as title if that's important.
- Generally speaking, the higher the resolution the better for electronic photo attachments (jpegs), but please don't exceed 10MB. We don't need to see every pore.

Don't push it

- Whenever possible, get your release to us early; our preference is definitely email, but fax and mail also work. You plan your events well in advance, so make sure part of that planning is to inform the press.
- Our deadline is 10 days to two weeks prior to the time you want the release to run. We publish releases as soon as possible, but it's not realistic to send a release and expect next-day publication.
- Is part of the goal of your press release getting us to cover your time-specific conveyor belt (christening/giraffe renaming/factory tour with a government official? Please let us know a minimum of

Be clear

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three days in advance. Hoping to get a photographer there? Add a few days to that. Their time books up really quickly several days out.

The Five Biggest Smallest Offenders

Please:

- No exclamation marks! Definitely no multiple exclamation marks!!
- No emoticons :(
- No ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. No Occasional capital Letters either, please. We Just Have To Go In and take Them Out.
- Telling time should look like this: 9 a.m. or 6 p.m. or noon.
- Lively, large, non-blurry photos. Please try not to channel a softball team (standing shoulder-to-shoulder, large arching group shot). Make something? Show us you making it. Won something? Try getting every staffer's hand on the award. Different can be interesting.

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