

Press Release Style Guide

Following is a short guide to press release best practices. The below are designed to help you focus on the priority news you want to discuss, and the most efficient manner possible for providing the news to various audiences.

Press releases

Distribute news – corporate, product, strategy, event, etc. All releases must outline a strategic direction that resonates with your audiences.

Headlines

Use title case, as shown in the title of this document, when writing headlines.

Newsworthiness

Your release must answer two questions, “Why should I read this now?” and “so what?” Your release is easily dismissed without a strong industry news angle or market relevance.

- Paragraph One = The most important news item or release summary
- Paragraph Two = Market validation and further company context
- Paragraph Three = Supporting market insight and validation
- Paragraph Four = Third-party quote
- Paragraph Five = Additional resources

Know your audience

Most people read beyond the second paragraph except to find pricing information, which is generally at the end of a release

Clichés, jargon, and dead phrases

Some once useful and accurate words and phrases have become so overused, they are virtually meaningless today. The following list of no-nos was culled from journalists, bloggers and others who read many, many press releases and would rather not see any more uses of:

- award-winning
- best-of-breed
- cutting edge
- groundbreaking
- innovative
- innovator
- leader
- leading
- mission-critical
- next-generation
- revolutionary
- robust
- synergy
- turnkey

Images

Consider including images – such as your logo, a screenshot, a headshot, product schematic or market-size graphs – with your release.

Key words

Keep your key words in mind when writing headlines and press releases.

Paragraph length

Formatting matters. Use short paragraphs and line breaks between paragraphs to make your release easier for the reader to digest quickly.

Sentence length

Write like Hemingway. He conveyed layers of meaning with



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straightforward, staccato-like sentences, simple vocabulary and little embellishment. A Hemingway sentence like, "He was dead and that was all" could certainly be gussied up, but it would detract from rather than add to the power of the words.

Let your words be clear. Do not use more than four lines for one sentence, or you will run the risk of confounding your **enterprise-ready** customers, media, analysts, partners, friends, family, enemies – well, confounding *them* is fine – who might be losing sight of why they were reading your very **robust** sentence in the first place, stifle back an **award-winning** yawn, decide that the sentence is not **field-tested** and judge you for taking up their valuable time.

Quotes

Include quotes in your press release, and make sure they can stand alone. If they were used without the rest of your release, would they convey the most important elements of your news? Also, try to avoid statements like, "We are excited," because it is naturally understood, anyway. Folks get it, so use the quote to focus on a strategic message or astute market observation.

RSS feed

Offer readers the option to subscribe to the company's breaking news.

Social networking

Including links to [Digg](#), [Technorati](#)

and [Delicious](#) offers readers the chance to share your news with others.

Website links

In addition to placing links to the corporate Web site in the contact area, place one to three appropriate links within the body of the release. Anchor text links using relevant key words can attract search engines. Avoid including more than three links, though, as this can make your news look more like spam.

Video

Consider embedding multimedia options in your release, such as a short product demonstration or customer testimonial.

More resources and background

- David Meerman Scott's [Gobbledygook eBook](#)
- HubSpot's [Press Release Grader](#)
- [Scribe SEO](#) services

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