

15 TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

1. Keep it simple, clear and direct. Place yourself in the shoes of an uninformed reader (that's who will be reading it).
2. Engage your reader from the start with a catchy lead paragraph.
3. Get to the point quickly, and then elaborate with progressively less important details in the following paragraphs.
4. Be sure of the facts you present. A reporter, columnist or editorial writer must be able to depend on you for accurate information.
5. Convey a sense of urgency if it is legitimate, without exaggerating, perhaps through a quote from leadership.
6. Go easy on quotes. If you use them be sure they sound like something a real person said. Don't make it up so it sounds too preachy or stilted.
7. Avoid jargon of any kind, especially public health jargon that confuses and frustrates those not in-the-know.
8. Leave no important question unanswered. Assume your reader has never heard of your community of faith and has no idea of your social justice mission, your size and scope. Include some information that gives context to your effort.
9. Favor short sentences over long ones. Make your writing tight and un-flowery.
10. When you do use long sentences follow with a short declarative one.
11. Stay with the essential details. As tempting as it is, don't even try to be all inclusive.
12. Be sparing in the use of acronyms. When you must use one, be sure it appears parenthetically after the full name of whatever it represents, i.e., National Association of County and City Health Organizations (NACCHO).
13. Limit your release to one or two pages, preferably double-spaced for easy reading and editing.
14. Include visual aids when possible. A photocopied map, photograph or other illustration can add interest in the newsroom.
15. Have someone who is not informed read the release to be sure it is interesting, understandable and free of typographical errors and misspellings.