



# Writing A Press Release That Will Get You Noticed

*The First Step To Getting Free Publicity For Your Business*

A press release is a good way to get the word out about your new product. It is an important tool in your marketing arsenal. Here are some guidelines to help you in this area.

Unless you have a marketing or public relations company working for you, you or someone on your staff will have to write the press release. You can't just provide the information to the magazine or newspaper and have them write it up. To maximize your chances of having your press release printed, you have to write it as though the magazine or newspaper wrote it; it needs to sound like an informational article.

You must write the press release from a third party point of view, without it sounding like an ad, which means you must write from a journalist's perspective. Only use "I" or "we" in a quote. Think in terms of posing a problem that your product solves. Don't use a lot of adjectives such as great, best, fantastic, breakthrough, etc. That sounds like ad copy and the editor will see right through it.

When writing your press release, position your product as newsworthy. This is important if you want your press release to be considered. You need to think like a reporter. This means:

- \* Separate real news about your product from promotional hyperbole.
- \* Deliver a sharp story angle that will be of real interest to the news reading or viewing public.
- \* Deliver this angle in a professional, courteous way.
- \* If your product solves a problem, tell the reader about the problem and how your product is the solution.

Reporters are hassled all day by PR people and really don't care about helping you or promoting your website, your video, your products or your life story, unless you are providing something that helps make their job easier -- that is, a really good well written story.

The best way to see it from their eyes is to step away from your business and try to view it as a reporter looking for an interesting story. Remember, she's looking for a story that will satisfy her editor and her readers. She's not interested in promoting you, only in crafting an article that will make readers stop and say "This is interesting. That's something I can use!" Take your ego

out of it, along with your inclination to sell, sell, sell. Look at your story with a cold, objective eye.

Do some research and read some new product announcements (press releases) in different magazines and newspapers to get an idea of how they are written. In newspapers you can find a lot of these in the business section. In magazines and professional journals, product announcements are usually derived from press releases, so look there to find them. Emulate that style. The more your press release matches the editorial style of the publication, the better your chance of it being published.

Make it timely! Submit your releases at the beginning of your marketing campaign while the story is still fresh and new.

Make sure to put your phone number and website address within the body of the press release.

When mailing in a press release, you may want to also send a copy of the DVD and a CD that contains the press release in .txt format. Editors love photos, so make sure to send good, high-resolution photos and/or art work of the DVD case. The photos could be out-takes from the movie. Make the photos strong and provide captions.

Send your press release package in a large Priority Mail envelope or nice envelope so that it stands out from the other mail the editor gets. Give it class.

Why send a copy of the DVD? A lot of times if the editor gets a DVD along with the press release, they will do a review of the video. This will give you even more valuable exposure.

If you decide to send the press release via email, make sure you attach several high-resolution photos (300 dpi preferably) along with a note in the email that you would be happy to send them a copy of the DVD. If you have a high quality video clip from your DVD on your website, refer them there.

If you are also going to run an ad in the magazine, talk to the ad representative to see how you can get the press release printed and to whom you can send the video to for a review. If the review turns out great, then ask for permission to reprint all or part of the review on your website or other promotional materials.

## How To Format a Press Release

### - Press Release Headline

State your most exciting news, finding or announcement in as few words as possible. Emulate the headlines you see in newspapers.

### - The Press Release Subhead

Subheads are remarkably useful tools, yet usually overlooked by press release writers. Basically, the press release subhead gives you the opportunity to flesh out your story and further hook the reporter.

### - The Press Release Lead

The lead paragraph includes the "who, what, when, where and how" of the story. If the reporter were only to read the lead of a good press release, she'd have everything she needed to get started.

*There's no room for BS, hype or sell. Just the facts!*

## The Rest of the Press Release

The balance of the press release serves to back up whatever claims were made in the lead and headline. Use enough supporting material to make your case, and to demonstrate that, whatever angle you're promoting, it wasn't something you slapped together carelessly.

Next, a quote will help put in some perspective:

"I have never really thought about Florida in its frontier days," Smith said. "That was one of the most interesting parts of this film."

Or, you might ask an expert for a quote:

"Everyone living in Florida needs to see this DVD," said Jane Doe, travel writer, "This funny, insightful and warm film will help many people to feel at home in Florida, and it will also help them to take better care of this magical state!"

If you use quotes only use the person's name or identifying information if you have their permission.

Finally, write a sentence or two describing your company and what you do. This paragraph is known as the "boilerplate" -- an old newspaper term meaning a block of standard text that's used over and over again (e.g. the explanation of symbols on the stock price page). In this case, it's text that you might use at the bottom of all your releases.

Place your boilerplate right above three pound signs ###: place these at the end of the release to signify that it is the end. This is old-school, but still used.

One more guideline: below the ###, add a line that says something like:

If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with Joe Owner, please call George Irwin at 888/555-1111 or e-mail George at [pr@JoesBusiness.com](mailto:pr@JoesBusiness.com)

## Some Key Things to Remember

\* Stay away from hype-bloated phrases like "breakthrough", "unique", "state-of-the-art", etc.

\* Read lots of good newspaper writing, such as the New York Times or the Washington Post to get a feel for the style. Emulate the style of the publication.

\* Shorter is better. If you can say it in two pages, great. If you can say it in one page, that's even better.

Make sure you include this press release on your website, preferably in an area titled "Pressroom." Add the option for journalists to subscribe to your press releases for access to upcoming news topics on your subject. The answer is to design parts of your website specifically to provide a newsworthy element to your story. Message boards, chat rooms, surveys, feedback pages and so on can all lead to publicity. These, and other offshoots of adding newsworthy elements to your site, can all provide the basis for outstanding publicity opportunities.

## Where To Send Press Releases

It depends: is your news suitable for the general public, or is it specific to a niche market?

General Public: Newspapers -- is it regional? When we announced our new DVD about a popular Florida author, we bought a membership list from Florida Press Association. Each state has one of these. We then cherry picked the newspapers and publications we wanted to send to and typed up mailing labels. (That part was time consuming but luckily my wife types 70 wpm.) Then we sent out a press release along with a DVD. It wasn't too long before we were contacted by reporters for more information. When we introduced another DVD we did on Florida, we already had the list.

Industry Magazines and Journals - Is your product specific to an industry, such as home building, model trains, video training or similar? If so, find magazines, journals and newsletters that would be appropriate for your news. Search news stands as well as online.

Internet: There are a number of services available that will distribute your electronic press release widely, some claiming to reach several thousand potential publications. Some are free and some charge a fee. We use PR Web (PRWeb.com) and they are FREE.

Don't be upset if an editor doesn't print your press release. Editors get a lot of press releases each month. Remember that your press release is competing with a storm of news that crosses an editor's desk every day, so do everything you can to make it sound newsworthy and timely.

You may have heard that a press release is a guaranteed free ad. This is absolutely untrue, so don't bank your marketing campaign on them appearing. Editors are swamped with press releases about everything from new product announcements to the next meeting of the local book club, so just write the best release you can and take your chances. If you follow the advice given here, you'll have a better chance of having your release printed, but it is certainly not guaranteed. Also when a press release is printed it is printed once and that is it. You will need to do more marketing than just press releases.

### Sample of Format

[Company Name]	
April 1, 2008	FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Joe Owner	
Telephone: 888/555-1111	
Cell Phone: 888/555-1111	
Email: <a href="mailto:Joe@JoeBusiness.com">Joe@JoeBusiness.com</a>	
Website: <a href="http://www.JoeBusiness.com">www.JoeBusiness.com</a>	
MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE GOES HERE IN ALL UPPER CASE Subtitle Goes Here in Title Case (Upper and Lower)	
Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release	
Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release Body of Press Release	
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Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate Boilerplate	
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If you would like more information, or to schedule an interview with Joe Owner, please call George at 888/555/111 or email <a href="mailto:info@JoeBusiness.com">info@JoeBusiness.com</a> .	

**Panorama Studios**

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**For Immediate Release**

March 31, 2005

## **FLORIDA ARTISTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE PATRICK SMITH NARRATES FILM ABOUT FLORIDA'S PAST**

**Panorama Studios Releases Award Winning DVD About Patrick D. Smith, Celebrated Author of A Land Remembered**

A newly released DVD, "Patrick Smith's Florida, A Sense of Place," provides an intimate visit with Patrick D. Smith, one of Florida's most popular writers, a resident of Merritt Island, Florida.

Produced by Panorama Studios, a studio owned by Patrick Smith's son, and narrated by Smith, the film takes viewers off the tourist path and into areas where Smith did unique research for several of his novels, including Forever Island, Allapattah, Angel City, and A Land Remembered. The film won a 2005 Telly Award and was honored with the Ron Tibbett Founder's award at the 2005 Tupelo Film Festival.

The film also includes historical illustrations and photos of Florida dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One segment of the film follows the route of a summer vacation trip the Smith family took from Mississippi throughout Florida in 1933. It reveals a Florida strikingly different from today, and will be a nostalgic trip for older Florida natives.

"This film was born out of my desire to preserve the message that my father has given in hundreds of speeches across Florida and to personally introduce my father's southern charm and entertaining delivery to a broader public," says Patrick (Rick) Smith, Jr., "It is a tribute to my father who is now unable to make public appearances."

The author of seven novels and two non-fiction books, Smith is a 1999 inductee into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame. He has received more than a dozen literary awards, including the Florida Historical Society's "Greatest Living Floridian" award. He has also been a popular speaker all across Florida, speaking in venues from small town libraries to the Governor's mansion.

The producer of several films, Rick Smith resides in California. He also has won several film awards for his productions that have been broadcast on PBS and the Learning Channel.

For more information on Patrick Smith and the DVD visit <http://PatrickSmithOnline.com>. The DVD will be available in bookstores and can be ordered immediately by mail from Panorama Studios, P.O. Box 343, Cambria, CA 93428 or from [PatrickSmithOnline.com](http://PatrickSmithOnline.com).

Panorama Studios is a multi-media production studio specializing in documentary and special interest video projects. It is located on southern tip of the beautiful Big Sur coastline in Cambria, California.

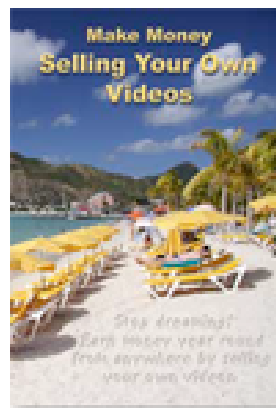
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For further information, or to schedule an interview, contact Rick Smith at 888-744-9381 or email [rick@panoramastudios.com](mailto:rick@panoramastudios.com)

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Rick Smith



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