

## CHECKLIST 7

### Writing a Successful Press Release

*Make sure you...*

- Find a newsworthy angle to your story and focus on that. Perhaps it is the first, last, oldest, youngest, biggest or smallest event of its kind. Is there a celebrity involved or do you have a catch phrase that gives your event or project a special twist? How is your organisation being affected by current events?
- Keep it clear and easy to read. Head it up with 'Press Release for Immediate Use' and the date, and always use an Arial font that is at least 12 point. Double space your press release so that the journalist can scan it easily and has room to add comments if necessary.
- Write a single line headline that says what your story is about. If you are sending your story to local media, make sure you have the word 'local' in the headline.
- Keep it brief. You should be able to capture your story in less than a page, so stick to the point.
- Copy your press release into the body of your email, rather than adding it as an attachment. This allows the reporter to quickly scan your story immediately on opening.
- Add a human touch. A news story should look like someone has been interviewed, so include some quotes either from yourself, or another member of your organisation. If you are quoting somebody else, make sure you have their permission.
- Double check accuracy. Before sending your press release, go back and double check all the details, including dates, times, venue and the spelling of names.
- Include contact details of someone who can provide more information at the bottom of the page. Make sure that person knows to expect a call. If appropriate, provide a website address where the journalist can go for more information about your organisation.
- Have photographs available. A good photograph is sometimes harder to resist than a good story, so let the press know if you have photographs available, or if there are photo opportunities coming up. Photographs of people are most attractive to local newspapers, especially if the people are actively doing something.
- Make sure you send the right release to the right people. Develop a relationship with the reporter who covers your area of interest. It's often not what you know, but who you know.

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This checklist has been written by Kerri Tilby-Price. Kerri is the author of 'The Seriously Good Guide to Fundraising' and the CEO of Exult Ltd, one of New Zealand's leading training providers for the non-profit sector. Kerri is also the editor of Tonic Magazine – a publication providing practical information and advice for grass-roots community organisations. For more information visit [www.exult.co.nz](http://www.exult.co.nz)