

Media relations for associations

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What determines what will attract the attention and pique the interest of media professionals?

- The prominence of a person or organisation.
- The significance of a topic (topics currently being discussed in the public arena will attract more attention).
- The originality, novelty or entertainment value of an event or matter.
- The possibility of personalising a topic (telling a personal story).
- How public and media relations have been maintained to date (those who are in contact with the media, know editors by name and are familiar with how editorial offices work will have easier access).

When composing a text, it is important to bear in mind the following:

- Good texts are understandable and to the point.
- Write clear and concrete texts.
- Use verbs and avoid substantives or nouns (clumsy style).
- Short sentences are usually easier to understand than run-on or nested sentences.
- Choose active rather than passive verb constructions.
- Use a concise word for a term.
- Only use foreign words if there is no other choice or if the foreign word is commonly understood.
- Avoid using any non-standard abbreviations.
- Less is more. Be restrained in your use of images, analogies and adjectives.

All press releases need to answer the seven "Ws":

1. Who said what/wants to do something?
2. What has happened/is supposed to happen?
3. When did the event take place/will the event happen?
4. Where did it happen/will it take place?
5. How did it happen/will it happen?
6. Why did it happen/will it happen?
7. What did it cost/how many people were/are affected?

Press release checklist

- Does the text have a clear and logical structure?
- Is the most important information at the beginning? Could the text afford to be shortened?
- Have all of the seven "W" questions been answered?
- Does the text have a good heading? Will the text get people interested and curious to read it?
- Can the text be edited easily?
- Are all of the details in the text correct and accurate?