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Publicity check list:

- ❑ Feature stories - get started and send early
- ❑ -What is your angle? The Hook? Here's where you provide the foot and brain work for those media folks

(Action, Arguments and Views, Unusualness, Community concerns and local interest, Human interest, Topicality, Relevance to a national issue (e.g. television soap, political crisis, freak weather, Christmas, Small children, Animals)

- ❑ -How can you tie your art or event into a newsworthy item?
- ❑ -What consequences will the news story which relates to your expertise, have on your community?
- ❑ -If an event is involved, who else is involved in organizing it?
- ❑ -Have you received assistance from any local agencies that would he note-worthy?
- ❑ -Are there any "celebrities" connected with your business who might participate in an interview or lend their name to a story?
- ❑ -Do you know anyone who might write a story to be submitted to the paper or a magazine? Do you know anyone who works for the paper?
- ❑ -Make lists, notes or outlines of your angles and hooks and practice your pitch.
- ❑ -List all the publications that might print feature stories.
- ❑ -Call them and ask for the Feature Editor.
   - -Be prepared to introduce yourself, your project and suggested story angles.
   - -Ask them if you can send them the publicity material you have. Ask in what form the photographs should be submitted.
   - -What is the time-frame and deadline for features/press releases?
   - -Do they accept articles from non-staff writers?

How To Write *a Press* Release

Except for *certain* allowable deviations, most press releases are pretty conventional in form To insure that your release is read in its entirety, and used in some *way,* it is essential that the release be written in the language and form that the press understands, expects and accepts. Prepare yourself. Study a newspapers.Note the way headlines are used, what's in the first two paragraphs, how the story is fleshed out, what is quoted, etc.   Here is a short list of contents:

1.   A headline starts off the release, This is just an abbreviated version of what the story is about, but it should be punchy, as if it were going to be the headline which actually gets printed with your story. Try to keep it to two lines, or less.

2.   The first paragraph (the lead) should indicate who, what, where and when The second paragraph answers the questions how and why, Thus the first two paragraphs should indicate all the basic information that is most newsworthy, The remaining paragraphs of the release should be devoted to additional information, statistics, quotes *from* spokespeople or other general background. Understand that editors and writers who receive your release will start cutting from the bottom,

3.   Releases should always be written in journalistic style. This means short declarative sentences, no flowery or opinion carrying adjectives and short (one to three sentences) paragraph, Even though the news release is designed to provide information so that news people can expand the story in their own *way,* it can some times happen, particularly in suburban publications, that the release will be printed 'verbatim. So it should be as objective, brief, thorough, accurate and clear as a good news article itself. Be exact so:

   A Give specific dates of events. Use "Monday, October 1, 2002" rather than "next Monday" or "tomorrow." Check all days and dates with your calendar.

   B Give the address as well as the name of the meeting place.

   C. Give street and town of residence of all (or the most important, if many are listed) people mentioned.

   D. Check all names for accuracy and spelling. The first mention of a name is "Quentin Smith of Waterbury and second is "Mr. Smith."

   E. Spell out all numbers from one to ten, use numerals for 11 and above. Don't begin a sentence with numerals.

   F.   Never, never sound subjective (i.e., give opinions) in a news release. That's for editorials. If you have a subjective view to air, phrase it in the context of a quote and attribute it to someone whose name and affiliation is spelled out

4.   Additional information which is not news but which can be helpful in defining or broadening the story can be included at the bottom of the release as a "Note to Editors." For example, you might want to indicate that a particular person will be available for interviews on a particular date, or that the event you are announcing has good photo/visual opportunities.

5.   Background information, full texts of letters, statements, schedules, etc. can be included as a separate set of staple together pages This is often helpful to new people for whom a one-sentence description or reference may not be satisfactory. Make sure you note their inclusion on the release by typing "SEE ATTACHED."

6.   If your release is clearly soft news, or if you want to prepare a feature story as a release (about a colorful aspect of the local scene, or on a human interest element), you have an opportunity to be creative and break a few rules. Instead of providing all the basic newsworthy information in the beginning, you can start your lead paragraph with something exciting and catchy. Editors particularly of small weekly papers) often appreciate having someone submit color stories, as they often don't have the staff to develop the same for themselves. Also, feature stories like these can provide better-staffed editors with a story they can develop further,

How It Should Look

1.   Write the release on paper which has a masthead identifying the organization. If you don't have printed, official stationery, or it is 8-1/2 x 11 and you need 8-1/2 x 14 to accommodate that extra paragraph, simply type the name and address and telephone number of the organization on the upper left hand comer.

2.   If you want the release to be considered the moment it is received (i.e., If you're offering it as hard news), type FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE on the upper left and put today's date (date of typing) directly below. If the event is being prepared as a summary of an event, speech, or conference that will not have already taken place, type FOR RELEASE: TIME/DATE of the event. If the release concerns general information (soft news), type FOR RELEASE ON OR AFTER :DATE.

3.   Below, or on the other side of your release date/time me, type FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT ,,,,, , then list the name and phone number of the persons who can give that information. The contact number is very important, especially if the release pertains to an event that you want to be covered, Make sure that the contact really can be reached at the number you give. If necessary, give night numbers or hours contact can be reached, since the press is too busy to keep caning back. Many stories never make it beyond the editor's desk because there wasn't anyone there when he/'she called.

4.   Type the headline in CAPS and underline if you can't double space. Stagger it across the page if you like, but make it stand out.

5.   Always double space and, if possible, confine to one page (8-1/2 x 14 is okay). Use wide margins so the news person can make notes. If it's necessary to go over one page, type (MORE) at the bottom of page one and staple together. Start second page with abbreviated headline (in caps) and "page two of two." Always indicate the end of a release by writing -30- or ### or -END- right below the last line.

6.   Enclosed photos always or state that digital images are available. Get email address when first phoning for details. Horizontals seem to be more useful than verticals. Send photos or 35mm sides or other size transparencies in color or black and white but make sure all images have good contrast. When sending pictures of people make sure they are grouped together with no empty spaces between. Do not send negatives unless asked.