![PRWeb - Online Visibility from Vocus]

Writing Great Online News Releases

How to release your news across the web to get the best results.

Contents

Creating An Online Press Release

As we all know, the way people look for information has changed. The process now—a quick search on the Web to find the links, content, references and discussions that get the attention of the person looking. And there is a ton of information out there.

To get noticed you need to write for two audiences:

The people searching for your businesses products and services.

The search engines that find your content and bring it to those people.

An online news release can help you do both.

The basic components include:

- Headline
- Summary
- Dateline and Lead
- Body
- Boilerplate Statement
- Contact Information

Greater Middleton Magazine Recognizes Classic Clothing, Inc. as a Great Place to Work

Lifestyle Publication Names Clothier as "Fun and Fashionable" Employer for Second Consecutive Year. The Company Ranked 15th on the List of 50 Top Employers for its Flexible Schedules, 401K plan with match, Management Training, Volunteer program, Dependent Care Accounts and Employee Fashion Discount Days.

Middleton, MA (PR Web), May 1, 2012— The May issue of Greater Middleton Magazine (GMM) recognized the region's best employers, and Middleton-based Classic Clothing, Inc., a small clothing retail chain offering affordable designer fashions, made the cut. The magazine specifically pointed to Classic Clothing's fun, family focused-atmosphere and generous clothing discount.

"We are honored that Greater Middleton Magazine included us on their prestigious list. Happy employees are motivated employees, so we place a lot of emphasis on attracting and retaining talent. After all, we want employees to enjoy the work environment, feel good about the products and represent us well," said Sheila Smith, CEO, Classic Clothing.

GMM publishes its Great Places to Work list every May. It teams up with the Middleton Department of Economic Development to compile a list of employers with 50 or more employees. Each company and a sampling of its employees are invited to complete an online survey. The Magazine's research department analyzes the surveys to develop the final list. In picking the list, GMM took different worklife aspects into consideration, including compensation, benefits, amenities, culture, flexibility, community involvement and diversity.

For the second year in a row, Classic Clothing ranked 15th on the list of 50 top employers. Calling it a "fun and fashionable" employer, GMM cited the company's work culture as a significant reason for the company making the list. Specifically, it noted Classic Clothing's family discount days, when employee families are invited to an after-hours party and shopping event where they enjoy significant discounts. This popular benefit, as well as an annual employee family fashion show, flexible work schedules, a 401K plan with match, management training, volunteer program and dependent care accounts, all contributed to Classic Clothing's inclusion.

With nearly 250 employees, Classic Clothing features clothing designed by Classic Clothing Founder and Designer Ryan Garcia as well as a variety of other designer brands. In addition to these classically modern designs, the company is known for offering high-quality fashions that are affordable to average families. Classic Clothing carries apparel for men, women, teens, tweens and children.

To learn more about the list, visit www.classicclothing.com or www.greatermiddletonmagazine.com.

About Classic Clothing, Inc.
Founded in 1996, Classic Clothing was started by local designer Ryan Garcia, whose vision of creating wearable and affordable designer fashions for all families continues to define the company. Over the past 15 years, Classic Clothing has grown from one family-owned storefront to 10 locations throughout the Middleton area. Today, the company plans to open several new locations in the Northeast, making great fashion a family staple.

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www.classicclothing.com

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Before You Write Your Release—A List of Do's and Don'ts

With more than 10 years of experience in the online news and press release distribution industry, PRWeb has a unique understanding of how to write a news or press release so it achieves success online. The following tips will help you write a professional, concise and powerful news release.

✓ The Do's

Start Strong: You only have a matter of seconds to grab your readers' attention, so you want to capture it with a strong opening. Your headline, summary and first paragraph should clarify your news. The rest of your release should provide the detail.

Identify Yourself: If your release does not identify the source of the information within the first few paragraphs, you may lose the promotional value your release can provide.

Write Professionally: If your release contains hype, slang, excessive exclamation points or some other common mistakes chances are it will be viewed as an advertisement rather than a news release, which may hurt credibility. Or worse, a media outlet may pick up your release and publish without modification, opening any sloppy writing to a larger audience.

Limit Jargon: The best way to communicate is to speak plainly using ordinary language. Using an abundance of technical language and jargon limits your reading audience.

Make sure your Information is Informational and Timely: Think about your audience. Will someone else find your story interesting? Answer the question, "Why should anyone care?" Make sure your announcement contains information that is timely, unique, highlights something new or unusual, and provides useful information to your audience. In other words, don't make it an advertisement for your business.

Avoid Clichés: You don't listen to clichés. Neither will your audience. Avoid phrases like "customers save money" or "great customer service" to announce or describe. Focus on the aspects of your announcement that truly set you apart from everyone else.

Pick an Angle: Make sure that your release has a good hook. Tying your information to current events, recent studies, trends and social issues brings relevance, urgency and importance to your message.

Use Anchor Text and Features: PRWeb news releases can accommodate multimedia files like images, video, links and other features that will capture the attention of your readers and highlight your news. Attach logos, head shots, product shots, photographs, audio files, video files, PDF documents or any other supplemental materials that build up your release. Use anchor text and hyperlinks to point readers back to your site ensures both your Website and your important keywords receive simultaneous promotion in your press release.

Illustrate the Solution: Use real life examples to illustrate how your company or organization solved a problem. Identify the problem and why your solution is the right solution. Give examples.

Don't Be Afraid to Toot Your Own Horn: Online news or press release distribution is a successful way to create expert status. If your company has reached a milestone, celebrated an anniversary, hired a new president, experienced significant growth or received an award, tell the world what you did right. Or, write a release that offers readers "tips" or help in your field of expertise.

Don't Give Away All the Secrets: If you're running a new promotion this season, tell readers where they can go to learn more. Provide links in your press release directly to the page on your Website where readers can learn the specifics about your news and then act upon it. If you give your readers no reason to click through to your site, they're not necessarily going to.

Stick to the Facts: Tell the truth. Avoid fluff, embellishments, hype and exaggerations. If you feel that your press release seems sensational, there's a good chance your readers will think so too.

Use Active Voice: Verbs in the active voice bring your press release to life. Rather than writing "entered into a partnership," use "partnered" instead. Do not be afraid to use strong verbs. For example, "The committee exhibited severe hostility over the incident" reads better if changed to "The committee was enraged over the incident."

Economize Your Words: Be concise. News search engines sometimes reject news releases with overly long headlines, excessive lists and high overall word counts. Eliminate unnecessary adjectives, flowery language or redundant expressions such as "added bonus" or "first time ever."

Proofread: Write your press release in a Word or other text document instead of writing it directly on the online submit page, so you can print it, proofread, rewrite and proofread again. The more time you take to do it right, the better your company's impression to the world.

❌ The Don'ts

We have seen some of the best press releases on the Web. We've also seen some of the worst. Since your release is competing with hundreds, sometimes thousands, of other companies and organizations that are all vying for a reader's attention, it's best to make sure that your release is strong and free of mistakes. Remember, you won't get a second chance to fix a negative impression.

Here are a few things that should not be in any press release:

- All capital letters to emphasize anything.
- Grammatical errors.
- Lack of content and substance.
- Advertisements or promotional/fluffy language.
- Hype.
- The words "you", "I" or "we" outside of a quoted statement.

Topic Ideas

All companies have news. In fact, even if you're a home business you have plenty of information to share—perhaps a new partnership, new products, a new Website, a new employee, etc. All of these topics can be used to help increase your business's online visibility. Here are some of the most common release topics.

Announcing a new product or feature.
Product launches are fundamental to fueling your company's growth. Generate maximum online visibility for your next product launch with online marketing tools and promotions.

Winning an award.
Awards give your company credibility with your customers—and sending out an online news release is a great way to get the attention your award deserves. Whether you are a local restaurant celebrating your Zagat Rating or your company has been voted best place to work—let the world know.

Hosting a fundraising dinner or technology summit.
Successful events need publicity—and what better way than to announce your event online, where millions of people can learn how they can participate in or support your event. Whether you are hosting a fundraising dinner, or launching a technical summit, keep your prospects up to date while driving traffic to your web site by promoting your event.

Announcing an employee change.
Employee promotions and new hires can be big news. And sharing that news with the world shows that your business is growing and that you value your team.

Launching a new partnership.
Sharing news about your business partnerships is one of the best ways to promote your success, highlight your company's growth, build credibility for your company and your partner's company, and potentially lead to new customers for both organizations.

Sharing survey results.
Market research is an effective tool to build credibility and awareness for your key initiatives—especially when the information is broadly communicated. Whether you're using survey data to identify industry trends or to build support for a key program, share that information.

The Headline

A good online news release headline:

- Provides information—not a marketing pitch or advertisement
- Contains the keywords people are likely to search to get information like this
- Gets a reader's attention quickly
- Makes the reader want to learn more

LENGTH: New/search engines have very specific headline limits (what they will display).

EXAMPLE:

ResortQuest Expands Vacation Rental Operations into the Alabama Gulf Coast Area

Google:
60 characters

➡

Yahoo!:
120 characters

➡

PRWeb:
170 characters

FORMAT: Title Case. Capitalize every word except for prepositions and articles of three characters or less.

TIP: Write your headline and summary last to be sure you include the most important keywords and information captured in the release.

The Summary

The summary paragraph is just that—a synopsis of the information contained in the release. The summary paragraph typically follows the headline and gives you the opportunity to provide a brief description of your business and the information you are sharing. Some distribution points will only display your headline, summary and a link to your news release. So, if your release does not have a summary paragraph, you may reduce the effectiveness of your news since readers will not be enticed to click through for more information.

LENGTH: One to four sentences.

FORMAT: Title case.

TIP: Make sure you announce your company's name within the headline, summary or first few paragraphs so you immediately link the information with your organization.

> **EXAMPLE:**
>
> ResortQuest, the nation's leading provider of vacation rentals, property management, and real estate services, is pleased to announce its expansion into the vacation rental arena along Alabama's beautiful Gulf Coast.

The Dateline and Lead Paragraph

The lead and first paragraph of a press release announces what you have to say, providing answers to as many of the critical "who, what, when, where, why (your reader should care) and how" questions that are relevant to your story. Best practices are to keep the lead paragraph compelling and simple, foregoing a lot of adjectives for critical information. You should grab your reader's attention here by simply stating the news you have to announce.

LENGTH: Ideally, 25 words or less.

FORMAT: City, State (PRWEB) Day, Month, Year—the most important information you want to announce.

EXAMPLE:

Gulf Shores, AL (PRWEB) May 9, 2008—ResortQuest's Real Estate division has served the Alabama Gulf Coast region for many years and the addition of vacation rentals/property management services in this area was a natural progression (dateline). Now, in addition to offering superior Real Estate services in the Alabama Gulf Coast area, ResortQuest will also provide vacationers with premier vacation rental options in Orange Beach, Gulf Shores and Fort Morgan. (lead)

TIP: Do not assume that your reader has read your headline or summary paragraph; the lead should stand on its own.

Include important keywords in the headline, summary and lead paragraph. Add your Web address to reinforce your site name and location.

The Body Copy

Now's your chance to tell your story. And, like any news story, the purpose is to provide your reader with information. Remember to keep your tone neutral and objective—like a newscaster vs. an advertisement.

LENGTH: 300 – 800 words

FORMAT: PRWeb press releases cannot contain html tags and other formatting such as non-standard characters, tables or forced line breaks. Use our Linkwriter on the submission page for your keyword links.

> **EXAMPLE:**
>
> "For additional information on the news that is the subject of this release (or for a sample, copy or demo), contact Mary Smith or visit www.prweb.com. You can also include details on product availability, trademark acknowledgment, etc. here."

Not sure where to start? Follow this format:

Opening paragraph
Elaborate on who, what, when, where, why and how. The media typically lift this information if they pick up or reference your release.

Center
- Add details to your story that support your claim, add interest, or reinforce what you are trying to say. These can include quotes from key staff, customers or subject matter experts, statistics, charts, etc.
- Provide detail around the information you are sharing.
- Include links to your Website in this form: http://www.prweb.com.

Final paragraph
Traditionally, the final paragraph of a news release contains the least important information. But for an online release, it's best to restate and summarize the key points of the overall release. It can also include an opportunity for the reader to get more information, and provide any legal language or product/service details.

What Not To Do

- Directly address the consumer or your target audience (calling them "you").
- Refer to yourself or your company as "I," "we"—both this and the bullet point above flag that the information to follow is a selling piece vs. news.
- Use exclamation points; hyperbolic product/service claims; descriptions of a product or service as amazing, etc., or the use of capital letters to CREATE EMPHASIS—as these challenge the credibility of your announcement.
- Include an e-mail address in the body of the release. It will likely be picked up by a "spambot", which is a program that searches the web for email address formats to create mailing lists for spam.
- Include long lists within your release. We have found that long lists may cause your release to be rejected from the news search engines.
- Create link spam (including excessive links to manipulate search engine rankings). Include no more than one link per 100 words of your release. These links include both anchor text links (highlighted words associated with a hyperlink) and active URL hyperlinks.

TIP: Keeps sentences and paragraphs short, about three or four lines per paragraph.

Don't forget to check spelling before you submit your release to PRWeb!

EXAMPLE:

"ResortQuest's vacation rental expansion into the Alabama Gulf Coast area was driven by consumer and homeowner requests. They talked, we listened and responded", stated Ryan Christopher, Senior Operations Manager with ResortQuest. "ResortQuest is excited to be a part of the Alabama Gulf Coast community and we are very encouraged by the welcome and interest we have received from local partners, owners, and businesses". ResortQuest is the largest vacation rental and real estate sales company on the Northern Gulf Coast and currently manages over 3,000 vacation rentals in this area. Vacation rentals include spacious beach condominiums, luxurious private homes and full service resorts in Destin, Fort Walton Beach, Beaches of South Walton, Panama City Beach, Navarre Beach and Perdido Key on Northwest Florida's Gulf Coast and will now encompass vacation rentals in Orange Beach, Gulf Shores and Fort Morgan on Alabama's Gulf Coast.

"We are thrilled to be affiliated with ResortQuest as their brand is nationally known and respected as a leader in vacation rental, real estate, and property management. Their marketing power will leverage the entire area as a tourism destination, reaching new guests and investors" said Rick Phillips, a local developer.

"I am excited to be part of ResortQuest, because they have so much to offer—both for our guests and homeowners," stated Tia Casey, ResortQuest's Alabama Gulf Coast Rental Manager and long time resident of the area. "From quality vacation rentals, to superior service, to value added products for our guests and special perks for our owners—it's a win–win situation".

"In addition to offering vacationers in the Alabama Gulf Coast area the same level of quality vacation rentals and superior service that our Northwest Florida guests receive, all ResortQuest guests staying in Northwest Florida and Alabama receive our seasonal complimentary Passport to Fun program", stated Vickie Warner, Marketing Director for the Northwest Florida and Alabama Gulf Coast area. "In Alabama, our guests receive complimentary admission/fares to Waterville USA, Deep Sea Fishing excursions aboard Zeke's Lady, a choice of Dolphin cruises and tickets to the Track Recreation Center".

Vacationers interested in learning more about ResortQuest's vacation rental options along the Alabama or Northwest Florida Gulf Coast, can visit www.ResortquestAl.com or www.ResortQuestNWFL.com. Alabama Gulf Coast homeowners interested in joining ResortQuest's Alabama Gulf Coast rental program, should contact Tia Casey at 1-800-the-Gulf or 251-968-2121 for more information.

Boilerplate Statement

By definition, boilerplate content is "a unit of writing that can be used over and over without change". In the press release world, this is typically your "About the Company" sentence. However, it can (and should) also include standard copy about any important people, services, or details in your release, as well as "safeharbor" statements in financial releases.

EXAMPLE:

About ResortQuest

ResortQuest, one of the nation's leading vacation rentals and resort real estate companies, provides a one-stop resource in North America's premier resort destinations, (ResortQuest.com).

ResortQuest is the largest marketer and management company of vacation condominiums and home rentals in the U.S. ResortQuest Real Estate is one of the nation's leading real estate companies focusing exclusively on resort properties, offering superior brokerage services in the country's premier beach, ski and golf destinations.

Contact Information

Contact information provides the media and everyone else interested in what you have to say a way to reach you. It should include your company name, telephone number, Website and an email address. Note: the email address will not be visible in the release.

EXAMPLE:

Mary Smith, Director of Public Relations
XYZ Company
555-555-5555
http://www.prweb.com

Submitting Your Release To PRWeb

Prior to releasing your information to millions, PRWeb's editorial staff does a final check to make sure the release contains a clear, timely and free of advertising hype, direct marketing and spam.

Following the guidelines below will help your press release get fast approval and distribution.

1. **Make sure your release is informational and timely.**
   Your release should include information that is interesting enough to your specific audiences to be reported on. This can include timely information about:

   - a new product or service or promotion
   - a new company officer or important hire
   - a business expansion, recent or upcoming event, or company move
   - a new customer win (with approval from the customer, of course)
   - a new partnership (with approval from the partner, of course)
   - organizational involvement with a community, charity or group
   - an organizational milestone like an anniversary or award
   - the issuance of tip sheet, expert opinions, best practices or other useful information

   Your release should not look or read like it is advertising, direct marketing, a general interest article, a company description, or "an open letter". Timeliness of information is also critical—there must be a reason your organization is announcing the information.

2. **Stay objective.**
   PRWeb press releases should be free of:

   - Direct addresses to your audience or yourself (i.e. the use of the words "you," "I," "we," etc.) unless used within a quotation.
   - Exclamation points; hyperbolic product/service claims.

3. Be accurate.
PRWeb requires a case number, court of record, complaint number or other sufficient documentation for all press releases referencing legal action or criminal matters. (Please see the separate editorial guidelines on distributing press releases about legal and political matters here http://www.prweb.com/pr/legal.html)

4. Provide valid contact information.
PRWeb press releases must contain a valid phone number and email address in the contact information.

5. Stay within the standard length.
PRWeb press releases should be between 300 and 800 words. The length of your release directly affects its distribution, and press releases that are overly short or long may have trouble being indexed in the search engines.

6. Follow standard grammar and spelling.
Your release should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Although jargon and acronyms are good for search engine ranking, make sure to include definitions for any industry jargon you use and spell out acronyms on first mention so the average person can understand what you are talking about.

7. Follow PRWeb formatting.
PRWeb press releases cannot contain html tags and other formatting such as non-standard characters, tables or forced line breaks. Releases also should not be written partially or entirely in all capital letters. Use our Linkwriter on the submission page for your keyword links.

A Final Checklist for Formatting Your Release

How you present your news is just as important as your content. Follow these formatting guidelines to best use PRWeb's distribution platform and search engine optimization.

✔ **Use "Title Case" for headlines.** The first letter of each word capitalized. Exceptions to this include words less than three characters and prepositions.

✔ **Don't use ALL CAPS.** It is considered bad form to submit a press release entirely in upper case letters. In the unlikely event that your release passes through PRWeb's editorial review process, it will be ignored by journalists and many readers.

✔ **Have your Dateline look like this: City, State (PRWEB) Day, Month and Year.** Including the city and town related to your news is optional, but helpful for readers. The date should reflect the date of distribution for your release.

✔ **Keep even spacing and avoid special characters.** Each paragraph should have natural line wraps, not forced line breaks. Leave one line break between each paragraph. It's not necessary to include dashes, asterisks or other symbols to separate sections in your release.

✔ **Do not use HTML.** PRWeb does not support embedded HTML or other markup languages. Your news or press release will be distributed over a wide array of networks and including such formatting will negatively impact the readability of your press release.

✔ **Limit in text links to one link per 100 words.** These links include both anchor text links and active URL hyperlinks.

✓ **Get written approval for ticker symbols other than your own:** Do not use unless you have express written permission to use another company's ticker symbol.

✓ **Convert charts and graphs to images or PDFs.** Attach graphs and charts to your release by converting them to images or PDFs as they will not display properly if they are cut and pasted into the text of your news release.

✓ **Keep your release within 300–800 words.** It is nearly impossible to announce your news in a few sentences. If you do not have more than a few sentences, you may not have an item worth announcing.

✓ **Include your email address only in your contact information.** To protect you from spam, PRWeb offers you a location in the press release template to include your contact information, including your email address.

Need Help?

PRWeb is happy to help you get your content in front of the right people, and our editors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition we offer the following to assist you with getting your name out there and your news heard.

Easy Submit ($100)

If you prefer a hands-off approach to news release submission, we can upload your release for you.

News Release Revision ($129)

Let us copyedit your news release for spelling and grammar and give it a refined, professional tone that will catch the eye of your target audience.

News Release Creation ($325)

An easy, hands-off approach to create a newsworthy release. A PRWeb editor will create a draft of your news release for you to help attract the attention of journalists, bloggers and consumers and achieve top results in search engines.

Search Engine Optimization ($175)

Maximize your online visibility—work with a PRWeb editor to achieve premium search engine results. A PRWeb editor will add search-optimized language to drive increased traffic to your news release, and build links to your website to help boost your website's ranking in major search engines.

Want to know more about PRWeb's online news distribution service? Call our 24/7 Editorial Support Team at 1-866-640-6397.

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