



Press Release Writing Workbook



1. Before you start

A press release is a great way to get free publicity for your business, but by definition, you need to ensure there is a “news” element to what you are sending out.

Ask yourself if anyone else will really care? It may sound harsh but adding a new line of stock or achieving six months in business is probably of limited interest to anyone but you.

Answer the following questions:

1. What is your news?

2. What is interesting or unusual about it?

3. Who is going to be interested in hearing your news?

1. Before you start

TARGETING

Knowing who would be interested in your news will help you decide which media to send your press release to.

For example, is your target audience other businesses, the general public, people in a specific industry or people with a specific interest.

1. *Who is your audience?*

Now you know who your audience is, it's time to nail down which media outlets/publications you should target with your press release.

For example, is it the local newspaper or community magazine, a trade magazine, local radio or a national magazine which caters to people with a specific interest.

It may be the case that there is more than one suitable media platform for your press release.

1. *Which media best suits your message?*



1. Before you start

MEDIA TARGET

Research which media platforms you intend to send your press release to and make notes here.

Media 1.....

Contact name.....

Email address.....

Job Title.....*Phone*.....

Notes (ie audience, average article length, tone of voice, types of stories)

Media 2.....

Contact name.....

Email address.....

Job Title.....*Phone*.....

Notes (ie audience, average article length, tone of voice, types of stories)



1. Before you start

MEDIA TARGET

Media 3.....

Contact name.....

Email address.....

Job Title.....Phone.....

Notes (ie audience, average article length, tone of voice, types of stories)

Media 4.....

Contact name.....

Email address.....

Job Title.....Phone.....

Notes (ie audience, average article length, tone of voice, types of stories)



2. The 5 Ws

WRITING

Jot down the key facts of your story that answer each of the five Ws (and the H).

Who? This is probably you, your business and anyone else relevant to the story.

What? This is probably the bones of your story. Jot down what is happening, has happened or is about to happen or what your news is.

Where? More likely to be relevant for local media, but always include where your business is based. Also, if your press release relates to an event, don't forget to include the location

2. The 5 Ws

WRITING

When? For it to be news, the events you are reporting need to have happened recently or be happening now or about to happen.

Why? Why something has happened or why it is important and relevant. Can be an important part of your press release.

How? How has this come about? How has it happened.

The answers to some of these questions may overlap - just use them as a guideline and a prompt to ensure you include all the relevant information in your press release.

3. Back to the beginning

Now you have all the information you need to include, you can start to create your draft press release.

In this section you will create your headline and first paragraph. These are very important elements of your press release and you may find it easier to come back and write them after the rest of your press release is written.

Write 10 possible headlines for your press release. Keep them short - less than 10 words.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



3. Back to the beginning

Write three different first paragraphs. Keep it to 25 words or less. Answer as many as the W questions as possible to sum up your story.

1.

2.

3.

Try to imagine how a news reader on the television would introduce your story.

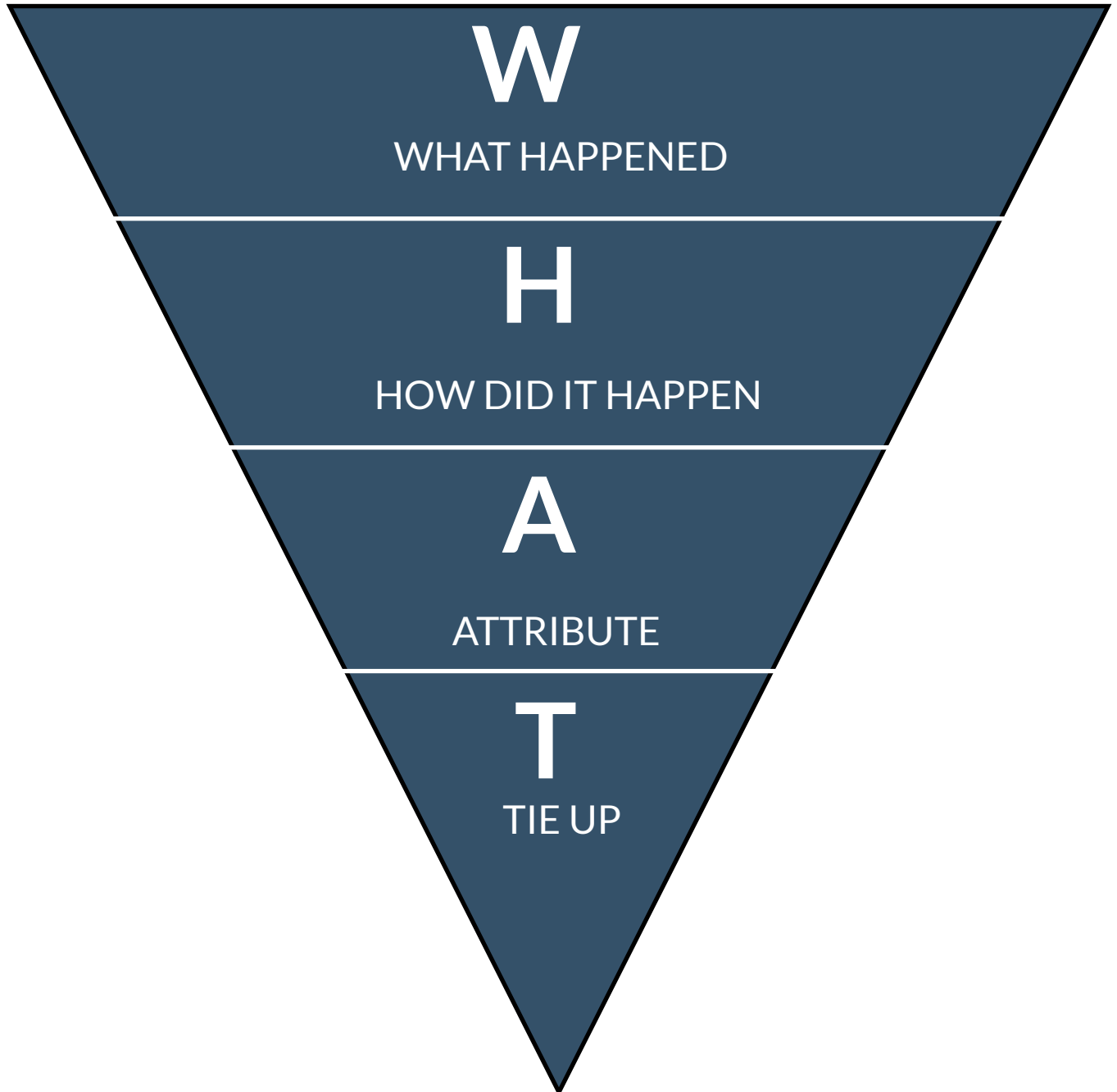
Another useful trick is to think how you might tell your story to a friend as you walked past them - you'd need to keep it really short and include the most interesting bits only.

If you are really struggling with this, you may need to re-examine whether your press release is really "news". If you are sure of its news value, do your best and remember "done is better than perfect" and journalists are masters of writing intros, so they will probably write their own anyway.



4. Story structure

INVERTED TRIANGLE



4. Story structure

Now you can start putting the facts of your story - the answers to the five Ws - into some sort of structured order.

Use the Inverted WHAT triangle to help you.

What Happened?

This is your first couple of paragraphs and should be an overview of what the story is about, introducing the key elements.

How did it happen?

Now you can elaborate and “tell the story”. This is the main body of your story.

4. Story structure

Attribute

Use quotes from relevant people (most likely you or other parties involved in the story) to bring it to life. Make them lively. They are also the best way to include “opinion” in a press release. You could use a good quote in the third or fourth paragraph of your press release to break up the main body of information.

Tie Up

Bring all the other information together in a strong and positive tie up at the end. This is also the place to include a call to action if you want people to visit your website or buy tickets to an event, for example.



5. Added extras

Now you have worked out what marketing you would like to do to achieve your goals in an ideal world without limits, now is the time to come back down to earth and get real by considering the limits of money, time and skills.

Hopefully, you now appreciate that marketing is essential to your business - without it your customers won't know you exists - so it's crucial you set a budget to spend on your marketing strategy.

Images

What images will you include? Logo? Do you have permission to use them? Do you need to take photos or get some taken by a professional? Make notes here...

Boilerplate

This is other information which may be relevant or of interest, such as your business's history and your background. It should definitely include your contact details, including email address and phone number.



6. Final Checks

Once your press release is ready to send, there are a few final things you need to do to give it the best possible chance of being used.

Use this checklist to ensure you have completed all the steps.

- Is it newsworthy?
- Do you know who your audience is?
- Have you researched the best media for your press release?
- Do you have the correct contact details of the best person to send your press release to?
- Does your press release include answers to all or most of the five Ws?
- Have you created a killer headline for your press release?
- Does your first paragraph grab the reader's attention and sum up the story in less than 25 words?
- Does your press release follow the inverted triangle WHAT structure?
- Have you double checked the spellings of all names in the press release?
- Have you attached appropriate images for use with your press release?
- Does your boilerplate include all the relevant information about you and your business?
- Are your contact details included, and correct?
- Have you written a good subject line on the email you are sending to the media?
- Have you double checked all spelling and grammar on your press release.

**YAY! YOU'RE ALL GOOD TO GO.
GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PRESS RELEASE**





Connecting small businesses

www.traceysweetland.co.uk | connect@traceysweetland.co.uk

