



Whether it's your first or your four-hundredth, writing a press release isn't always an easy thing to do. Being able to organize your story in a way that is interesting to readers, accessible to journalists, and optimized, takes some serious know-how. Here at Cision we handle thousands of press releases every day, so we've got some insight into what goes into a good one! If you're not sure where to start, or if you just want to brush up on your craft, we created a press release template and checklist to help you knock it out of the park.

## ✓ YOUR PRESS RELEASE SHOULD:

- Start with a dateline city/province/country
- Have an attention-grabbing hook included in the headline and subheadline
- Keep headlines and subheadlines brief and shareable. 280 characters should be your upper limit, but remember that your headline will be cut off after 55-70 characters in Google search results
- Have a clear news angle – it should be written like a newspaper article
- Include your organization's name in the headline
- Answer (as quickly and concisely as possible) the who, what, where, when and why of your news
- Make your call to action obvious (the sooner, the better!) if you have one for this story
- Include 1-3 unique hyperlinks (tied to your CTA, your website, or anywhere else you want to drive your audience) that are tied to relevant text – don't just say "click here"
- Include relevant multimedia (logo, headshots, images, videos, infographics, etc.)
- Include any stats/numbers/data that you have (bonus points if you have this in your headline/subheadline)
- Use headers and lists to segment your release, especially if it's long. This makes your release more digestible and SEO-friendly
- Limit paragraphs to four sentences or fewer when possible, and vary sentence length and structure
- End with contact information
- Be written for humans, not for bots; using natural language is good for SEO and your readers
- Be newsworthy and unique (check out the featured releases on newswire.ca for inspiration)

## ✗ YOUR PRESS RELEASE SHOULD NOT:

- Be stuffed with keywords – write for your readers, not robots
- Include multiple paragraph-spanning quotations (unless it's really, really interesting or really, really important)
- Ramble, or include "fluff" content
- Have a byline – that's content better used on your blog or as an earned media opportunity
- Include industry jargon; keep it as accessible and easy to understand as possible
- Read like a commercial; your readers see enough ads
- Include unsubstantiated claims – don't make journalists and readers do your research for you
- Include swear words
- Read like an editorial column, a blog post, or be written in first person
- Include a ton of hyperlinks – they can be distracting and including too many negatively impacts how search engines handle your release
- Be a slightly altered copy of your previous releases. You'll get better results if you keep things fresh
- Include gory or suggestive imagery
- Newsjack (play off of news not related to your organization) or include stock exchange symbols or logos of other unrelated organizations
- Be inflammatory or accusatory