



ideas and news from SMPS Boston

Press Release Relief: You've written it, now what?

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Today's post is courtesy of Jennifer Shelby, CPSM, account director for Rhino Public Relations. Questions or comments? E-mail her at Jennifer@rhinopr.com or visit www.rhinopr.com.



You've won or completed a great project and want to get the word out to the media via a press release. Now what? As it turns out, it's pretty simple. There are just a few minor things to keep in mind.

Know your target audience

Before you begin, determine who you are trying to reach with your news. Once you know who you are trying to reach, compile a list of publications that your target audience reads. Your list should include social media outlets like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

One on one is best

Send one separate release to each contact on your list. So, if you have 100 contacts, send 100 individual emails. It's difficult to personalize each release, but by addressing it to only one person, at least the editor or journalist doesn't get put on a general 'bcc' list. You also run less of a risk of bouncing into their spam folder.

Short, sweet and to the point

Your title should be informative, concise and mention the firm name and main point of the release. It should also be used as the subject of your email. If you need to, provide a quick

introductory title in your subject line and a slightly longer one to introduce your release in the body of the email. For example:

- ★ Brief: SMPS Boston Celebrates Outstanding Communication
- ★ Full: SMPS Boston Celebrates Outstanding Communications at Annual ROC Awards Gala.

Minimize Clicks

Paste your release into the body of your email. Media professionals are busy people and you want to make their lives as easy as possible. If they have to open an email and then open an attachment, chances are they won't take that next step. At the very top of the release above the title make any necessary personal notes briefly and in a font size and style that separates it from the body of your email. These notes can include photo credits and captions, or someone's hometown or year of graduation, if applicable to the recipient.

Attaching images

Make sure that any image you attach is small enough to make it into the intended mailboxes. Your personal note can include a line such as 'higher resolution images available upon request' but respect your recipient's email limitations by keeping images small – a suggested size is 4x5 inches at 150 dpi. Keeping files sizes under 800kb is a good rule of thumb. Also, make sure your image is clearly identified with your firm name and a brief description (e.g. SMPSBoston_AwardsCommittee.jpg).

Distributing news is a cost-effective and highly targeted manner in which to grow visibility for your firm. It should be approached as one of many tools in your public relations arsenal and can be used liberally to disseminate all types of information. By following some simple guidelines and respecting time and work-load of media personnel, you will begin to see coverage of your company news where you need it most.