

HERITAGE[®]

BATHROOMS



GUIDE TO WRITING A PRESS RELEASE



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The goal of a press release is to convey your story in such an interesting way that your chosen media outlet will cover it in their own news bulletins. This could be your local or national newspaper, TV or radio station, magazine or website.

It is important to be aware that the media receive a huge amount of material from a number of sources every day. So, for your story to be successful, it is essential that it's interesting to the media and their audience.

When starting to write your story you need to begin with the basic questions, sometimes referred to as the 5Ws of journalism:

- Who – Who is involved in the story, this could also be the business involved, not just individuals
- What – What has happened, what is effected or being celebrated?
- When – It is important your story is timely, there is no point sending out a story a week after the event it refers to has taken place
- Where – Where did/will the event take place? If your story is local and you are trying to get coverage in a local media outlet this becomes an even more important factor
- Why – This covers what is interesting or engaging in your story and why people will want to know about it

Additionally, understanding the criteria the media will judge your story on will help you structure your story and avoid it being rejected. These criteria are called 'news values' and some of them include:

- Timeliness – the story should be current, or in time for an event that it is relevant to – plan ahead so your stories link to what will happen in the next twelve months

- Proximity – If you're a local business, a press release targeted at the local media will be more successful than one targeted at national media as they are more likely to be focused on national news
- Unusualness – What is unusual or unique about the story? "It is not news if a dog bites a man, but it is news if a man bites a dog" (John B. Bogart, city editor of New York Sun, 1882)
- Human interest – news is created by and affects people so elements of human interest may add news value
- Entertainment / celebrities / the elite – Stories that are humorous or entertain can gain attention and celebrities will also attract media interest
- Bad news / good news – Bad news is often considered to be hard news and good news as soft. Hard news stories usually cover subjects like politics, economics, conflict, crime, etc. They're factual and aim to inform. Soft news stories usually cover human interest topics as well as arts, entertainment, health and education. They're longer and often written as feature stories that aim to entertain as well as inform.

The more of these elements you have in a story the more likely it will be selected. If your story does not meet many of these criteria, the more you should consider reworking your story, presenting it as a feature or using it on your own news source, e.g. your website.