

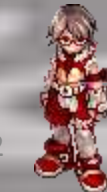
Press releases

How to promote your FIRST Team



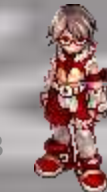
What is a press release

- A pseudo-news story
- Third person
- Attracts editors & reporters



How do you use a PR?

- Email, fax and/or snail mail
- Sent to:
 - Newspapers
 - Television
 - Online media
 - Radio



What is the format of a press release?

[COMPANY LOGO]

Contact: John Smith
Tel. 555/555-2222
Cell Phone: 555/555-2222
Email: johnsmith@anywhere.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAIN TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE GOES HERE IN ALL UPPER CASE
Subtitle Goes Here in Title Case (Upper and Lower)

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If you'd like more information about this topic, or to schedule an interview with John Smith, please
call Pat Brown at 555/555-2222 or e-mail Pat at pr@theplace4vitamins.com

- Place your logo, contact information and press release date in the upper banner.
- The main title should be in all caps and centered
- The subtitle should be in Upper and lower case, with capitalized first letters and centered.
- The body – who, what, why, where, when, how is next – put most important info first, least important last
- Boilerplate information before the end
- ### marks the end of the release
- Repeat contact info at the end – we'll go over these in more detail in the following slides



What is the secret to getting a press release printed?

- Think like a reporter!
 - Make it REAL news
 - Hook – Deliver a sharp story angle that's of interest to the public
 - Be professional & courteous
- Inform Simply
 - High school level



Develop an angle

- Know what is newsworthy
 - Attract general public
 - Highlight
 - Local Community involvement
 - Controversies
 - Cool/new/fascinating
 - Topical (interesting based on the season, or current public interest topics)



Writing a great title

- The Bad:
 - Team 1511 sponsors robotics event at local high school for the general public
- Awesome titles
 - Teen geeks battle for robotics glory
 - Robotics kids celebrate international success
- Subheads
 - Details



The Five “W”s & How

- Requirements
 - Who is affected or interested or participating
 - What is the thing you’ re promoting
 - Where will it be or where was it
 - When will it be or when was it
 - Why should people be interested
 - How can they engage (attend, celebrate, sponsor, etc.)
- Use news writing style – not a fact based one



The Rest

- Back up claims – Feed the Reporter
- Provide a quote to put things in perspective
 - If possible find an uninvolved expert to provide quote
- Help reporter by
 - Providing background material
 - ### = Done!
 - Contact Info



More Recommendations

- Hype-bloated phrases = Bad!!!
- You are the Journalist!
- Newspapers = Ideas!
- Keep it short, don' t fluff!
- Format



Connecting with the Press

- Create a PR Mailing list
- Connect with:
 - Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn
 - Use a TEAM not personal account
- PICK SMART!
 - Choose the right resource at the media outlet to connect to



Creating a press calendar

- Chart your events for the year and create due-dates
- Assign resources & follow up
- Pre-pen content early!
- Create some fill in the blank releases for each event
- Use boilerplates to repeat info about FIRST and your team.



Involving the team

- Create a PR sub-team led by a mentor or parent who is good at and enjoys writing
- Good writing skills = real-world benefits
- Parent or Mentor is final Edit & Trim editor
- Meet frequently
 - Assign one release/person
- Promote & Provide
 - Add Press Releases to the website
 - Be sure to provide press contact info on your site



What is news?

- Coverage depends on available space
- Consider announcing:
 - Community service
 - Demos
 - Competitions
 - Kickoff, ship dates
 - Other significant events



Alternatives to regular news

- Many newspapers and TV stations have websites where they allow you to “self report”
 - Upload Pictures
 - Events
 - Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down
 - Opinion columns
 - Community forums



Be aware of media calendars

- Watch for large newspaper coverings
 - Volunteer for coverage!
- Send everywhere!
- If you are at a local or regional school watch for announcements about a larger newspaper covering your region in pictures or stories and volunteer to help the reporter cover your team as part of it.
- Don't be shy about sending press releases or making press contacts in other cities where you'll be competing.



What if they show up at your event!?

- Have a team spokesperson
 - Guide the media person
 - Assign an adult
 - Provide SAFETY GLASSES! 😊
- Don't lose them!
 - Have 3-5 points of discussion
 - Have “quotable” statements ready



What if they show up at your event!?

- Be in uniform!
- Give opportunity
- Provide high resolution!



Final notes

- Be pleasant & hand write notes
- Column space
- Want more coverage



Questions?

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