

News Releases That Get Picked Up

The goal for all news releases is to get “picked up,” which means published or aired. Even better, is having your news release used as the basis for a bigger feature put together by a journalist. There are ways to make your news releases get such serious consideration.

The most important thing is the content, or news in your release. Don't attempt publicity for no reason. There are plenty of legitimate developments that, depending on the media outlet, could be newsworthy.

News Ideas

- A show opening
- Your participation in a group show
- The start of classes
- New techniques you've discovered or practised or experimented with
- New medium you're working in
- A creative partnership or collaboration
- A new studio location or changes to your premises
- Donation of works to charity
- New services you provide
- Awards, appointments, honours, acknowledgement by other media outlet
- Artistic tragedies such as losses or destruction: Bad news can provide plenty of human interest, particularly if you focus on how you plan to overcome the setback

State your news in the very first paragraph of the release. Often, this is all that gets read, so it has to be compelling and powerful. Write in the third person, so instead of using “I,” give your name as if someone else was reporting about you. Try to be objective, writing an interesting article instead of blatant self-promotion about how wonderful your work is. Keep news releases short: no more than two double-spaced pages. Include background information on you and your work, and an interesting, attention-getting, perhaps startling quotation. Provide all the details that the public needs, including dates, times, location, cost and phone number for more information. This material is usually best at the end of the release, as only the most interested people will read this.

Format

At the top of the first page, on the left side, single-spaced, should go the name and contact details for the person to be called for more information or to set up an interview. This might be you or someone you appoint to handle publicity. On the right side of the page, put the date of the release. If you're publicizing an event, it's a courtesy to add a second line stating “Stale Date:” and then the date by which the event will be over. Media can then tell at a glance whether they have time to act on the release.

Provide an attention-getting title, but don't be surprised if the media uses their own version. This is an easy way for them to make their piece look different from any other media outlet's. Double space the text and keep it under two pages, and indicate the end of your release by putting “-#-“ or “-30” in the centre of the line beneath the last sentence. This traditional typesetting sign announces the end of a piece, but does not get printed.

Preparing a professional-looking news release that offers a story that is of real interest to the public should help land you valuable media recognition.