



Government  
of South Australia

Department of Trade and  
Economic Development

# BizFacts

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## Media Release Checklist

A media release is an organisation's written communication with target media about a newsworthy event, which it is hoped will generate some positive editorial coverage. It is essentially the bare facts of a news story about your business, whether a paragraph announcing a new appointment or a three page document of a complicated report.

### Why write media releases?

Seldom does positive publicity occur without some proactive effort on the part of your business

- Media releases give you the chance to offer a selection of facts and views and you get to decide what information you want to provide
- Media releases, and the possible publicity generated, can help to establish your organisation as innovative, informed, and a responsible citizen, and can be a powerful part of your marketing strategy
- Positive publicity helps to build awareness of your brand
- Audience members tend to place more reliance on editorial coverage than on advertising as it is generally thought to be unbiased, objective information.

### Instructions

Proceed through each item of the checklist and its corresponding links, ticking off each box as you progress.

KEY MEDIA RELEASE ISSUE / TASK		Completed ↘	N/A ↘
1.	<b>Ask your customers what media they digest</b> (print media, broadcast, electronic). Suggestions for how to go about this include conducting surveys, contacting a few key customers by phone or e-mail, observing your competitors etc.		
2.	<b>Develop a database of key media contacts</b> (editors and key reporters of publications read by your target audience)		
3.	<b>Alert your team to any possible topics for media releases</b> (i.e. include 'Topics for Media Releases' as an agenda item in your regular team meetings)		
4.	<b>Ensure topics are newsworthy</b> – just because it is interesting to you does not mean it is interesting to the media or to your target audience. It also needs to be relevant and timely		
5.	<b>Writing the release</b> Generally, a media release should contain the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The date of issue to the media</li> <li>◆ Whether it is for immediate release or to be embargoed to a particular date</li> <li>◆ A headline (to generate interest and summarises what the release is about)</li> <li>◆ An introductory paragraph (provides some brief background and summarises the topic of the release)</li> <li>◆ One to two paragraphs which cover the fundamentals of the news– the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, HOW, WHY.</li> <li>◆ A quotation from a key individual</li> <li>◆ Contact details of an informed individual for the press to contact if required</li> <li>◆ Photograph(s), graphs, diagrams if appropriate</li> </ul> Include double line spacing and large margins		
6.	<b>Once you are satisfied with the release, send it</b> (via fax or email) to the appropriate target media. Have your key contact person alerted to the release and have them ready and available for possible calls by the media.		

## Tips to Remember

- Make sure there is an angle for the media release – put an interesting slant on the subject which will have particular relevance to the reader of the publication
- Make sure your lead paragraph is strong in content and demands attention (you only have around 30 seconds to grab the attention of the recipient of your release)
- Check your spelling and grammar!
- Avoid jargon
- Use everyday language and don't indulge in obscure and inflated expression
- Use simple sentences and switch to a new paragraph after each sentence. Limit sentences to 25-30 words
- Consider media training for those who may appear on radio or television.

## Examples of topics for media releases *(from Public Relations Institute of Australia<sup>1</sup>)*

- New product releases
- Major installations completed
- Background information relevant to your business on a current issue in the media
- New senior appointments
- New technological advances
- Major contracts won
- Important quality approvals and/or awards
- Upcoming announcements or events

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<sup>1</sup> Information Source: Public Relations Institute of Australia

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