



# Writing a Good Press Release

## A Reflective Strategy Guide

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### Introduction

A press release is often your first and sometimes only chance to shape how a story lands.

Done well, it earns attention and drives coverage. Done badly, it gets deleted. Journalists are flooded with messages every day. Your job isn't to shout louder, it's to be clearer.

At Reflective Strategy, we believe good communication rests on clarity, structure, and psychological insight. That applies just as much to press releases as to policy or campaign work. You don't need gimmicks. You need a story that matters, told simply and well.

The best press releases are well organised. They don't just describe a moment they fit into a strategy. They're written with purpose, backed by evidence, and shaped for the audience they're meant to reach.

This guide outlines the principles we follow when helping clients write press releases that land. Not hype. Not fluff. Just what's needed and what works.

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### How to Use This Guide

This guide is structured around the essential elements of a strong press release from headline to sign-off.

1. **Write a Headline That Speaks for Itself**
2. **Start With What Matters**
3. **Use Numbers With Purpose**
4. **Write Like a Human**
5. **Add Quotes That Add Value**
6. **Bring in a Credible Second Voice**
7. **End with Structure, Not Spin**
8. **And What Makes a Press Release *Really* Good?**

Each section includes practical prompts and psychologically grounded tips. At the end, you'll find a **Quick Checklist** to help you review your draft before hitting send. Think of it as a companion, not a manual something to return to whenever you need clarity.

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### Need Support?

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### 1. Write a Headline That Speaks for Itself

Your headline is the first thing a journalist will see. In many cases, it's the only thing they'll read before deciding whether to keep going.

- What's happening?
- Why now?
- Why does it matter?

Avoid wordplay or internal shorthand. Clarity beats cleverness. A strong headline can usually be stand-alone on a screen, in an inbox, or above an article.

Don't try to be flashy. The best headlines often read like good news headlines: active, specific, and immediately informative.

And don't be afraid of being plain. In a crowded inbox, plain can feel refreshing.

✦ *Tip: If your headline only works in context, it doesn't work.*

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### 2. Start With What Matters

Don't warm up. Lead with the point.

The first paragraph should clearly explain what's new, why it matters, and who it affects. Avoid scene-setting, mission statements, or buried leads. Journalists want the story not the sales pitch.

Think of your first paragraph as your one real chance to land the message. Don't waste it on things that could be Googled or guessed.

The more concrete, the better: "X launched today" beats "X is pleased to announce." Ground the reader in what's happening and why it's relevant now.

✦ *Tip: Ask yourself, "What would I need to know if I were seeing this for the first time?"*

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### 3. Use Numbers With Purpose

A single well-chosen stat can lift your story. It shows scale, urgency, or impact and gives a hook for follow-up.

- How many people are affected?
- What's the cost of inaction?
- What change have you delivered?

Don't flood the release with data pick what helps the story land. A press release isn't a report. One or two good numbers are often more powerful than a page of metrics.

Good numbers also give journalists confidence: they can see that your claim is rooted in something real. If you're quoting percentages, include the actual figures behind them, transparency builds trust.

And remember: the absence of numbers is also a message. If something can't be measured, can it still be felt? If so, find language that makes the impact tangible.

✦ *Tip: If your numbers feel vague or padded, they probably are.*

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### 4. Write Like a Human

Avoid acronyms, industry lingo, or bureaucratic tone. A good press release reads like something a real person might say clearly, confidently, and without overcomplication.

Short sentences. Active verbs. Concrete language. Every word should do a job.

The tone should feel natural, but not casual. Aim for clarity, not charisma.

If the story is serious, let the language breathe. If it's hopeful, let that warmth show.

And remember journalists are humans too. Writing like one helps you be read by one.

✦ *Tip: Read it aloud. If it sounds stiff or unclear, rewrite it*

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### 5. Add Quotes That Add Value

Your quote is not the place to repeat what's already been said.

Instead, use it to offer:

- Context or insight
- Emotional tone or stakes
- A call to action or forward-looking comment

This is where your spokesperson gets to sound like a leader, not a robot. Be clear, specific, and natural someone the audience can relate to, not just respect.

Avoid generic language like “We are delighted...” or “This is a step forward.” Ask: what's interesting, urgent, or real? A good quote brings energy to the page.

✦ *Tip: Ask yourself: “Would a journalist actually use this quote?”*

### 6. Bring in a Credible Second Voice

If someone else believes in your story, let them say so.

A short supporting quote from a partner, customer, expert, or peer group adds credibility. It shows that your message isn't just internal it resonates outward.

Choose your voice carefully. It should feel additive, not decorative. Don't include a second voice for the sake of it include it because it deepens the story or extends its reach.

You don't always need a name everyone knows. Sometimes, relevance and authenticity matter more than profile.

Think tactically: the second voice can also help open doors with policymakers, funders, or audiences beyond your own.

And if that second voice shares the emotional burden of the story urgency, outrage, hope the message travels further.

✦ *Tip: Think strategically. Who do your target audiences trust?*

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### 7. End with Structure, Not Spin

The final section of your release should make it easy to follow up:

- A short “About us” paragraph
- Contact details (including name, number, and email)
- Optional links to further info, interviews, or visuals

Keep it clean and well-spaced. Don't try to force in extra story here, the work is already done.

This part isn't just admin. It shows you're prepared, professional, and ready for what comes next. Make it easy for someone to get in touch and give them confidence that you'll respond.

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### 8. And What Makes a Press Release *Really* Good?

If the earlier sections are the minimum standard, here's what the best press releases often do:

- **They feel purposeful:** It's obvious *why* this is being sent, and *why now*.
- **They lead with clarity and end with direction:** There's no drift, no filler.
- **They use quotes to say something new:** Not to repeat or decorate.
- **They have a rhythm:** Short sentences, strong verbs, clean structure. They read well.
- **They're written with empathy:** for the reader's time, context, and constraints.

And most of all:

They don't try too hard. They trust the strength of the story.

If you're asking yourself, “Is this something someone would *want* to read?” you're in the right mindset.

**Bonus Tip:** Timing matters. Unless you're breaking urgent news, aim to send releases early in the day ideally Tuesday to Thursday, mid-morning. Avoid weekends or Friday afternoons when inboxes are either overloaded or ignored.

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### ✓ Checklist

- Does the headline say clearly what the story is and why it matters?
  - Is the first paragraph short, clear, and informative?
  - Have you used one or two strong numbers to back up your point?
  - Is the language free of jargon and easy to read aloud?
  - Does your quote offer real insight, emotion, or direction?
  - Have you included a second voice for credibility or reach?
  - Is the release no more than one page two at most?
  - Have you included contact info, a clear sign-off, and a short “about us”?
  - Would you read this if it landed in your inbox?
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### A Final Word from Reflective Strategy

A press release is more than an announcement. It's a test of your clarity and a chance to show others what kind of organisation you are.

If you can't explain your story in 400 words, no one else will. But when you can, when your message is sharp, your timing is right, and your tone is human, you give others a reason to care, to respond, and to act.

At Reflective Strategy, we don't just help write press releases. We help you find the story worth telling and make sure it lands with the right people, in the right way, at the right moment.

Whether you're:

- preparing for a media launch
- responding to scrutiny or crisis
- building long-term visibility
- or just trying to make sense of your message

...we can help you bring clarity, calm, and credibility to the process.

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