

# Top 10 Common Press Release Mistakes

## 1. Backdated

Distributors typically do not pick up a press release that includes a date in the lead paragraph (first person) earlier than the actual release date. But if you prefer to include a date, make sure that it syncs with the actual release date.

*Effect: Limits distribution*

## 2. First Person

A press release should read like a news story. News stories are written in third person. The only time your press release should contain pronouns such as I, we, us, or, your, etc. is when you are quoting someone. Opinions should only be expressed within quotation marks. Remember the reason publicity is so effective is because it does not read like an advertisement.

*Issue: Creditability*

## 3. Duplicates

At the moment it is not possible to target multiple industries. Duplicate (or substantially similar) submissions of another press release already in the system will not be accepted. If a press release has been previously released on Business Wire, PR Newswire, or PR Web, and was already included into Google News, then it is most likely not going to be included again.

## 4. Length

Distributors typically do not pick up a press release that is too short (less than 150 words or so), or too long (more than two pages or 500 words). Press releases that are too short tend to read like advertisements and are not considered newsworthy.

*Effect: Limits distribution, creditability*

## 5. Newsworthy

What is the news event?

For the media to consider your announcement newsworthy it must have a strong news angle and be interesting. The angle (or news peg) is the story hook; the news event; the controlling issue; the reason for the media to publish your story. Your news release should be written objectively and in third person. Remember, publicity is not advertising. Your news release needs tell people your story.

*Effect: Limits distribution, creditability*

## 6. Reader Opinions + Op-Ed

Submissions that are written, as Reader Opinions, Op-Ed, or Open Letters for the media, are not accepted. Remember a news release should be written objectively and in third person.

## 7. Articles

Articles are not accepted.

You are welcomed to write a news release announcing your article or new web content. Make sure to include excerpts or quotes, and a link to the full story.

## 8. All Caps

It is unprofessional to write a press release in all uppercase characters (it gives the impression of shouting). The headline and body of your press release should be in proper case. The only time you should use all uppercase characters is for strong emphasis, which should be used in moderation, i.e., no more than a few consecutive words in all caps. Press releases written entirely in uppercase characters is unacceptable.

*Effect: Difficult to read*

## 9. Headline

The headline of your press release should convey a snapshot of what it is about. Your headline is the first, and often

the only, thing an editor reads. Headlines must immediately grab the readers' attention otherwise your press release is dead. Common headline errors:

- One-word headlines are unacceptable
- Do not use all caps or exclamation points
- It is not necessary to include "For Immediate Release" when distributing via the internet
- For search engine optimization purposes: Limit your headline to no more than 65 characters

#### **10. Excessive Links**

Including links in your press release should always be done in moderation. Having an excessive amount of links in the body of a press release is distracting for the reader. In addition, stuffing the bottom of your release with a list of links that provide no news value is unacceptable.

To submit press releases go to:

[www.PRLeap.com](http://www.PRLeap.com)

A free press release distribution service to major search engines, web sites and newswires, since 2003.