



# How to Boss Your First PR Campaign

By Sarah Ross  
September 2020



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# About me



- PR Account Manager at Anicca for 5+ years
- Worked in industry for nearly 10 years (always agency)
- Background in journalism
- I work on:
  - PR strategy
  - PR campaign delivery
  - SEO content
  - Link building
- Punk, gigs, records



Examples of the  
***brands we work with***



# What is Public Relations?

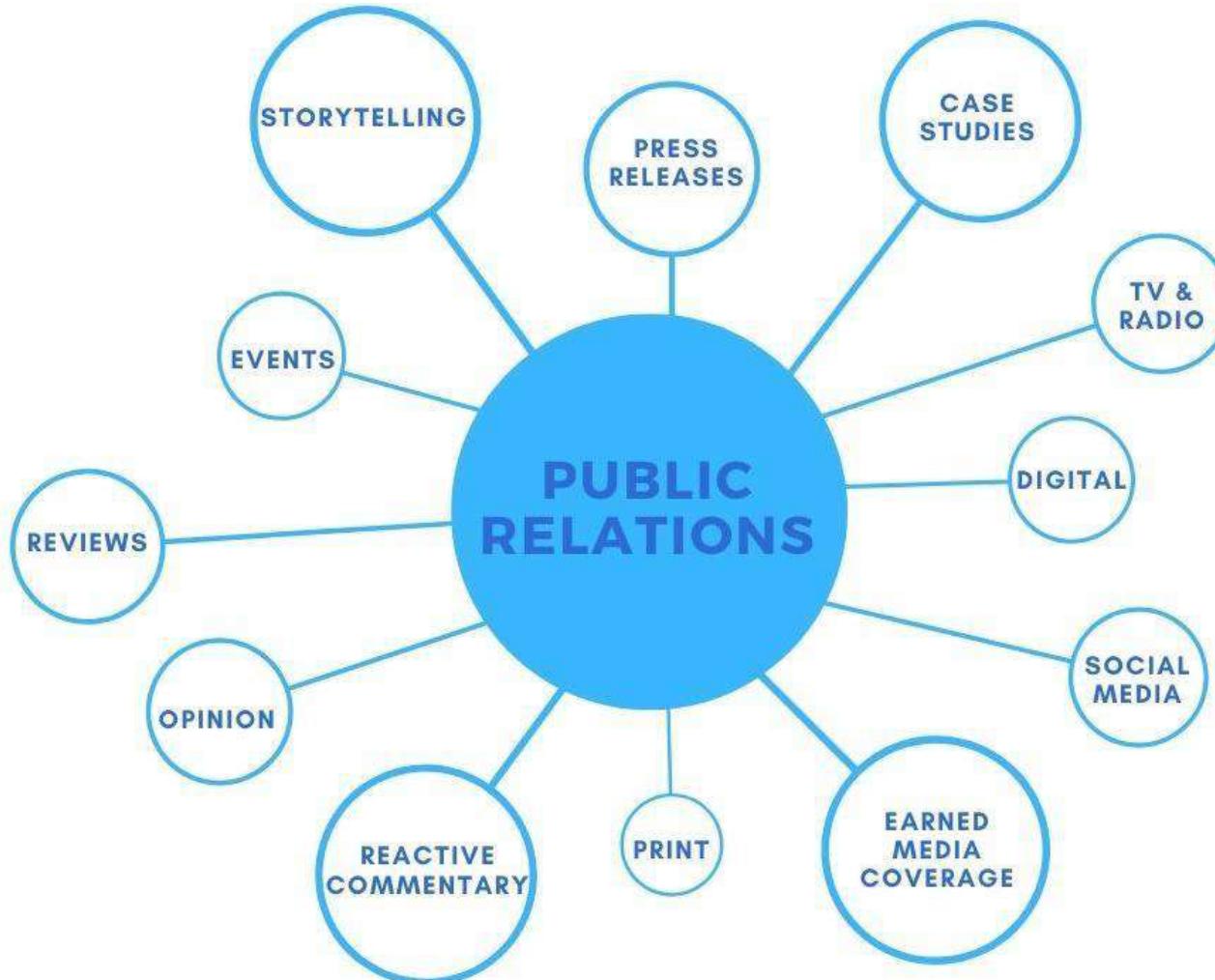


# What is Public Relations?

- Public relations is the strategic management of communication between a company or organisation and the public
- It builds and maintains a positive public image on behalf of a brand
- It increases brand awareness through earned media
- Defends brand reputation during times of crisis
- Supports SEO activities through online citations and link building

“Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics.”

*Definition according to the Public Relations Society of America*



# What Public Relations Isn't

## **PR is not free advertising or advertorial**

- Publications will not publish the story exactly as you have written it
- Earned media – your story needs to be strong enough to warrant coverage
- Your story will be passed to the advertising team if it is too sales driven

## **PR is not 100% controllable**

- Once issued you cannot control how or when it is published
- A journalist may see an alternative news hook
- Combined with other stories (e.g. round up appointment stories for regions / sectors)

## **PR is not 100% guaranteed**

- No guarantees of coverage
- News agendas change very quickly

## So why do I need PR?

92% of consumers  
trust earned media

*Cision, 2019*

VS

56% of respondents  
trust advertising  
“completely” or  
“somewhat” across all  
channels

*Nielson, 2019*

# How do I gain coverage for my business?

- 1 Understand what journalists are looking for

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- 2 Create a newsworthy story

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- 3 Present your story in a way that appeals to journalists

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**100%**

of journalists stipulate their number one method of finding stories is through press releases (Meltwater, 2018)

**300**

Average number of emails a journalist receives every morning (Meltwater, 2018)

**45%**

Increase in effectiveness for press releases with an instant news hook (Cision, 2018)

**25%**

of journalists write on average seven stories a day (Meltwater, 2018)

**70%**

of journalists spend less than one minute reading an email (iScribbler, 2018)

# What makes a story newsworthy?





# Understanding News Values

# What are news values?

A guideline used by journalists and editors to determine the relevance of a story:

- Is it of interest to their audience?
- Does it warrant coverage?

Your news doesn't need to tick everything on the list to have value.

However, the more it ticks the more value it has and the more likely you are to secure coverage.

Organisations place greater value over some news values depending on their audience.

1. Timeliness
2. Proximity
3. Impact
4. Prominence
5. Oddity
6. Relevance
7. Conflict

# 1. Timeliness



News you can trust since 1931

Coronavirus Northampton Town Northampton Saints Sport What's On Retro Lifestyle

## Northamptonshire technology businesses working with NHS to tackle PPE shortage

Silverstone Technology Cluster mobilising its 'world class' engineering and manufacturing firms for coronavirus fight

By Jack Duggan

Friday, 24th April 2020, 3:02 pm

Updated: Friday, 24th April 2020, 3:49 pm



### BusinessLive

REGIONS ▾ WALES BREXIT SECTORS ▾ OPINION PARTNER CONTENT



IN ASSOCIATION WITH NatWest

we are what we do NatWest

SEND ME DAILY EMAILS ADVERTISE WITH US MARKETING SOLUTIONS GAAPWEB TOTALLY LEGAL SEC'S IN THE CITY CONTACT US ABOUT US

B Enterprise ▾ I Am Open

## CCM Group taking on staff after selling 10m masks and hand sanitisers to councils, care homes and others

Prior to the lockdown the Mansfield business was celebrating its best ever financial performance

SHARE COMMENTS

By Tom Pegden Leicester Mercury business editor

03.06.12 JUN 2020

ENTERPRISE

'News' should offer something new

24-hour news cycles and social media make timeliness more important than ever

Journalists need stories that are new or even still unfolding.

- New achievements
- Hitting business milestones
- New team members
- Creating new apprenticeships

## 2. Proximity

Tiny 'teapot' found in Derbyshire garage sells for £390k

3 days ago



Toilet paper panic buying strikes again as shelves are stripped of loo roll in Australia

[View 13 comments](#)



Metro News Reporter Friday 26 Jun 2020 10:37 am



796

SHARES



The closer the news occurs to the audience of the media outlet the more relevant it becomes.

This is particularly important for regional media – make sure you're sending them news for their patch.

Proximity doesn't just apply geographically, it also applies culturally, which helps to explain why we are often more informed about events in America and Australia than closer, non-English speaking countries.



### 3. Impact

#### Debenhams ready to cut 2,500 jobs in new blow to high street

Beleaguered retailer says trading remains slow after reopening 124 stores



#### DIY firm Screwfix to open 40 new stores and create 400 jobs

Edward Thicknesse



The greater the number of people affected by a story, the greater the coverage.

- Major job creation
- Major job losses
- Service closures – bus routes, road closures, building work
- Business growth – how does this affect the industry or local community?

# 4. Prominence

## NEWS

[Home](#) | [Coronavirus](#) | [US Election](#) | [UK](#) | [World](#) | [Business](#) | [Politics](#) | [Tech](#) | [Science](#)

[UK](#) | [England](#) | [N. Ireland](#) | [Scotland](#) | [Alba](#) | [Wales](#) | [Cymru](#) | [Local News](#)

### Marcus Rashford: Food voucher U-turn after footballer's campaign

① 16 June 2020

[f](#) [e](#) [t](#) [m](#) [Share](#)

Coronavirus pandemic

### Covid: Manchester mayor calls for 'urgent review' of 10pm closures

① 2 hours ago



The more well-known a figure is, the bigger the news story.

- National press – royal figures and celebrities
- Industry titles – company directors and thought leaders from the most well-known firms
- Regional media – councillors, local celebrities community champions and business owners.

## 5. Oddity

### **Ben & Jerry's have a 'flavour graveyard' with all their discontinued ice creams**

Ever wondered what happens to a Ben & Jerry's ice cream flavour when they stop producing it? Well it turns out they all end up in one very specific place

### **Police pick up a penguin from village street in Nottinghamshire after farmyard escape**

The flightless bird had escaped from his home on a farm about a mile away.

⌚ Sunday 16 August 2020 23.09, UK

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

### **Pensioner wiped out village's broadband for 18 months by turning on old TV**

View 26 comments

News that is unusual or rare if often used to create more light-hearted news.

These stories are usually really sharable and perform well on social media because they offer a surprise.

Think animals in strange places, extreme weather or brands doing unusual things.

## 6. Relevance

The screenshot shows a magazine page from GLAMOUR. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Makeup, Hair, Skin, Fashion, Entertainment, Beauty Club, More, Follow, and a search icon. Below the navigation is a large, blurry photograph of a couple in wedding attire sharing a kiss. A white text overlay on the photo reads "LIFESTYLE" above the headline and "Here's what a post-lockdown wedding looks like" below it. The main headline in bold black text is "From virtual caviar tastings to lockdown castles, how luxury has adapted in the time of COVID-19". Below the headline is a paragraph of text: "\$115 caviar tasting flights include three jars of caviar, creme fraiche, a mother of pearl caviar spoon and an accompanying Instagram Live with experts". At the bottom of the article, it says "by Megan C. Hills • London • 29 May 2020". Below the article are three social media sharing icons: Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp.

Relevance varies significantly between media titles depending on the type of outlet.

Regional, lifestyle, business and trade titles often look to the national media for inspiration.

Can you comment on a topic that is gaining coverage in the media right now?

Environmental topics, such as the plastic-free movement and fast fashion, are currently popular.

## 7. Conflict



CORONAVIRUS FOOTBALL NEWS ▾ CELEBS TV POLITICS SPORT ▾ MORE ▾



### Mum slams school's strict lunchbox rules that 'add £100 to monthly food shop'

Mum-of-two Jennifer Ireton has shared the extensive guidelines she was sent by her son's primary school setting out what she should be packing in her son's lunchbox, and what is banned

Share



15 COMMENTS

By Luke Matthews Audience Writer

12:37, 22 SEP 2020

NEWS

N News ▾ Nottingham News ▾ BBC

### Nottingham academic hits out at government's decision to bring in 10pm curfew

'When were any of those involved in making this decision last in a city centre pub at closing time?'

Conflict in the form of a disagreement can be newsworthy.

E.g. community groups opposing council plans or directors disagreeing with new legislation for their industry.

An issue that could be seen to endanger people, waste money or lead to skill shortages could meet the criteria of conflict.

Back to school stories often use this format, with parents in conflict with schools over uniform rules.

A blurred background image of a modern office environment. Several people are working at desks equipped with multiple computer monitors. The office has a contemporary design with large, blue, dome-shaped pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. A central wooden table holds a large bouquet of flowers.

# Do Your Research

# Understanding Your Audience

Before you start developing ideas and potential stories based on the seven news values, you need to complete the following research:

1. Who is your audience?
2. What are their interests?
3. What media titles do they consume?
4. What stories do those media titles publish?

# Always Follow the News

Helps you react to hot topics:

- ✓ Timeliness
- ✓ Prominence

Find trends and talking points:

- ✓ Timeliness
- ✓ Relevance

Identify regional angles:

- ✓ Proximity
- ✓ Impact

Discover thought leadership opportunities:

- ✓ Prominence
- ✓ Relevance

Respond to issues that may affect your business or community:

- ✓ Conflict
- ✓ Impact

# Always Follow the Competition

Know what your competitors are up to

Follow their social media accounts

Follow key hashtags for your industry  
(#digitalmarketing #digitalpr)

Set up Google Alerts to be notified of any new coverage they achieve

## Benefits:

- Helps you understand the stories that get traction
- Keep up-to-date with discussions in your industry
- Informs your media list

Alerts

Monitor the web for interesting new content

Anicca Digital

This will create an email alert for sarah@anicca.co.uk.

Create Alert Show options

Alert preview

There are no recent results for your search query. Below are existing results that match your search query.

NEWS

Jennifer Young, Bassist for Travis Larson Band, is the Glue that Holds the Band Together  
Guitar Girl Mag  
... off of a series of winter NAMM Show appearances and performances to resume work on a new album, the long-awaited follow-up to 2016's Anicca.

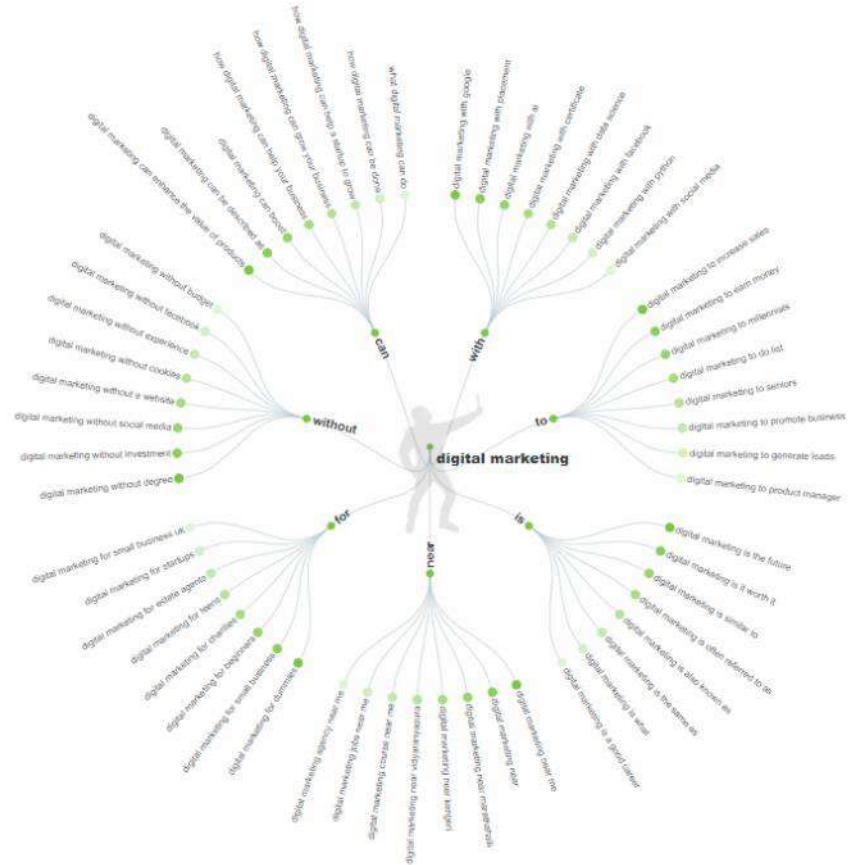
WEB

Anicca Digital  
anicca.co.uk  
Anicca are a Multi-Award Winning Digital Marketing Agency that use data to drive leads and sales to your business through SEO, PPC, Social Media ...

(Use speech marks to refine results to this phrase only, e.g. "Anicca Digital")

# Inspiration for Developing Ideas

- Story mining with colleagues – customer service teams, department specialists, etc.
- Your own data – has there been an increase in demand for certain services or products?
- Google Analytics – Behaviour – Site Search
- [Answer the Public](#)
- Twitter #journorequest
- [Help a Reporter Out](#)
- Follow publications and journalists on social media
- Forward features lists
- Twitter follow [@DigitalPREx](#) and [@DigitalPRInspo](#)



# Build a Media List

# Building a Media List

## Free methods

- Social media
- Media websites – contact us
- Google
- Guess – use the same format as any email address for that title (e.g. name.surname@title.com)

## Paid media databases

- Vuelio
- Response Source
- Gorkana

## Tips

- List your contacts in a spreadsheet.
- Keep notes on who picks up or publishes your story.
- This will also help you to keep track when it comes to following up with journalists at a later time.
- Helps you to keep track of outlets you know you can get coverage from.

# Media List Example

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Contact Name	Job Title	Media Type	Outlet	Email	Phone	Url	Date Issued	Notes
2		Business Editor	Newspaper	Leicester Mercury			<a href="https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/">https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/</a>	29-Sep	Asked for more info - deadline 30/09
3		Editor	Newspaper	Coalville Times				29-Sep	Published 30/09
4		Editor	Magazine	Community Voice					
5		Editor	News Website	Love Business East Midlands					
6		Editor	Magazine	Niche Magazine					
7		Editor	News Website	East Midlands Business Link					Followed up 07/10
8		Journalist	News Website	East Midlands Business Link					OOO
9		Journalist	News Website	East Midlands Business Link					
10		Editor	News Website	East Midlands Business Desk					Followed up 07/10
11			News Website	Insider Business Online					Published 30/09
12			News Website	Insider Business Online					
13		News desk	News Website	BBP Media					
14		Editor	News Website	BBP Media					
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									

# Creating your first PR campaign





# Developing a Newsworthy Story

# Developing Your Story

Once you have compiled a list of possible topics for your press release, perform the following checks:

- Is your story newsworthy outside of your company?
- Who will be interested in this story?
- Compare it to the list of news values - does it tick any in the list?
- How does your story fit into wider topics in the news?

**Reminder:** Regularly reading news stories from the media outlets you want coverage from will give you a greater understanding of what they publish.

Also research the stories covered by the journalist you are looking to target with your pitch.

## Developing Your Story

If you can't see how your story meets any news values, then it's probably not newsworthy.

Company anniversaries, staff anniversaries, website relaunches and rebrands are the ones we get asked about most often.

Generally, they're not of interest to the media, unless you're a household name or unless they are major milestones.

Every company has them and the media can't cover each one.

You can always run the idea by a journalist for their feedback on whether it's worth pursuing.

# How to Make a Story More Newsworthy

The story you've got in mind might not be of interest to a journalist yet, but there are ways to make it newsworthy.

Additional information or impressive stats can help to meet one or more of the news values above and add weight to an anniversary or relaunch story.

- Company aims for the future
- Job creation – are you aiming to double your workforce in the next 12 months?
- Client wins
- Product development
- Turnover targets – what was your turnover in the first year of business, compared to what it is now?
- Inspiring the next generation
- Company history – do you have a rags to riches story?

# How to Make a Story More Newsworthy

Alternatively, look for an oddity.

- Does your company founder have an interesting background
- Did they switch industries to launch the firm?
- Has your market research thrown up some unusual findings?

Or you could comment on a conflict facing your business or industry.

Are there any new industry regulations or guidelines that you disagree with?

Could new regulations impact on jobs or profits?

If there's an issue you think is hindering business growth, recruitment or product development or a safety concern that hasn't been properly addressed then this could be a newsworthy angle for your story.

But do tread carefully, so as not to damage any relationships.

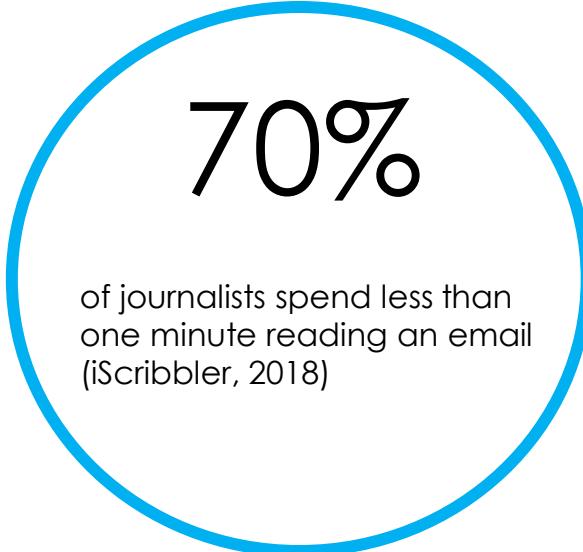
# Creating a News Hook

A news hook is the main angle of your story.

A journalist won't read your entire press release.

They'll make the decision based on the first couple of paragraphs.

- ✓ Attention grabbing
- ✓ Succinct
- ✓ Easy to understand
- ✓ Covers the important facts



70%

of journalists spend less than one minute reading an email  
(iScribbler, 2018)

# Creating a News Hook

Your news hook should be easily conveyed in one sentence that includes all or most of the 6 Ws.

- **Who** - name your company or describe your business. E.g. Anicca Digital or ‘leading digital marketing agency’.
- **What** - what has happened? Explain as concisely as you can. E.g. moved to new premises, taken on more staff or hosting an event.
- **Where** - Be specific for regional press (e.g. Leicester) but more general for national media (e.g. East Midlands). You can include more detail further down.
- **When** - Use the present tense to emphasise to the journalist that your story is new.
- **Why** - Why has this happened or why is it significant? E.g. the first, the latest, new or innovative.
- **How** - How has your business achieved this? Through investment to increase productivity or streamlined processes to save money.



# Drafting Your Press Release

# How to Write a Press Release

A press release is still the most effective tool for getting your story in front of journalists.

But how you write it is key to whether or not it gets picked up.

**How to make a press release more effective (global numbers):**



[Cision's 2018 Global State of the Media Report](#)

# How to Write a Press Release

Keep clear and concise



## Heading

How would you sum up the story in one sentence?



Who, What, Where, When,  
Why, How?

Your news hook should be clear in the first sentence

Additional detail

Who is the most appropriate person to comment on this story?



Quotes

Add a link to your website



CTA

Additional info about your company



Notes to editor

# How to Write a Press Release



The screenshot shows the BusinessLive website header. It features the 'BusinessLive' logo on the left, followed by navigation links for 'REGIONS ▾ WALES BREXIT SECTORS ▾ OPINION PARTNER CONTENT'. On the right, there are social media icons for Twitter and LinkedIn, a search icon, and a user profile icon. Below the header, a purple banner reads 'IN ASSOCIATION WITH NatWest' on the left and 'we are what we do NatWest' on the right. A thin horizontal line separates the header from the main content area. In the main content area, there is a breadcrumb trail 'B Retail & Consumer ▶ Retail' above a large, bold headline: 'Derbyshire caravan and motorhome retailer sees sales surge during coronavirus crisis'. Below the headline is a subtext: 'It coincides with new research which suggests more of us are considering caravan holidays'. A horizontal line follows this text.

## Derbyshire caravan and motorhome retailer sees sales surge during coronavirus crisis

It coincides with new research which suggests more of us are considering caravan holidays

A Derbyshire firm which sells new and used caravans has reported a sharp increase in sales during the coronavirus crisis.

Robinsons Caravans, based at Brimington, near Chesterfield, saw sales of caravans increase by nine per cent in June and 14% in July. And in June, the firm exceeded its sales targets for motorhomes by 250%.

# How to Write a Press Release



# Tips for Writing Your Press Release

**Don't make it time sensitive** – gaining approval from all stakeholders can often delay timely news, so remove references to time or dates where possible to stop your story becoming old news too quickly.

**Avoid using industry jargon** – keep in mind the journalist and audience you're talking to and adapt your language as necessary.

**Avoid using marketing or sales copy** – it makes it difficult for the journalist to see the real story if it's hidden behind too many adjectives. Journalists want facts. If it sounds too salesy they will likely bounce it to their advertising team.

**Read the news** - the best way to learn how to write like a journalist is to read how news stories are written in regional press and tabloids, e.g. Derby Telegraph, Metro, Daily Mirror, etc.



# Issuing Your Press Release

# Preparing Your Email

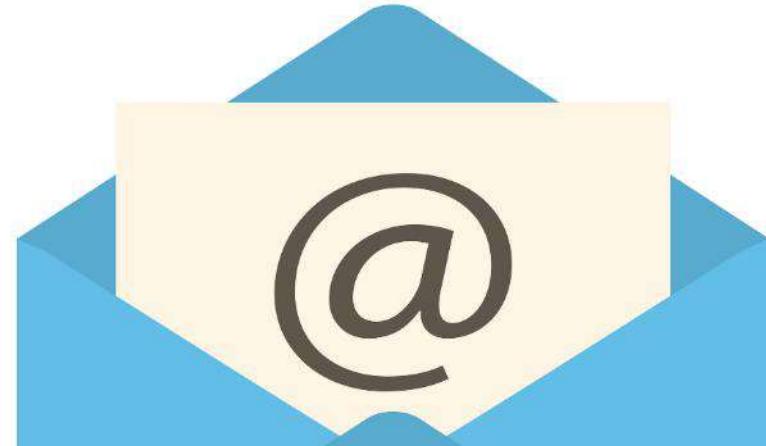
What you will need to issue your press release to the media:

- Approved press release
- High quality image – 1MB 300dpi
- Available time to answer media queries
- Spokesperson available for interview

Copy and paste your press release into the body of your email.

Attach your press release and image.

If you have more than one image or large file sizes, put into a Dropbox folder and add the link to your email.



# Preparing Your Pitch

Include a short pitch to the journalist:

- What the story is about
- Why they / their audience will be interested
- Reference other work they've done

Writing your subject line – keep it short and snappy. Best words to use\*:

- Best
- Revealed
- New
- Data
- Study

\*Research from Aira



# Tips for Writing Your Email

Personalised pitches generally get a better response.

Adapt your pitch for the type of media you are targeting  
e.g. regional, trade, lifestyle.

Don't put your subject line or headline in all capitals.

Follow up – if you've had no response and no coverage  
then email the journalist again.

Don't be afraid to change your subject line or pitch, keep  
notes on what generates the best response.

300

Average number of emails a  
journalist receives every  
morning (Meltwater, 2018)



# Building Relationships

# Getting Journalists Onside

- Understanding news values helps to maximise your PR activity.
- Feed journalists quality news stories that are relevant to the topics they cover.
- Don't fill their inbox with stories that aren't relevant, it makes it harder to gain coverage when you do have some real news to share.
- Journalists receive hundreds of stories every day, demonstrate that yours are worth reading.
- Journalist deadlines are short, do your best to meet them.
- Fit around a journalist's request where possible.
- Back up what you are saying with facts and stats.

# Thank you Any Questions?

Sarah Ross

 /sarahleanneross

 sarah@anicca.co.uk

# Offers



Online Learning During  
Coronavirus Lockdown

Free Access To Our  
Training Resources &  
Online Learning Portal

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one of Our Channel  
Specialists

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## **Next Webinar (Friday 10th October 9:00) – Getting started with LinkedIn advertising**

- ▶ Bakti Jethwa, Social Media Account Director at Anicca Digital, will present our next webinar in October.

<https://anicca.co.uk/webinars-videos/>