

# Public Relations Guide

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## Utilize Resources within your Chapter

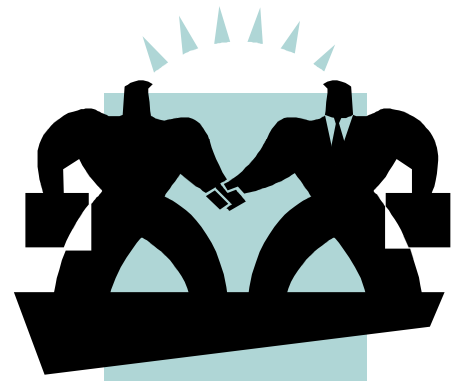
- # Talk to Parents and your Parent's friends
- # Use the contacts you make within your chapter to take to other organizations of which you are a part.
- # Use your Advisors & Alumni
- # Swap internship/job contact information
- # If you are active in your chapter you will be better able to promote your activities
- # Start discussions about public relations within your chapter
- # Contact brother/sister organizations
- # *Network! Network! Network!*

## Utilize Resources on your Campus

- # Greek Office
- # Women's Center
- # Campus Activities Office
- # Residences Halls
- # Sorority and Fraternity Houses
- # Career Services
- # Student Government
- # Keep faculty & staff informed and involved
- # *Co-Sponsor! Co-Sponsor! Co-Sponsor!*

## Utilize Resources within your Community

- # Connect with your chief of police
- # Connect with your fire department
- # Connect with local hospitals
- # Host events at local establishments
- # Get to know your Town Council
- # *Advertise! Advertise! Advertise!*



# Be Bigger Than Yourself!

## GET YOUR CHAPTERS NAME OUT THERE!

- 📄 Place ads in your campus newspaper
- 📄 Place ads in Campus Newsletters
- 📄 Submit information to the Greek Office for Newsletters and Greek publications
- 📄 Utilize display cases in the Student Union and in various places around your University
- 📄 Make announcements in class and at other student group meetings
- 📄 Get Faculty, Staff and RA's involved!
- 📄 Speak to the Student Government about your event
- 📄 Include as much information as possible on your chapter/council websites

## Use the Following Tools

- 📄 Print Advertisements
- 📄 Letters
- 📄 Banners
- 📄 Flyers, Posters, Banners, Window Displays
- 📄 Table Tents and Door Hangers
- 📄 Modeling Good PR
- 📄 News Releases
- 📄 Special Event Publicity
- 📄 Public Service Announcements
- 📄 Interviews
- 📄 Websites
- 📄 Newsletters



## How To Write A Press Release

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### *Press Release Content Basics*

There are seven basic elements that every press release should have in terms of content and how it appears:

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** These words should appear in the upper left-hand margin, just under your letterhead. You should capitalize every letter.

**Contact Information:** Skip a line or two after release statement and list the name, title, and telephone and fax numbers of your company spokesperson (the person with the most information). It is important to give your home number since reporters often work on deadlines and may not be available until after hours.

**Headline:** Skip two lines after your Contact information and use a boldface type.

**Dateline:** This should be the city your press release is issued from and the date you are mailing your release.

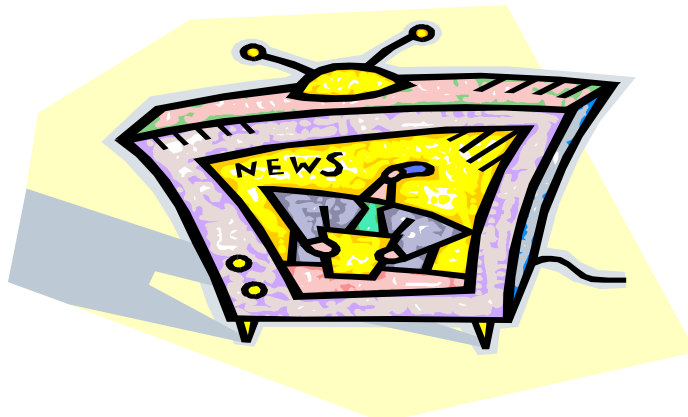
**Lead Paragraph:** The first paragraph needs to grasp the reader's attention and should contain the relevant information to your message such as the five W's (who, what, when, where, why).

**Text:** The main body of your press release where your message should fully develop.

**Recap:** At the lower left hand corner of your last page restate your product's specifications, highlight a product release date.


## **10 Essential Tips to Ensure Your Press Release Makes the News**

1. Make sure the information is newsworthy.
2. Tell the audience that the information is intended for them and why they should continue to read it.
3. Start with a brief description of the news, and then distinguish who announced it, not the other way around.
4. Ask yourself, "How are people going to relate to this and will they be able to connect?"
5. Make sure the first 10 words of your release are effective, as they are the most important.
6. Avoid excessive use of adjectives and fancy language.
7. Deal with the facts.
8. Provide as much Contact information as possible: Individual to Contact, address, phone, fax, email, Web site address.
9. Make sure you wait until you have something with enough substance to issue a release.
10. Make it as easy as possible for media representatives to do their jobs.

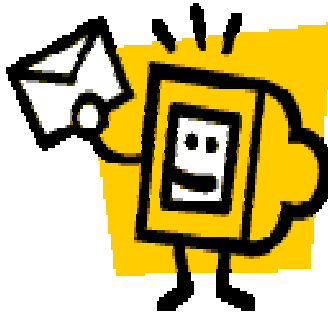


Information adapted from: <http://www.press-release-writing.com>

## **Information to Include in an E-mail News Release**

-  A compelling e-mail subject header and headline.

- ☞ A first paragraph that covers the five W's: who, what, where, when and why.
- ☞ Electronic contact information including an e-mail address for the press contact and Web site address of the company. Reporters working on deadline will often choose to call a company representative rather than wait for a reply by e-mail. Be sure that in addition to e-mail contact information, a phone number for the press contact is listed.
- ☞ The mention of key clients or endorsement from a 'non-biased' source like a university professor or reviewer. You should have permission from those sources to use their remarks in your press release.
- ☞ A short paragraph at the end of the release containing background information about the organization. This might include a synopsis of the activities of the organization, how long they have been in existence, and any area of expertise. If the press release is about a book or entertainer then cover career high-points.



## **How to Format a Release**

1. Use 8 ½ x 11 paper.
2. Use a minimum of one-inch margins on each side of the page.
3. Use a Bold typeface for the headlines to draw attention.

4. The first line of the message should read: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE in all caps. This lets the reporter know the news is authorized for publication on the date they receive it.
5. Allow one spacer line then write a headline using a combination of lower case and capital letters. Keep your headline to ten words or less. Do not write the headline in all capital letters because it is harder to read using e-mail software. Capitalize the first letter of all words in the headline (with the exception of: “a”, “an”, “the”, or prepositions such as: “of”, “to”, or “from”). The combination of upper and lowercase makes it easier to read.
6. All releases must include a date since reporters do not always use releases immediately.
7. Include press contact information below the text of the news release. A reporter reading your release should be able to make a decision about your story in the first screen of the e-mail, if it is a e-mail message. Don't waste that space with contact information. They will scroll down to find out who to contact if they want to follow-up with you.
8. Finally, close the document with the characters -30- or ### which are style conventions that let the report know they have reached the end of the story.

Information adapted from: <http://www.press-release-writing.com>

## **PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact:

Contact Person:

Company Name:

Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

Email Address:  
Web site address:

## **Headline**

City, State, Date — Opening Paragraph (should contain: who, what, when, where, why):

Remainder of body text - Should include any relevant information to your products or services. Include benefits, why your product or service is unique. Also include quotes from staff members, industry experts or satisfied customers.

If there is more than 1 page use:

-more-

(The top of the next page):

## **Abbreviated headline (page 2)**

Remainder of text.

(Restate Contact information after your last paragraph):

For additional information or a sample copy, Contact: (all Contact information)

Summarize product or service specifications one last time

Company History (try to do this in one short paragraph)

# # #

(Indicates Press Release is finished)

***SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE***  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Name**  
**Telephone Number**

***LOCAL WOMAN NAMED ALPHA PHI DELEGATE***

(City, State, Date) -- <NAME> recently attended the Alpha Phi International <NAME OF REGION> conference at the <LOCATION, CITY and STATE> as an official delegate for her Alpha Phi International Fraternity chapter at <SCHOOL>.

As an Alpha Phi chapter delegate, <LAST NAME> attended a three-day conference to learn leadership and communication skills necessary to direct her Alpha Phi's individual chapters. Delegates from <NUMBER> of Alpha Phi's 143 international collegiate chapters attended.

Alpha Phi's training conferences are divided into eight U.S. and Canadian regions so that each chapter's individual training needs are addressed and one-on-one attention is given to the new leaders responsible for upholding Alpha Phi's universal values, which include camaraderie, humanity, scholarship and community service.

During the three-day conference, attendees develop skills including leadership, risk management, finance, scholarship and governance. Roundtable discussions are held to investigate current topics affecting specific chapters or the university campuses on which they are housed. In addition, attendees are encouraged to participate in philanthropic events that aid the prevention of women's heart disease, Alpha Phi Foundation's main charitable mission.

"The purpose of these regional conferences is to better equip our young women with the problem-solving and decision-making skills necessary to be effective leaders in their chapters and on their campuses," said Susan Zabriskie, executive director of Alpha Phi International Fraternity. "During these conferences these delegates have the opportunity to connect with their peers from neighboring campuses, and to further network and develop numerous alumnae contacts. We believe leadership skills and networking are gifts for a lifetime."

Alpha Phi International Fraternity was founded in 1872 as one of the first Greek societies for women. The Fraternity has more than 140 collegiate chapters and more than 150 alumnae chapters throughout the United States and Canada. A nonprofit organization, Alpha Phi Foundation is the philanthropic and educational arm of Alpha Phi Fraternity. Through contributions from chapters, individual members and friends, the Alpha Phi



Foundation supports cardiac care programs and other charitable projects and a variety of scholarships, financial aid and leadership training programs for women.

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Information from: [www.alphaphi.org](http://www.alphaphi.org)

## **Sample News Release**

[Letterhead, if available]

August 1, 2001

[Media Contact]

[Address]

[E-mail Address]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Local Delta Gamma chapter holds Anchor Splash™ event**

The State College chapter of Delta Gamma Fraternity will hold its tenth annual Anchor Splash™ on Saturday, August 14 at 2 p.m. at the campus natatorium. All proceeds will benefit the Local Elementary School for Children who are Blind and the Fraternity's international philanthropy project, Service for Sight.

Twenty teams of Greek and non-Greek participants will compete in a series of contests, fund raisers and competitions, culminating at Saturday's pool events. Each team will swim relays — both traditional and novelty — and perform a brief synchronized swimming routine. The Delta Gamma chapter has been collecting contributions. Donations will also be accepted at the door. Local Store and Local Shop sponsored the event and provided trophies and door prizes.

Delta Gamma Fraternity is an international women's fraternity, headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, and consisting of more than 180,000 members. Delta Gamma's purpose is to foster high ideals of friendship among women, to promote their educational and cultural interests, to create in them a true sense of social responsibility and to instill in them the best qualities of character. The Delta Gamma Foundation guides members to "Do Good" in support of its philanthropic mission: sight conservation and aid to those who are blind and visually impaired.

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For more information, contact:

[Name]

[Title]

Delta Gamma, Alpha Alpha chapter

[Address]

Phone [(xxx) xxx-xxxx]

Fax [(xxx) xxx-xxxx]

E-mail [name@school.edu]

## ***Sample Public Service Announcement***

[letterhead if possible]

August 1, 2001

[Media contact]

[Address]

[E-mail Address]

**START AUGUST 7, 2001**

**STOP AUGUST 14, 2001**

Join the fun as 20 Greek and non-Greek student teams compete in Delta Gamma's tenth annual Anchor Splash™ swim event at the State College natatorium on August 14 at 2 p.m. You don't want to miss the relays and synchronized swimming! Donations will be accepted at the door and proceeds will benefit those who are visually impaired.

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For more information, contact:

[Name]

[Title]

Delta Gamma, Alpha Alpha chapter

[address]

Phone [(xxx) xxx-xxxx]

Fax [(xxx) xxx-xxxx]



E-mail [name@school.edu]

So you have your event and you are ready to go....



**WAIT!**

Make sure you follow these steps to  
make sure your event gets to the  
**MEDIA!**

- Arrange for a photographer to be present and taking pictures during not only the event, but also during your planning meetings to help your chapter cover the event and create a scrapbook for the event.
-  We have established a media contact list (complete with a phone number and mailing address list for everyone) to give an advance copy (two weeks in an advance for press release with a phone call follow-up/reminder the day before the event) and information to:
  - The Alumni Affairs/University Advancement Office
  - The campus Photography Department
  - The Dean of the Journalism/Communications Department - student coverage
  - The Academic Advisor of the student newspaper(s)
  - The Academic Advisor of the Radio/Television Stations
  - The campus Public Relations Office
  - Local newspapers - ask for the Features or Community News Editor
  - Local television - ask for the news desk
  - Student Newspaper(s) Editor
-  We have completed a press release, edited it, and have submitted an advance copy (two weeks in advance for press release with a phone call follow-up/reminder the day before the event) to:
  - The Student newspaper
  - The Public Relations Office on campus
  - The campus radio station
  - The campus television station
  - Local television stations
  - Local radio stations
- While the event is taking place, note all of the members of the media who are there to cover the project.

- Make sure that you have your photographer there taking at least three rolls of film for your event. You will need good photos for not only the media, the Executive Office, and your scrapbook, but also for advertising next year's event!
- Greet each member of the media and administration personally, even if you have to momentarily stop what you are doing to offer them assistance, clarification or quotes.
- Process the film the same day at a one-hour photo lab, and buy several copies of your best shots.



*After your event is completed:*

- Check the media coverage in the daily papers to make sure your story made the paper. If it did not, submit a follow-up press release, with the results of your event, (including money raised, amount of people in attendance and whom the money will benefit,) with copies of your two best photos and captions to every media agency that missed the story.
- Call everyone on your media coverage list and submit the follow-up story details to all agencies that did not make it to your event.
- Thank everyone earnestly for their help in your chapters/councils event, and tell them you will call them again in the future to inform them of your next philanthropy.
- Send five of your best photo prints with a copy of both your advance and wrap-up press release to your Greek Office and your National Headquarters for publications and to provide information to membership, alumni, prospective members and members of the media.

*Remember, most media companies do not cover events because they  
have no idea they are going on!*

## What to do when a reporter calls???

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- **If you need help - ask.** If you've received a call from a reporter and have any questions or concerns about how to respond, contact the Greek Life Office.
- **Don't feel rushed.** If a reporter calls and you are caught off-guard or are preoccupied with another task, ask to call back so you can gather your thoughts. Remember, though, that reporters' deadlines are often measured in minutes; if you agree to be interviewed, you must respond quickly. **It is helpful to find out the reporter's deadline.**
- **Identify the reporter.** If you agree to an interview, write down the reporter's name, media outlet and contact information. If you have any doubts about the reporter's identity, contact the Office of News and Communications.
- **Decide what you want to say.** Many interview subjects view their objective in an interview as avoiding saying anything foolish. That's certainly important, but you may not accomplish much with such a defensive approach. You should also view the interview as an opportunity to communicate what you want to say. Before you begin, decide what two or three key points you want to get across. Be sure to make these points during the interview, even if the reporter doesn't ask about them.
- **Offer human examples.** In addition to having data to highlight your points, make sure to have human examples ready for each one. Using examples of real people helps a reporter answer the question that his or her editor will ask: "So what?"
- **Provide background information.** You can help the reporter - and minimize errors - by offering to provide background information on complex topics. This can include material from other sources.
- **Direct the reporter to your Web site.** A complete, up-to-date Web site is an invaluable resource. It reduces the chances of the reporter making an error about your background (it must be accurate, of course).
- **Prepare for difficult questions.** Anticipate difficult questions, including personal questions, and prepare responses to them. Never say, "No comment." Instead, explain why you can't or won't answer the question.
- **Give simple, direct answers.** Be brief. Reporters likely will use short quotes, clips or sound bites. Avoid jargon and explain the topic as simply as possible. It's best to avoid flippant or joking comments that sound acceptable in conversation but might be taken out of context.
- **Nothing is "off the record."** Don't say anything you don't want to read in the newspaper or see on the evening news, even when the formal interview seems to have ended and you are just chatting with the reporter.
- **Ask questions.** Although reporters are unlikely to let you review a story before it's published or aired, they may let you verify specific information or quotes. It doesn't hurt to ask.
- **Give feedback.** If a reporter makes a major mistake, call the publication and ask for a correction. If the mistake is minor, it may be better to let it go. If you have any questions about whether the issue should be pursued, contact the Office of News Services or the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. If you feel the story is well done, let the reporter know that, too.