

How to send a press release

After you've made sure your announcement is newsworthy and everything is correct, here are the 7 steps on how to send a press release.

Identify the right journalists

When you're emailing your press release, it's crucial to identify the journalists who would be interested in covering your story.

Ask yourself these two questions:

Which journalists would be interested in your press release?

Which publications does your target audience follow?

This should give you a better idea of the reporters and outlets you should have in mind.

In other words, there should be a fit between what you're pitching and what the journalists you're reaching out to usually catch.

These are precisely the people who are ready to read and respond to exactly the kind of news you're sharing. After all, *this is what they write about.*

How to do it:

If you're sharing *industry-specific* news, look for journalists who covered similar topics in the past.

If you're sharing *local* news, additionally look for journalists that focus on a particular location.

Find your angle

Once you have a list of journalists that could be interested in your press release, the next step is to figure out your angle.

Journalists receive a ton of pitches and press releases every day, and having the right angle is crucial to help them quickly understand why they should cover this story.

Using an angle is important because it can change the conversation with journalists. Instead of “Do you want to cover this story?”, you can turn it into “Here’s how you can present the story”.

What is an angle in pitching journalists?

The angle is turning the facts of your press release into a story. It’s essentially framing it in a way to help journalists visualize why their readers will be interested.

What’s important to remember:

The angle of your press release email may depend on the journalist and publication you’re sending it to. What might work for one person, may not necessarily be effective for another. While this can be time-consuming, it greatly increases the chances of your press release being picked up.

After all, when you put all the pieces together for them in a convincing way, there is no other direction to go:

✓ It's newsworthy

You're talking to the right person

✓ The journalist can easily see why this will be interesting to the audience

Write an engaging subject line

Before we move on, let's take a moment to look at a tiny part of your pitch email that can have a huge impact on its success—your subject line. Getting it right is just as important as the message inside.

Journalists are busy people and they don't have time to read through emails that are not relevant to their interests. A direct and specific subject line that tells them exactly what your pitch is about is the best way to get their attention.

✓ Keep it short

Keep it short and to the point. Most email clients only show the first 50-60 characters of the subject line, so you need to make sure your most important information is front and center.

Be direct

People often think they have to come up with witty, tabloid-style headlines to stand out in a crowded inbox to make their PR pitch subject stand out. In fact, editors and journalists will tell you this is just what not to do.

✓ Beware of spam filters

Avoid using all caps, exclamation points, or other forms of punctuation that can be seen as spammy. This can also trigger spam filters and hurt your chances in the future.

Make a reference to what's inside the email

Phrases like “Story idea”, “Background on X” or some reference to a trend or ongoing story that a journalist is covering is a way to signal that you are writing for a specific reason and a clue about what they will find in your pitch.

Mention multimedia or interactive elements

Be sure to refer to them! Research consistently shows that media pitches with graphs, videos, and other interactive elements achieve significantly higher levels of engagement. If you use them, be sure to include a reference to them in your email subject line, like “Video shows...”, “See how...” or “Watch...”

Write your press release email

Now it's time to write the message you're going to send to the journalists you've selected.

This is where you ask them to get interested in the announcement you're sharing using your angle— interested enough to cover it in their own words in their media outlet.

And just as the emphasis in the previous step was creating a focused, relevant list of contacts, the theme in this step is to create a focused message containing only relevant information.

Greeting

The greeting is a small, but important part of the email. Keep these things in mind:

If you haven't interacted before, stick with a general greeting, such as "Hi", "Hello" or "Dear".

Be sure to mention their name. Double-check that you've spelled it correctly.

If you've been in contact before, you can use a more personal greeting, and make a reference to the past.

Introduction

Before you get to pitching your press release, make a personalized introduction. This will help you make a connection with the journalist, and show that you've done your research and you're not sending a mass email.

This is the part of your email where you should mention why you're reaching out specifically to *them*. You can make a reference to previous articles they've written, especially if they are related to the news you want to share.

Keep this part of the email limited to 1 sentence. Remember that journalists get tons of emails just like yours every day and they're not going to spend their time following you as you slowly get to your point.

Email body

The email body is the meat of your message. This is where you present your angle and the most important parts of your news. Now that

you've previously gotten the attention of your recipient, the next step is to get them excited with your news.

Include the most important takeaway from your press release in the first sentence. Mention an intriguing statistic or share a key statement that aligns with your angle.

Once you have their attention, share more information about your news. Include the 5Ws – what, where, who, why, and when. This is where you can mention that you've included your press release below, where the journalists can read more if they are interested.

Offer exclusivity and additional value by offering something extra, such as an interview with a key person at your company, additional information, or assets.

Include your press release in the email

Once you've written your email, you have to include your press release somehow. After all, this is why you're emailing journalists.

Journalists have a preferred preference for how they receive press releases:

Paste your press release below your email signature or additionally add a link in the body of the email

Avoid including your press release or more than 2-3 images as attachments – they can trigger spam filters

If you want to include more assets, share a link or mention that you provide them on request

Send your email

To improve the chances of your press release getting published, make sure the journalists actually read it.

Don't ask them to click on a link and go to another page – keep it simple. If you're using a PR outreach tool, the process is a lot easier.

Follow up if needed

One of the less pleasant parts of pitching to journalists is the follow-up.

A few days have passed and the journalist's response is nowhere to be found. You can almost hear the crickets chirping. Did they read my press release? Did they open my email? Did they even get my email?

While it's possible that the journalist has simply no intention of covering your story, it's important to remember that journalists are, simply put, busy.

A safe way to follow up is to wait a few days and send them another email and provide additional information.

If you're using a PR outreach tool, you're able to view individual email statistics for each journalist you send your press release to, including:

open rates (who opened your email)

click rates (who viewed your press release)
and bounce rates (indicating when there was a problem with their inbox).

This makes the follow-up process a lot easier because you'll know how to approach the journalist knowing if they've even opened your email – or even set up automated follow-ups if they haven't.

If you are following up with journalists, avoid asking if they read your press release. Instead, make your follow-up more compelling by adding something new.

Consider including a fresh angle or interesting points that you didn't mention in the first email. This second chance allows you to grab their attention again and can get them eager to read the full press release.

And most importantly, follow up only once. Repeatedly following up will make you look unprofessional and hurt future chances of connecting with that journalist.