

**Main Street Media Savvy Column #2**  
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**to Ben Miller**

**Demystifying Press Kits and Press Releases to Support DIY Publicity Success**

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Business owners seeking to earn their own publicity can get tripped up before they begin. Getting up to speed about how to write a press release and how to prepare a press kit can be a bit overwhelming for the uninitiated. Take heart. With focused effort and attention, it doesn't have to be hard.

Begin with the knowledge that news stands on its own merit. The more timely, newsworthy, relevant, trend worthy and hard hitting your news, the better the likelihood that you'll earn the headlines you seek.

News hits you squarely between the eyes, kicks you in the stomach, makes you think, touches your heart, or kicks you in the behind. If the information you have to share fails to meet any of these criteria, you may not have a story that is worthy of media attention. No amount of fancy packaging is going to be the ticket to the front page of your hometown newspaper, business journal or media broadcast.

Present your news in a way that captures attention, compels editors and reporters to care, and serves the readers, listeners or viewers. And, provide the support and access necessary to support accurate, timely reporting.

If you are serious about earning favorable publicity over time, get serious about making it easy for reporters to tell your stories. Prepare a press kit that shares the highlights about you and your company in a clear, compelling way. And offer the convenience of 24/7 online access to this information.

The basic elements within your online press kit include the following:

1. Your biography and/or your speaker sheet
2. Your digital photo and/or digital photos of your products
3. A backgrounder that explains the origins of your company, to whom you offer products or services, and the kinds of problems you solve for your customers
4. A fact sheet that explains when your company launched, the progress it has made to date, the scope and reach of your products and services, awards and recognition you've earned, and other relevant facts
5. Press releases with the latest news first

6. Links to press coverage earned to date
7. Testimonials from customers
8. Your company logo
9. Suggested interview questions
10. Contact information to facilitate interview coordination

When you make these elements readily available, you support every reporter's quest for accurate, timely, and complete information. When interview opportunities present, you can confirm that the reporter has accessed this information and use your time together to dig deeper into the story at hand and offer news the reporter can't get anywhere else.

Consider this list of "don'ts" and "do's" as you prepare to create a winning press kit of your own.

- Don't spend a fortune on elaborate press packages or feed the landfills with weight without substance.
- Don't contribute to the back problems with the heavy load that could be your press kit at the next industry trade show when an online press kit can do the job.
- Do put the most newsworthy news releases front and center.
- Do go beyond boilerplate and make your bio an interesting read. If your experience and credentials read like "blah, blah, blah" to you or your closest colleague, chances are they will be received in a similar way – or worse – by a busy reporter who is skimming for the most compelling facts.
- Do sit for a professional headshot to put your best face forward. Label your photo with your full name, title, and the date to make it easy for editors to identify you. Digital images of at least 300 dots per inch (DPI) are best.
- Do identify your best customers and offer email or phone access to make it easy for reporters to get in touch to capture their perspectives.
- Be prepared to identify your top competitors and how their offerings are contributing to the current dynamics in the marketplace.

When in doubt, check out the press kits of your top competitors or other businesses you admire. Then, craft materials that tell your own story in an even more compelling way. If you'd like to preview a wide variety of online press kits, visit [www.presskit247.com](http://www.presskit247.com) for examples against which you can craft your own.

If you'd like to learn how to prepare press releases that sidestep the trash can to deliver the headlines you seek, visit <http://www.publicityhound.com/pressreleasetips/art.htm> to sign up for a free

email tutorial that offers 89 ways to write powerful press releases. This single action can jumpstart your learning at a price that can't be beat.

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