

PWR New Media 2011 Journalist Survey News Release Responses to Open-Ended Question:

We asked the 200 journalists in our survey to share their thoughts and preferences on News Release. As in the past, many took advantage of the opportunity. All unedited responses are below.

Most commonly, they told us they prefer email and want Releases loaded with easily accessible, relevant content. Regarding email, they said.

Email only. I throw or lose 100 percent of all hard-copy communication. Sending a huge press kit in a folder announces to the world: "I am living in the year 1978." The nature of this survey seems to imply that you think a snappy Facebook page with cute embedded videos is key to snaring press attention. A quick, concise email or text message is far more effective than a cumbersome PDF. If your Web site takes more than 2 seconds to launch, I'm gone. Think content over presentation. No attachments. No embedded graphics. Quick, concise.

Email is always best; supporting photography that I can easily download (not huge files, please); or, easily accessible links that do not require a computer genius to open, view and download; also, it is always appreciated to be able to quickly have a press/media contact, just in case additional info is needed. Prefer emails for many reasons: ease of sifting through them, environmentally friendly, have capacity for back and forth conversation as well as links and attachments.

e-mail still the best way

Prefer email without phone followup

Prefer e-mail.

Email puts it in front of my face, but I want to be able to go to an online press room for the downloadable images, videos, and background. I want access to an angle I can own - I don't just want duplicate copy.

Initial press release by e-mail is preferred; one contact by e-mail or by phone confirming receipt is reasonable and acceptable, but multiple re-contacts regarding the release and/or repeat sendings of the release or sending the information in bits and pieces (as some sources do to "assure" that I pay attention) are not reasonable and not acceptable. Releases lacking vital details — time, date, location, ticket price, contact information for the journalist, contact information for the public, all common-sense, "sine qua non" items — are surprisingly common.

Open to many methods though e-mail is most effective. Most important is contact info for some who is EASILY REACHABLE by phone or e-mail.

Email is easiest but messenger service definitely gets noticed more.

Regarding content, they want easily downloadable images in particular but also want supporting information, contact info, and access to interviewees... all well written and easily accessible, of course. And, they want to access the assets via link, not attachments.

Prefer to receive images with release so I don't have to ask for them or go download them. Downloading adds to my time and I have to set up a filing system to make sure they match up with story. Please send high rez for print and low rez for Web. If sending a pdf, make sure you give copy permission so we can copy and place it in our own website or production systems.

Need more access to several images to support the content. A link to jpegs would be useful. The best releases should include everything you need to know about the news, whatever that might be. I don't want to have to follow up unless it is necessary to do a larger story. Please, please, please include a link when available.

Would be nice to have information as to where the product is sold locally and links to where to purchase.

I dislike receiving press releases that do not have a phone number or email address for follow-up questions

I prefer well-written, concise press releases with phone numbers and email addresses.

Not enough contact info; it seems to be missing more now than ever.

For television, we need people to interview -- that's the most important!

I like to have something that I can visually see easily and refer to. I also want something that I can print out to make notes

As in the past, several shared thoughts on what not to include with a releases, most notably attachments and large files.

Do not ever ever, ever send releases by attachment

Mostly in email. We prefer that the press release is written in the body of the email rather than sent as an attachment that we have to download and open.

No large files or attachments

Most press releases have way to much information about the sender or sending company and not enough of the who, what, where, when, why and how that the release relates to or is about.
e.g. the full background and history of Ford Motors, for example, when I get a promotion press release.

As always, they offered an abundance of general advice as well as their thoughts on Releases in general.

I love press releases

We no longer use snail mail.

New media is good, but traditional media and access to live sources should not be eliminated. An actual phone call or meeting is still vital for reporting on and providing readers/viewers with accurate stories.

Keep it simple. Keep it short. Don't bother me if you don't know my market, my interests or my needs. Don't pretend to be my buddy if you've never met me, and above all, be competent.

Less flash, more facts. I don't like misleading or dramatic headlines that overstate the message. And make the what/when/where etc. obvious!

The press release should provide a story angle that is of interest to readers and not a self-promotional angle. Editors don't want to run free ads; they want stories that are compelling to readers. If it happens to promote a person or business, that's fine

The copy needs to be in the body of the email IN ADDITION to being attached, and please, never use a pdf. Just a WORD DOC.

do not call, please

do not call me to see if i got it

get to the point

Please get to the point quickly

One twist this year was the number of journalists who gave from and subject line advice:

Email press releases should have product/service in the Subject line. I review beauty products and getting an email with a subject line such as "Spring is in the air" is annoying. Better to say, "New Spring Perfume from Coty" or "Spring 2011 colors from Revlon" etc

An indication in the Email subject line about the region the release pertains to would save time.

The message line on email press release should include company of product name

The press releases should be identified as "press release" in the email subject line so it grabs my attention and does not go in the junk mail.

Information should always be in e-mail subject line - not just "Press Release" or "Media Advisory"
place release in body of message-

Not surprisingly, journalists prefer releases that are highly targeted to their audience.

Regardless of how they are received, press releases must be of local interest to us or they just get trashed. Keep them simple and targeted to our audience. If I have to ask how does this relate to the Richmond, Ind., area specifically, then I usually hit the delete button next.

i suggest personalizing releases for the market you are sending to. If the event is out of state, I am going to delete it, so if there is something relevant to me, put it at the top, otherwise I will never see it, I just delete it

Target your efforts. Read the site or publications and don't send information about things that is not covered by that media and is wasting time of editors and writers. Once you do this a couple of times, your email is directed to the spam file.

Understanding better what we write about is more valuable. We write about issues but instead I often get press releases for products, which is something we never cover

I need press releases on WINE for the trade ONLY

PR companies should do their research before sending out press releases. I receive tons of "junk" PR a day of releases that aren't applicable to my publications or our audience. I also would like PR companies to stop "following up" with phone calls. I always have to answer, "yes, I received your release but I'm on deadline."

We do not carry press releases or news items. We publish only scientific articles, research reports, and opinion pieces written in response to articles we have published.

I would just love it if they were relevant to our market!

Send only the ones you actually have thought through and evaluated for appropriateness to the recipient. I get so many junk pitches that I tend to delete most PR pitches altogether without even looking.

They also want releases to arrive in time for their publication schedules:

Mostly I get them through email, which is great. If it's a brand I love, I follow on FB or Twitter in order to stay current on new info as well. I also receive snail mail for product/book reviews which is often helpful. My biggest concern is the timeliness. Too often, we receive releases with only a seven day lead time. For print publication, we need at least 14 days for consideration.

Finally, as in past years, some journalists vented a bit about what they don't like about releases.

I'm deluged with emails. Receiving the SAME press release 8 or 10 times is aggravating!!!! Twice is okay, maybe three times. But NOT 10! I'm also fed up with being referred to a website for information. If it's not in the press release, or the press release is missing essentials like date, time, place, cost, reason for the event, I am NOT going to do the PR person's job and trash the release. I was a PR exec for 30 years...and I would be embarrassed if any of my employees sent out the amateurish releases that sound strictly bush league. They are almost never sent thoughtfully based on what I cover.

PR for for-profit businesses basically is a waste of time. We don't do puff pieces unless the business is also an advertiser. PR that does not relate to our market (LGBT community) is a waste of time

We are bombarded with too many self-promotional e-mails from software vendors.

There are too many press releases in this world! Senders must understand that silence = not for us. Please: no followups, no phone calls. Thanks....

If I hear "is just around the corner" or "reach out" one more time, I will scream. Also, we don't do stories on for-profit businesses, except maybe in business. If it is not in Ventura County, we are not interested.

To view charts of this survey, please visit

<http://www.pwrnewmedia.com/2011/powerlines/february/downloads/2011JournoSuroveyCharts.pdf>