



Media and Public Relations

Publicity for a project can be achieved in different ways - public relations is only one of them!

There are announcements that are better spread through flyers, a personal letter or during an information session, rather than via the media.

That is why you should answer the following questions to check what the best channel is to publish your news before writing a press release.

Checklist public relations	
1. Define target group(s)	Who is the announcement meant for? Is it for the regional press, politicians, the community, schools, district leaders, etc.?
2. Set an objective	For example: one article on the regional page in newspaper X; one new contact with a youth organisation of the region Y, etc.
3. Define message	What information do we want to transmit? For example: Our project gives 500 children clean drinking water.
4. Define means	How will you transmit your message to the individual target groups? Which channels (flyers, letter, media, internet, street information campaign, information session, etc.) are best suited for whom? → Define for each target group. For example: Information to the public via press release to the regional press; local council via local newsletter; youth organisation Y via information session, etc.



After answering the questions you have decided to write a press release. Pay attention to following steps:

Checklist press release	
1. Define distribution address list	Who will receive the release? Where do we want to place the article? → You will find addresses of journalists and regional media on the Internet (Google search). The institute for communication & media sciences (IMW) in Bern also has an extensive link lists to Swiss media. SAJV can also help with her distribution list. matthias.fiechter@sajv.ch
2. Writing a text	What is our message? What is our teaser? (see question 3).
3. Sending out press release via e-mail and fax	If you personally know a journalist, send the release to the editor's team and copy in the journalist.
4. Give information to journalists, answer their questions and explain	Usually journalists are not experts - you need to carefully explain the project for them to write a good article about it. Take your time and prepare carefully!

Structure and outline of a press release

Structuring a text according to journalistic criteria means: The text is usually not structured in the order of events, but starts with the most important information. If you save the most important for the end, it is possible that it will be left out because media texts are usually edited from the end to the front.

A professionally structured press release raises your chances that journalists will write an article. That is why it pays off to think about these points carefully before you write and then present the information clearly and appealingly. Journalists usually do not have time to work through the texts and personally gather general information. The press release needs to be clear and concise; the main points need to be visible at first glance. Check your text before you send it, both for content and language. You even might want to give it to someone else for proof-reading.



Journalistic structure	
1. Headline (maybe additional subhead)	<p>The headline is the story in a nutshell. It presents the article's key element in a brief and concise way and creates the incentive to read the article (teaser).</p> <p>Careful: do not use abstract, complicated words, but write in a meaningful way!</p>
2. Lead	<p>The lead or intro answers all the questions a reader might ask about the story. Stylistically speaking it is the opposite of writing chronologically. The lead is a very short summary of the text and already contains the most important information.</p> <p>The six Ws (who, what, when, where, how and why) can be a guideline.</p>
3. Text	<p>The text explains, gives information and background specifics.</p>
4. Contact person for further information	<p>The contact person can answer questions; sometimes journalists need more information or have specific questions. The contact person needs to know the topic and also be available!</p>

Writing a press release means selecting and preparing information.

- Write in a concise manner, do not give too much information.
- Get to the point.
- Write in a lively and concrete way.
- Use images, idioms and examples.
- Avoid (or explain) any technical terms or foreign words.

A good text

- Uses simple language, short sentences, active voice
- Uses vivid and colourful wording; avoids technical terms or foreign words
- Rarely uses adjectives
- Uses the present tense since journalism talks about recent events.

Field: **Methods / Work tools**

Subject: **10 Media and Public Relations**



 Links:

- SAJV (*individual counselling and extensive manual*)
matthias.fiechter@sajv.ch
- The PEYA Guide to Working With the Media:
http://www.peyalliance.com/guide_media.html