NEWS RELEASE CHECKLIST

Companies, organizations and businesses issue news releases to secure publicity designed to build brand image or credibility, announce something newsworthy, stimulate interest, provide information, answer questions, communicate in a crisis, or respond to an accusation. In short, they answer questions.

Planning

❑ Is it important to your geographic area?

❑ Do you know whom you want to reach with this release?

❑ Have you researched the target audience?

❑ Have you properly packaged the release as a announcement/news story, feature, or hybrid?

❑ Is your story newsworthy?

❑ Is it interesting, relevant, or timely?

❑ Will it make an impact?

❑ Are there good reasons why your target public(s) should care about this information or will benefit from reading it?

❑ Does the release achieve some public relations goal?

❑ Do you know what you want to happen as a result of the release?

Format

❑ Is it single-spaced (digital) or double-spaced (for hard copies)?

❑ If it's more than one page, have you typed, "—more—" at the bottom of the page?

❑ Have you included a slug at the top of the second page condensed version of the headline and page number)?

❑ Did you signal the end of the release with the triple pound signs (###) or —30— at the bottom of the last page?

Content

❑ Do you have a strong lead or hook?

❑ Have you covered the basics?

- contact information for media (including phones, emails)
- headline and subhead if needed for clarification
- release date
- dateline; especially for digital news releases that may be found months or years later
- answers to the who, what, when, where, and why questions
- contact/follow-up information for reader (including addresses, phones, emails)
- boilerplate: brief bio about your company

❐ Have you double-checked your facts, statistics, and claims?

❐ Are claims and statistics factual, unbiased, and accurate – and attributed?

❐ Does it contain specifics and avoid generalities?

❐ Have you used reputable sources and attributed them?

❐ Does it contain pertinent, insightful or attention-getting quotes and are the attributed?

❐ Is it concise, not wordy, and to the point without unnecessary or off-topic information?

❐ Is it too salesy or promotional?

❐ Do you need to provide any "Notes to the Editor"? If so, put them after the "###" or "30."

❐ Have you told them what they need to know to achieve your PR goal?

Style

❐ Did you write the release in third person?

❐ Did you use the inverted pyramid with important presented in descending order of importance?

❐ Is there a human-interest angle?

❐ Have you eliminated the fluff?

❐ Does the content flow logically?

❐ Is it "on message"?

❐ Did you edit and proofread for clarity, word choice, grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation?

❐ Did you double check dates, days, capitalization, facts, and personal and company name spellings?

Distribution

❐ Have you considered where to send your message to be noticed by those you want to reach?

❐ Have you considered the best timing for this release?

❐ Have you used SEO optimization if distributing online?

❐ Have you considered whether the recipients prefer emails or hard copies?

Evaluation

No matter how your press release is distributed, be sure to track placements, reach and effectiveness. Many services offer tracking of news releases published by media outlets, monitor conversations about the subject matter or company, and/or measure reach and reader sentiment. This feedback can help you determine which media are most likely to run your stories in the future and direct your media planning.