



Writing a Good News Release

Checklist • Set of Tips • Sample News Release



REMEMBER

Good news releases increase your chances
of getting your message heard.

Pat Case
Case Communications

tel **541-386-6964** cel **541-806-3052**
2550 Reed Road, Hood River, Oregon 97031
www.patcase.com

News Release Checklist

Here's a checklist you can use when writing your "events" news release.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure an overall professional image<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put it on your letterhead• Set your font size to 11 or 12 pt.• Set your margins to 1 or 1 ½ inches• Number your pages• Use single spacing (the new standard)• Use upper and lower case• Write clearly and professionally<input type="checkbox"/> In the header area, include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The words "News Release"• The date of the release• Contact info of person who can provide additional information<input type="checkbox"/> Start out strong, telegraphing what the story is about and create instant interest with a meaningful:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headline• Subhead (helpful, though not essential)<input type="checkbox"/> Write a strong lead paragraph that summarizes the key elements of the event, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What the event is• Who the key people are• When it is taking place• Where it is taking place | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Include a statement near the beginning of the release, describing why the event is occurring and/or why it is important<input type="checkbox"/> Fill out the body of the release in a way that adds interest to the reader, including information such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific aspects of the event• Related events or issues• Biographical snapshots of participants• Other places where the event has occurred or will occur• Etc.<input type="checkbox"/> Conclude your release with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A paragraph about the sponsoring organization and a link to their website• How readers can get additional information<input type="checkbox"/> Let editors know what's coming<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place the word "more" at bottom of pages when more pages follow• Place the traditional symbol ### at the end of your story<input type="checkbox"/> Finally, add photo captions<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide titles for each photo, more lengthy captions when the title doesn't sufficiently explain the photo |
|--|---|

News Release Writing Tips

Here are some writing tips to help you write a better release.

Focus Your Content

- Have a single focus to your article
- Be sure your story is written in a way that's newsworthy
 - Avoid hype
 - Beware of jargon
- Wherever possible, localize the story to the special interests of local audiences
 - For instance, if the event features a dance group that will be teaching at a local school, be sure to mention that point somewhere in the text

Put the News First

- Use the “inverted pyramid” approach, answering the following six questions in order of importance:
 - What's the name of the event
 - Who's involved
 - When is it taking place
 - Where is it taking place
 - Why is it happening
- Following the essential information, provide any additional information about the event or related issues that may be of interest to readers
- Background information about the sponsoring organization should come last

Be Clear & Concise

- Keep the length of the release between one to two pages
- Write content in short, digestible chunks
 - One sentence paragraphs should be interspersed with two and three sentence paragraphs.
 - Short chunks are an essential aid to reading, especially in online environments
- Find a comfortable balance between shorter and mid-length sentences
 - Sentences containing 25 to 30 words are difficult to read and should be avoided
 - Sentences with 8 to 10 words are good, but should be interspersed with longer sentences of 15 to 20 words

Use Correct Grammar & Style

- No spelling or grammatical errors
- Ensure a good “flow” with proper paragraph structure and transitions between sentences and paragraphs
- Avoid the passive voice
 - Passive: It was thought that the band played a great set.
 - Active: The band played a great set.
- Refer to the Associated Press Style Guide for more information

A Word about Images

You should provide one or two photos that help to make your story come alive.

Ideally, photos should be something that would show up well in either color or black and white. Include a title description of the photo at the bottom of your press release, and a short description if warranted.

FOR PRINT MEDIA

- Send via email as “attachments” and not within the body of the email itself.
- Send in **high resolution** format. Here are some guidelines to keep in mind:
 - At least 3” x 5” (900 dpi x 1500 dpi) (NOTE: “dpi” stands for dots per inch)
 - Generally 500 Kbytes to 3 Mbytes (though higher resolution may be needed for glossy magazines)
- Note that the resolution of images you may have on your website is not going to work for print publications. You must include higher quality images if you want your images to appear in print.
- Also note that some email programs automatically compress attached digital photo files. Be sure not to allow this compression to take place. When attaching your email, if you see a dialog box pop up that asks you if you want to compress the file, say “no.”

FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- The images that go onto websites are of much lower resolution than those used in print. Still, the same images you send for print media can be downsized by most webmasters for use on websites.
- If you don’t have high resolution images to send, send the lower resolution images that may already appear on your website, as often the webmaster can make these smaller images work.
- As with print media, send images as “attachments” and not in the body of your email.

Sample News Release

Columbia Center for the Arts

215 Cascade Street
Hood River, Oregon, 97031
www.columbiaartgallery.org
541-386-4512



News Release

Date: September 12, 20XX
Contact: Joanie Thomson, 541-386-8877

Tactile Expressions: Adventures in Form, Texture, and Color *Eclectic Mix of 3D Art Featured in New Show at Columbia Art Gallery*

The Columbia Art Gallery is pleased to announce a new show, featuring an eclectic mix of three-dimensional art, created by six artists who live in communities throughout the Columbia River Gorge. Art media ranging from silk to ceramic to steel to paper, as well as mixed media, will be featured in the show titled “Tactile Expressions: Adventures in Form, Texture, and Color.”

Located in the Columbia Arts building in downtown Hood River, the show opens on Friday, March 3rd, and runs through Sunday, April 2. The public is invited to the artist reception on Friday, March 3rd from 6 to 8 p.m. Hors d’oeuvres will be served.

A wide variety of shapes, textures, and colors are the common threads that hold this uncommon show together. Heather Marlow of White Salmon, WA, curator for the show, says: “People who love art that’s uncommon ... but art that ‘feels good’ in their homes and gardens ... these are the people who would get the most out of this show.”

Participating Artists

Dawn Elle from Maupin, OR, will be displaying highly stylized ceramic pieces that are likely to start a conversation in any home. Glazed in shiny, bright colors, Elle describes her art as “combining both fun and function.”

-more-

tel 541-386-6964 cel 541-806-3052
2550 Reed Road, Hood River, Oregon 97031
www.patcase.com

Tom Herrera from Mosier, OR, will be showing whimsical pieces of garden art, which combine steel, recycled metal objects, glass and various types of lighting. He says: “If I see people smile when they look at my art, I feel I’ve done my job as an artist.”

Heather Marlow, of White Salmon, WA, curator for the show, specializes in a new and non-conventional medium known as silk fusion. The focus of her work is on creating richly colored, sculpted pieces that stand out and say “look at me.”

Melody Robichaud of Hood River, OR, who specializes in mixed media, says she wants her art to “stir people’s spirits.” Her art awakens a sense of something wonderful and magical in people—something outside the ordinary. Robichaud says that her entry titled “Choice” calls on us to decide whether we will choose joy or sorrow in our lives.

Zewei (Willia) O’Connor, who lived in Hood River until two years ago, and who now lives in Salem, OR, was born in Shanghai, China. A student of Chinese painting for many years, she now focuses on textile art, and has won numerous awards for her work. One of her most notable awards was the coveted first place prize in the New York Quilt Festival.

Dave Sherburne from Trout Lake, WA, makes a variety of “uncommon” common objects, including tables, lamps, and water features, out of a mix of media, including concrete, steel, ceramics, glass and “found” objects. His pieces range from traditional to humorous to abstract.

Marlow sums up the show by saying: “These are some of the most ‘tactile’ sensitive people I know. We all love the feel that working in our respective media gives us, but just as important, we want people to be fascinated by what we do, and to make what we do a part of them.”

The show is made possible by generous contributions from its sponsors: E.T.C. Every Thread Counts, and Century 21: Cascade Pacific.

Columbia Center for the Arts is a non-profit community-supported arts center which brings artful events to the Columbia River Gorge, including art shows, theatrical events, film, dance, music, literary presentations and more. The Center is open to the public Wednesday through Saturday, 10 to 5, Sun. 1 to 5.

For more information about Columbia Center for the Arts, visit their website at <http://www.columbiaarts.org>.

For more information about the show or other events sponsored by Columbia Center for the Arts, please call Bill Sturman at 541-XXX-XXXX, the Columbia Art Gallery at 541-XXX-XXXX, or Judie Hanel at 541-XXX-XXXX.

###

[Photos and captions follow, next page.]

tel 541-386-6964 cel 541-806-3052
2550 Reed Road, Hood River, Oregon 97031
www.patcase.com



“Choice”

Mixed media creation
by Michele Robichaud.

Depicting two crows, this soft sculpture represents the choices people have in life, particularly between sorrow and joy. Choice was inspired by the Old Wives Tale “Counting Crows.”



“Koi Pond II”

A fiber/textile masterpiece
by Zewei (Willa) O’Connor .

Koi Pond II is inspired in part by the Chinese belief that everybody should strive to be like the water lily --- which grows from the mud and muck, and rises up to be a wonderful and beautiful flower.

#