

How to write a media release

- It's important to think about which media you are targeting – are you going to send this to a local community newspaper or a national paper like The New Zealand Herald or The Dominion Post? Or are you trying to get coverage on the radio or a magazine? Look at the type of stories in your target media and try to write in a similar style and tone.
- Call your target media and speak to the reporters who cover the Education or Business stories. That way you can email your release directly to them. You are far more likely to get your story published if you make a connection with the reporters – don't just send your media release to a generic address like info@thisnewspaper.co.nz
- If you live outside the main cities and are trying to get coverage in a national publication, make sure you clearly describe which towns you are from. You might know where Okaihau or Roxburgh is, but the reporters in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin may not.
- Send the release at a time that allows the media to respond – for example don't send a press release in the afternoon and expect a reporter to be at your launch the next morning but also don't send the story so far in advance that it will be forgotten when the event is on.
- Write the release in a way that highlights the most newsworthy points about your product/service. You want the reporter to pick up your story so make it easy for them – make it interesting and relevant, and be clear about what the news angle is. For example, if your product is very environmentally friendly, or has a social or community aspect - highlight that.
- Think of the most interesting thing about your business or product/service and what you want to draw the reader's attention to. For example, are you having a product launch at the local farmers market? Have you just managed to get an endorsement for your product from a local celebrity? 'Our company has a new product/service' is not worth doing a media release on – 'Our company is launching a new product/service that solves problems for mums and dads' is much better.
- Your headline must be catchy – keep it short and sweet! 'Wellington students create new iPhone app' is far better than 'Wellington High School YES Company Inva-Vision launches brand new high tech iPhone app'.
- Make sure all the key points are in the first three sentences. Many reporters will read the first paragraph and then decide whether to continue reading, or delete your media release and move on. Don't leave it all until the end of the media release.