



GUIDE TO BEGINNER'S PR: PART 2

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*Creating your press release
& pitching to the media*



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Issue 12

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1. INTRODUCTION

by Elma Glasgow

Welcome to Part 2 of the Beginner's Guide to PR.

The next few pages will take you through the next steps to pitching to the press, and, hopefully, securing coverage.

All of these sections are essential when communicating with the press, so please read carefully.

This advice is based on years of working in PR and the press; my guidance will help you avoid the typical pitfalls that can hold you back and impact your confidence.

With my help, you'll learn key skills and spot potential obstacles in advance.

Along with plenty of success, I've also had to learn some hard truths.

I'm passing these on to make the process as rewarding as possible for you, whilst enabling you to share your important messages of wellbeing, environmental protection and other critical topics.



“This guide will help you avoid the typical PR pitfalls that can hold you back.”

2. HOW TO WRITE A PRESS RELEASE WITH KA-POW!

The advice in Part 1 of this guide forms the foundations of your press release and pitch to the press. This step shows you to structure and write a one-page press release often used across UK media.

Create an eye-catching, snappy title – Keep the title as short as possible; it needs to sum up the entire story.

Introduction

- Summarise the whole story in two or three short sentences and aim to cover the ‘Big Six’: what, where, when, who, why and how. In fact, a journalist should be able to just print the introduction and still convey the crux of your story.
- When written, ask a few people outside your business to read it, and to tell you what they took from it. If their feedback doesn’t reflect what you want to say, tweak the introduction until their thoughts echo your story.

Body of the release

- Aim for two or three short paragraphs.
- Expand on the who, what, where, why, when and how.
- Include a brief quote or two to bring the story to life.
- In the era of fake news, when making claims such as how your business has helped the environment or mental health, include evidence, e.g. reputable research that backs up your claim.

Link through to research by [using anchor text like this](#).

Ends

- This tells the reader that the story has ended.

Notes to Editors

- Underneath this subtitle, add your contact information, the key points about your business (i.e. one or two)

DOWNLOAD THIS HANDY [PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE](#) NOW.

3. HOW TO TAKE FANTASTIC PHOTOGRAPHS

Never underestimate the value of photos: great images convey your ethos and branding, and they add to your credibility.

The better the images you can provide to the press, the more likely they are to cover your story. If you don't have a collection of recent photos, which you can send with your press release, now is the time to take new ones.

Some important things to consider: If using a smartphone, make sure your settings are set at the highest image quality possible. If the pictures are low resolution they'll only be used online,

limiting your chances of other kinds of coverage. So, by providing a selection of high resolution images, you're offering the journalists the option of using your content in print, broadcast and online.

Take some time to seek out further guidance on [how to take photos with your smartphone](#). Ideally you need to avoid issues such as reflections on glasses, people standing in shadows, lack of visibility of your branding, unappealing surroundings, and bad lighting.

Ask yourself: what do I want the photos to say about your business, and how can I portray it in elegantly and professionally?





Save the images and customise the file names; add names of people in the photos (add them in the order of appearance, e.g. left to right), and the photographer's name.

This will save the journalist's time in asking you for this information.

Instead of attaching high resolution images to an email containing your press release, and risk it bouncing back because of large file sizes, load two or three to a website such as WeTransfer or DropBox.

Simply create a link and add it to the press release for journalists to click on and download the pictures.

PR tip: On free accounts with the likes of WeTransfer, the link will expire after a set period. This is important when planning when to issue the release.



4. WHY TRANSPARENCY IS SO IMPORTANT

2030 has been labelled the decade of action. With that, the press and customers expect higher levels of transparency than ever before in terms of the impact businesses are having on the world.

To protect your reputation, prepare yourself to answer challenging questions; it'll not only make your story much stronger, but you'll be seen as a trustworthy source.

As a business already being driven by social purpose, you're probably already used to sharing behind-the-scenes information with customers, associates, partners, etc. But as you start working with the media, journalists may ask for up-to-date evidence that demonstrates your impact.

In the eco sector – Journalists want to see data that backs up your reports, and aim to lift the lid on greenwashing.

In the wellness sector – The media want to see science that backs up any claims you make.

Trends forecast that consumers will increasingly seek out holistic solutions, but a journalist's job is to make sure you're qualified, experienced, reputable and genuine.

What do you have that can be used to offer the press evidence of your authenticity and impact? Take a few minutes to write a list of material you can use to back up your claims.

I've included a couple of examples to help you out:

- Testimonials from customers.
- Certifications

"Journalists aim to lift the lid on greenwashing."



5. HOW TO PITCH YOUR STORY TO THE MEDIA

After creating the release, you need to pitch it to the press. This also requires careful planning.

FINDING THE RIGHT PEOPLE

You gathered a list of outlets in Part 1 and found potential opportunities for coverage; now you need to find the right people to talk to:

Journalists and editors operate in the print and online press. Planners, presenters, researchers, podcasters and producers in broadcast and digital production.

Many websites include a list of names and emails. Make use of the general emails too, e.g. newsdesk@ or features@ addresses.

Try Twitter to find individual journalists. By following potential press contacts, you can quickly figure out their areas of focus, e.g. activism, travel, nutrition, yoga, healing, community, eco-products.

PR tip: you can use the Lists feature on Twitter to keep a record of your new press contacts. If you don't want anyone else to see it, make it private.



CALLING JOURNALISTS

Firstly, if you're planning on contacting the national media, skip ahead to the information about emailing your pitch.

As a low-profile business without a story of national significance, your time is best spent on writing and sending great email pitches, and then hoping journalists take an interest.

This may sound negative, but my advice will save you a lot of effort (and frustration!). Otherwise, prepare to make calls.

Prepare a 30-second pitch before you call a journalist:

- Begin by introducing yourself.
- Summarise the story and explain why you think it's suitable for their title – your research will help you here.
- Let them know you're about to send the release to them.
- Thank them for their time.

CREATING A PITCH EMAIL

A punchy and exciting subject title: four to five words only.

- Add a two-line introduction to the press release, and explain why you think your story is suitable for the outlet you're sending it to.
- Copy and paste the full press release into the email below your introduction, so it's very easy for journalists to read.
- Load hi-res images to an online platform such as or Dropbox and create a link.
- Add the link to the press release, just below your introduction and let journalists know they can download images by clicking on the that link.
- Send the email to the journalist.

Now, relax and congratulate yourself for sending out your first press release.

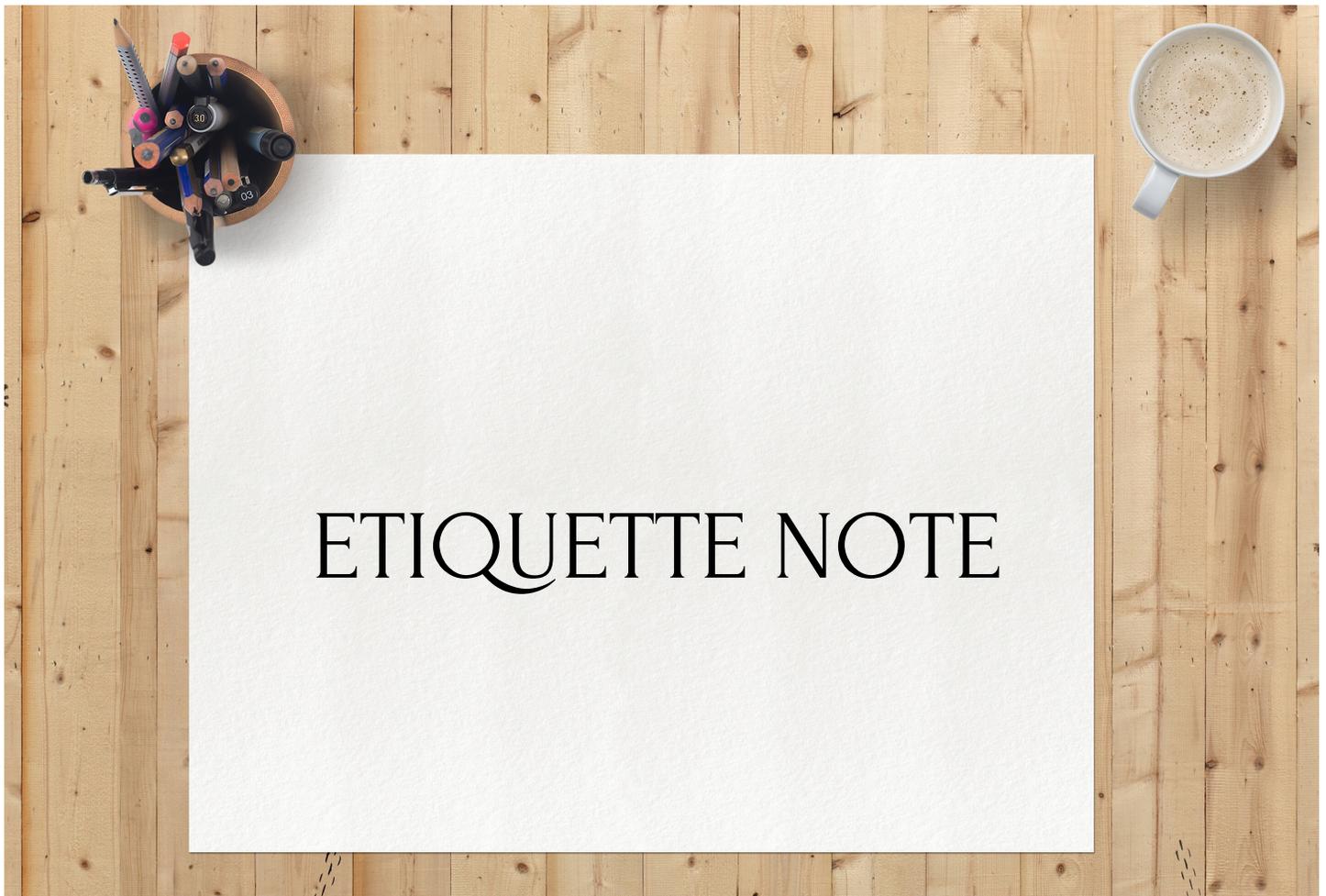
FOLLOWING UP

If you have no response it could be that the reporter is planning on covering your story but simply hasn't had time to tell you.

Often, they'll cover a story but won't tell you they're doing so as they're too busy to reply to every email they receive. Or sometimes another story comes in, and nudges others off the page.

Having said that, it's always worth chasing up, but don't overdo the calls or you'll risk damaging what could be an invaluable relationship.

PR tip: remember, the only time press coverage is guaranteed is when you pay for an advert or advertorial. If your story isn't covered this time, don't lose hope!



“

Never spam a journalist via email, phone or social media. Communicate with them in a measured and professional way to win them over.

”

6. YOUR CHECKLIST

Congratulations on acquiring your new PR skills!

As long as you're mindful of how the press operates, and you ensure your approach is polite, confident, friendly and professional, journalists are more likely to look forward to hearing from you.

Use the checklist to track your progress.

-
- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Drafted a rough structure your press release. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loaded images to a website and created a link to add to the press release. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Proofread to check press release for typos. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Found relevant phone numbers and emails. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Asked three other people to read the press release and asked for their feedback. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Successfully called and spoke to the key journalist/s (not the nationals). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Tweaked press release accordingly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Created email pitch and sent to key journalist/s. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Proofread the release again and saved it as the final version that will go to the media. | <input type="checkbox"/> | Your hard work has resulted in coverage! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Taken new, high-resolution photos. | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Saved the images and changed the file names accordingly. | | |

7. FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. If you'd like one-to-one support, I'm available for ongoing coaching. Contact me at hello@elmaglasgowconsulting.com for more details.

I hope you enjoy working with the media – remember, don't worry too much about getting into the national papers, TV or radio (at least at first). National media may reach huge numbers of people, but the competition for coverage is fierce.

An important aspect of PR is accepting this and looking at the most suitable options. Of course, being featured in a Sunday newspaper supplement is fantastic!

However, if it doesn't bring you more custom into your store, café or classes, is it going to help you meet your business goals in the short and mid-term?

I want you to have a rewarding PR experience, and targeting your specialist and local press offers a great opportunity to develop your confidence whilst still reaching your audiences.

I'd advice to use your PR initially to build a solid profile and reputation and gather stories to share with national press when you're ready to do so. In fact, treat the non-national press as your co-workers who can help you build up your venture. If the nationals pick up on the coverage in the meantime, that's brilliant!



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