



## Writing Press Releases

INTERREG IIC  
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## Discussion points

- When to use a press release
- How to write a press release
- Press release style, format and structure



## Getting started

- What's our message?
- Who are we trying to say it to?
- Will our target media and audience see it as news?



## What is news?

- Information that people need to make decisions
- News helps people decide:
  - ✦ what to like and dislike,
  - ✦ what to buy,
  - ✦ where to work
  - ✦ where to invest



## What is news?

- **Hard news** – needed for decisions. What is new that will change my life?
- **Soft news** – entertainment and human interest.
  - ✦ It's important to touch people emotionally – to make them feel warm towards your product or service.



## What is news?

- Something new – not known before
- Change
- Controversy
- Human interest
- Amusing
- Linked to famous people or places



## Know your target audiences

- It is essential to identify your target audiences clearly before publicising news
- If you know your audiences, you can tailor your news and messages to coincide with your communications goals



## Know your target audiences

- Don't forget that different people, journalists and media have completely different ideas of what constitutes news
- To choose the correct media, you must know who your target audiences are and what media they read, watch or listen to



## Choosing your media

- **REGIONAL MEDIA**
- Who reads, watches or listens to local regional media - newspapers, television and radio?
  - ❖ Local politicians, employees and communities around particular projects and community leaders



## Choosing your media

- **FINANCIAL MEDIA**
- Who reads, watches or listens to financial newspapers, magazines, radio and television?
  - ❖ Business people, financial analysts, government officials, regulators, scholars & researchers. All other media – on a regional or global scale



## Choosing your media

- **TRADE & INDUSTRY PRESS**
- Who reads trade, technical and professional publications?
  - ❖ Organisations operating in your sector (Business-to-business), your partners, financial analysts and specialist investors



## Choosing your media

- **CONSUMER AND LIFESTYLE**
- Who reads, watches or listens to consumer and lifestyle, magazines, radio and television?
  - ❖ General public, opinion formers, NGOs, are pressure groups



## Choosing your media

### • NATIONAL MEDIA

- Who reads, watches or listens to the national newspapers, magazines, television and radio?
  - ❖ The general public, analysts, politicians, policy-makers and opinion shapers, regulators, unions, other media, employees and potential employees



## Choosing your media

### • INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

- Who watches, reads and listens to international television and radio?
  - ❖ Analysts, policy-makers, regulators, the competition, your international colleagues and potential employees, on a global scale



## Choosing your media

### • NEWS AGENCIES and ONLINE MEDIA

- Who gets information from news agencies and online media?
  - ❖ Large-scale global investors, financial analysts, your international partners and all other media (who will use newswire or online media story for their publication) – on a global scale



## Customise your news

- Determine the style, tone and content for your chosen medium and audience
- Trade and technical need detail
- Print press need photos
- Tabloids need colour, emotion and people
- TV needs visual



## Organise your information

- List all of the points you'd like to cover in the press release. Make sure that these points answer the 6Ws:
  - **who** is doing what / **who's** responsible?
  - **what** is being done?
  - **when** did / will this take place?
  - **where** did / will this take place?
  - **why** did this happen / **why** did this take place?
  - **HoW: how** did it happen / **how** is it being done?



## Organise your information

- Once you've listed as many points as possible:
  - ❖ identify one to three points that you think are the most important
  - ❖ these will be your messages
  - ❖ they must be clearly identified in your press release
  - ❖ have points to back-up these messages



## Choose an angle

To make your audiences care:

- ❖ Is your angle topical?
- ❖ Why will this matter to your audiences?
- ❖ What do they care about?
- ❖ We all prefer stories about people than things
- ❖ If not, try to "peg/attach" it to a recent event that would be interesting to readers



## Steps to writing your release

- Remember to make the journalist's job easier and increase your chance of having a press release published, ensure your press release is:
  - ❖ Easy to read
  - ❖ in a simple style without clutter
  - ❖ gets to the point as quickly as possible
  - ❖ interests the reader



## Steps to writing your release

- Keep it simple
- Clear and concise everyday language
- No complicated words
- Avoid EU jargon
- No abbreviations
- Read it out loud – does it sound okay?



## Steps to writing your release

- **Write a headline in fewer than 10 words**
- **Ensure it's:**
  - ❖ Catchy, clear, simple
  - ❖ Conveys news angle in imaginative and attention-grabbing way because it's the first thing the reader sees



## Steps to writing your release

- **Format**
- Keep it short (1 page if you can)
- Don't bore journalists with more information than they can use
- Ensure messages are easy to identify
  - ❖ When it's too long, journalists might not find the key messages in your press release – and report the wrong thing



## Steps to writing your release

- **Quotes**
- ❖ Use a direct quote from a senior person
- ❖ A good quote will be reproduced unchanged in print
- ❖ Quotes can inject humanity, personality, colour and feelings to a project



## Steps to writing your release

### • Style

- ❖ Avoid flowery phrases or cliches
- ❖ Keep language simple
- ❖ Avoid acronyms, abbreviations, EU jargon and technical terms
- ❖ Write in the third person only
- ❖ Write quotes in first person
- ❖ No spelling or grammar mistakes



## Steps to writing your press release

### • Style

- ❖ Sound objective
- ❖ Refrain from hype
- ❖ Use true, correct information and try not to embellish the facts
- ❖ Press releases should never sound like sales



## Steps to writing your release

### • Back-up what you say

- ❖ Provide references for all statistics, facts and figures
- ❖ Journalists will question the validity of figures
- ❖ Draw conclusions from facts, express opinions in quotes



## Steps to writing your release

### • Format

- ❖ Write in proper press release format
- ❖ Provide background material through the NOTES FOR EDITORS section
- ❖ Include contact details of spokespeople
- ❖ Ensure the INTERREG IIC and EU logos are used



## Steps to writing your release

### • Timing

- ❖ Date it and issue it on the date of issue. If it's the wrong date journalists will think it's old news
- ❖ Use the mail for press packs but not press releases. These must e-mailed or faxed.
  - Journalists will know it's immediate and can also cut and paste quotes and facts



## Press release workshop

- Identify news angles for your project
- Indentify your audiences
- What is the best choice of media to reach them?



## Press release workshop

- What are the main points and messages?
- What is your headline?
- What are the 6Ws?
- What would be good quotes to use and who should they be attributed to?