

PR Template

10 rules of a press release

1. Make sure the story is of *genuine* interest and timely - old news is not news.
2. Be aware of what else is in the news – if a major event is taking place it could overshadow your story and if a disaster or accident has taken place your story might seem insensitive and poorly judged.
3. Keep your language simple and jargon free and don't assume knowledge.
4. Avoid overly subjective language as it will undermine your authority - keep the tone and content factual.
5. Proof-read your press release carefully and ask someone else to look over it for you - mistakes can be embarrassing at best, controversial at worst.
6. Keep the release to a single side of A4 wherever possible and cut and paste it directly into the email – some journalists simply will not open an attachment to read a release.
7. Attach a photograph if you have something appropriate but make sure it's in focus and of print quality – a photograph taken on a mobile phone is unlikely to be clear enough.
8. Make sure your press release has been cleared through the appropriate Bus User channels *before circulating it*.
9. Target your journalists and publications carefully – make sure your story is relevant to them and work to their deadlines.
10. Call ahead to introduce yourself and let them know the release is on its way - keep a record of when and where your release is used.

Headline: Bus Users UK back Catch the Bus Week

The headline must be eye catching - it can be amusing or a play-on-words as long as it doesn't detract from the meaning or seriousness of the release. Otherwise, make it short and self-explanatory.

Date: 29th of April to 5th of May 2013

If you're writing about an event that's about to take place then write the date, venue and time just below the headline. There's nothing more frustrating than having to read through an entire release to find the pertinent information.

Opening paragraph: Bus Users UK is backing a major new initiative to get people onto buses. Catch the Bus Week kicks off on Monday 29 April and will see hundreds of projects launched across the UK including ticket giveaways, community events and donations to charity.

The opening paragraph must contain the who, what, why, where, when and how. Most journalists will read only the headline and opening paragraph of a release so highlight anything that will sell your story to them in your first few sentences.

Background: Greener Journeys, the group behind Catch the Bus Week, wants to persuade people to take a billion fewer car journeys in order to reduce congestion and carbon emissions.

In your second and third paragraphs introduce some background. Explain who's involved in more detail and what their role is, why an event is taking place or the context to what has happened.

Quote: According to the Chief Executive of Bus Users UK, Claire Walters: "Catch the Bus Week is a great way to highlight the green credentials of bus travel and encourage people to see buses as a viable and economic alternative to car travel.

Quotes are a great way to inject some colour into a release and speak subjectively on the subject. Remember to give the name AND job title AND organisation of the person being quoted.

Additional: "It's also a timely reminder, given the current climate, that buses can offer vital access to employment, education, health and social facilities. Bus travel is changing and Catch the Bus Week is a fantastic opportunity to show people how safe, reliable and environmentally friendly it can be."

If you have more than one person to quote or they have more to say then add it here. You can also add in more background if it's relevant.

Who we are: Bus Users UK, the voice of bus passengers, is an independent not-for-profit that aims to improve bus services across the UK and get more people on board.

Close with a statement about Bus Users UK that a journalist can use word-for-word in an article.

Notes to editors: NOTES TO EDITORS

Always title these clearly as notes to editors. If you are writing on behalf of Bus Users UK then please use the following copy. Bus Users in Wales and Scotland will have their own standard copy that should explain who they are in relation to Bus Users UK.

Bus Users UK is an independent group which champions the interests of bus and coach users and campaigns for better bus and coach services.

We have the ear of all the major bus companies and a lot of the smaller ones too, of their trade organisation and of the Government and local authorities.

We operate a complaints appeals service for bus users who are dissatisfied with the response they have had from bus companies, and we run events for bus users to meet their local bus company management and local authority staff. We act as a support organisation for local bus users groups.

Bus Users UK Ltd is a Company Limited by Guarantee (registered in England No 04635458).

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The contact on a press release should be prepared to be called outside of office hours (although this is unlikely to happen in reality) and as such should provide full contact details.