

NFASP's Guide To Writing A Good Press Release

This guidance is intended to help studio groups get messages across to a variety of media channels.

There's an art to writing a good press release and making sure that the information that you want to get across gets published. Here are some simple tips to help NFASP members raise their profile and have a better chance of getting their stories published.

Editors, working to tight deadlines, will use stories that are well organised and require little editing. Sub-editors, similarly pressed for time, are likely to cut stories from the bottom to make sure that they fit so:

- - Make sure that your story has a clear hook – who? what?, when?, why?, how? all at the beginning and make clear why this story and why now
- - Avoid starting with numbers or dates as they look clunky on the page but impressive numbers are newsworthy, so do mention that you've just welcomed your millionth visitor/raised £1m early on.
- - Be as concise as possible, you can add extra information in "notes to editors" at the end, where you should put web links to help editors find additional info and thumbnails of available images.
- - Use your introductory sentence to set up the story in a nutshell, then expand on it below (tell, then re-tell the story)
- - Try to keep the story short – you can always supply more information later.
- - For web sites remember that many readers won't bother to scroll down unless they're really intrigued so make the first few hundred words count.
- - Think about your headline. If it's for the web then the words you use will help the story to go up the search rankings (search engine optimisation/SEO) – so make it tell your story for you.

- • Good images help to sell a story – try and make them as dynamic and eye-catching as possible, but pay attention to individual publication/site image requirements (NFASP can only cope with a 225 pixel width, the glossies will want hi-res images)
- • Think about the potential readers for the publication – if it's for a general, rather than art-specialist, publication avoid art jargon.
- • Always explain acronyms/abbreviations at the start e.g. NFASP (the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers)
- • If you've made a commitment to name-checking a funder, embed their names in a sentence early on in the piece e.g. "The new Arts R Us studios, funded through a partnership with Bogus County Council and Mega Corp, offer 2,000 square feet of creative workspace"
- • Make quotes relevant. If you have lots add them as a list at the end, in the notes to editors, making sure they're attributed to the speaker
- • If you need to get the message out for a particular time (e.g. advertising an event), allow as much time as possible – at least two weeks if feasible
- • For broadcast media, send for the attention of the news desk and ask for it to be put in the diary, with dates/times of when someone might be available to talk to camera/mic.
- • And finally, especially for web stories, do a little summary (circa 30 words) that describes the story in a nutshell, and then expand in subsequent paragraphs. The summary may be the only visible bit on a web site until readers click "read more"