



How to Write a Press Release to Get Publicity in Print and on the Web

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Sherri Collins

Editor Pet Product News International

Sherri has more than 19 years of publishing experience, most recently as the managing editor of AUTO Aficionado, preceded by a two-year stint on the PR side of life and 9 ½ years as executive editor of european car Magazine. Sherri joined the PPNI editorial team almost a year ago.

Sherri's weekly blog, Of Pets and Pen, can be found at <http://www.petproductnews.com/ppn-editorial-blog/of-pets-and-pen/default.aspx>

Introduction

The importance of press releases and how a great one can benefit your business by generating buzz throughout the industry.

- ◆ Why you need publicity?
- ◆ How to go about getting publicity
- ◆ The benefits of publicity



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Topic 1: Reasons to Send Out a Press Release

- ◆ A new product, product line, service, etc.
- ◆ **Company changes:** new opening, closing, acquisition, selling, merger, facility expansions, website, phone number, address, etc.
- ◆ **Company news:** partnerships, distribution agreements, financial reports, endorsements, sponsorships, seminars, contests, giveaways, donations, new certification, anniversary, survey/study results, etc.
- ◆ **Personnel changes:** hires, restructures, promotion, death, etc.
- ◆ **Personal recognitions:** awards, medals, honors, new license, speaker at a conference, etc.



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Topic 2: Press Release Dos

- ◆ Know your audience.
- ◆ Focus on facts: who, what, when, where and why. Start the press release with bulleted points for Who, What, Where and When, and include a description of each in one line or less. This allows editors to direct the release to the appropriate party quickly.
- ◆ Include the most important information first.



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Topic 2: Press Release Dos (CONTINUED)

- ◆ Include full company name.
- ◆ Include media contact information: name of contact, title with company or mention PR firm, phone number and email.
- ◆ Add an “About Company” at end of press release: full name of company, what it does/manufacturers/etc., company headquarters, list any subsidiaries and their function, short company history, website and contact info, number of stores, when founded.
- ◆ List credentials of any doctor mentioned, such as DVM, Ph.D., MD, etc., as well as current position.



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Topic 2: Press Release Dos (CONTINUED)

- ◆ Write a clear headline. For example, write “ABC Company Partners with XYZ Foundation” or “New Partnership to Benefit Homeless Dogs,” not “Hot Deal Creates Happiness for All Involved.”
- ◆ Add quotes, if appropriate, to add character, but make sure they are relevant and that they bring something to the news at hand. For example, the founders of ABC Company may comment on how they expect their new partnership to be better than last year by finding x-amount of more homes for abandoned dogs.



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Topic 2: Press Release Dos (CONTINUED)

- ◆ If mentioning other companies in the press release, include their headquarters and focus.
- ◆ Keep the press release concise. It doesn't have to be terse and boring, but make each word count.
- ◆ Date the press release.
- ◆ Proofread for grammatical, spelling and typographical errors.
- ◆ Check the format. After several emails/attachments/etc., letters can turn into unreadable characters. For example, th\$ dog #%st...



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Topic 2: Press Release Dos (CONTINUED)

- ◆ Send high resolution images with the release and include captions. This means photos should be at least 3" x 5" at 300 dpi with no re-sampling done (i.e., just making an image bigger using the same file. It doesn't help.). The best image is the one straight from the camera. The sharper the image, the clearer the focus, the less special effect, the better chance it has of getting into the magazine.
- ◆ Be aware of lead time. Monthly publications will likely work several weeks to a few months ahead. For example, in May, B2B publications are already working on July and August issues. For consumer publications, the lead time is even longer. Make sure the press release is timely.



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Topic 2: Press Release Dos (CONTINUED)

- ◆ If you mention a website in the release, make sure it's current/active. Use complete link (<http://www.PetProductNews.com>), it will help your search engine optimization efforts when it is picked up by an online source.
- ◆ Post all your press releases on your own website.



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Example of an Effective Press Release

August 03, 2009 02:47 PM Eastern Daylight Time 

Coupons.com Unveils First-Ever National Television Advertising Campaign

→ Strong headline

Campaign Showcases Drastic Cost-Saving Measures and Suggests "There's A Better Way to Save" with Coupons.com

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Coupons, Inc., the leader in digital coupons, today announced a new national television advertising campaign titled, "There's A Better Way to Save." The campaign, which debuted August 1, aims to raise awareness of the money-saving opportunities available with online coupons and drive traffic to its flagship consumer Web site, Coupons.com. The campaign represents the first-ever TV advertising campaign by Coupons.com, which is experiencing dramatic growth as more and more consumers and consumer brands turn to online coupons.

"The 'There's A Better Way to Save' national television ad campaign marks the beginning of a new outreach for Coupons.com," said Steven Boal, CEO of Coupons, Inc. "Coupons.com has grown to become the 43rd largest Web property in the U.S., and there's a tremendous awareness among shoppers about the ways to save money 24/7 across our network of thousands of sites. This new outreach will help attract those who are still unaware of how easy it is to save up to \$2,000 a year on groceries by simply using our coupons for the brands they love, trust and buy every day."

Campaign Overview

The "There's A Better Way to Save" campaign positions Coupons.com as the one-stop-shop to help consumers find simpler solutions to saving money by using humorous examples of shoppers resorting to great measures to trim their grocery budgets.

The 15- and 30-second commercials include a reminder of how easy it is to save on Coupons.com, each concluding with, "Click. Print. Save." They will appear in 60 U.S. markets, including seven of the top 10 beginning August 1. The campaign includes three spots. The first spot is available at <http://www.couponsinc.com/corp/source/freesamples.asp>; subsequent spots will be posted when they air.

The commercials were created in-house and directed by Jason Zada of Tool of North America. Post production was provided by The Whitehouse.

Campaign Strategy

Coupons.com's national television advertising campaign is based on a successful direct response strategy that was tested with its subsidiary brands, CouponSuzy.com and CouponBug.com. At the conclusion of more than two years of research, the market-based tests demonstrated that TV can be a cost-effective ad medium for driving user traffic to Coupons.com and increasing overall brand awareness.

"We've had the pretty unique position to be able to test the effectiveness of television advertising with our CouponSuzy.com and CouponBug.com brands over the past two years," added Boal. "We've found that with the right dial settings and levers, TV can be an extremely cost effective means for our direct response goals to drive new and repeat visitors and raise awareness. We're substantially upping our investment in TV at a time when other companies are pulling back."



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Example of an Effective Press Release (CONTINUED)

Astounding Growth for Online Couponing

Increased interest in digital coupons by both consumers and major brands is converging to drive unprecedented growth. First, more consumers are using digital coupons. In fact, more than 18 million unique consumers visited Coupons.com in June, making it the 43rd largest Web site in the U.S.† In addition, more companies that already utilize digital coupons are using them more often, while more companies are discovering digital coupons to promote their products for the first time.

Millions of dollars in savings are printed every day by consumers from Coupons.com. In June, over \$57 million in savings was printed from Coupons.com, a 130 percent increase over the same month in 2008. In addition, between January 1 and June 13 of this year, \$313 million in savings was printed, which is equivalent to the amount of savings printed in all of 2008.

→ Details/Scope

About Coupons, Inc.

Coupons, Inc. is the global leader in interactive coupon solutions, providing clients with complete coupon promotional opportunities that appeal to key customer demographics. The Company's innovative marketing technology solutions help top brands and retailers reach consumers on thousands of Web sites with the most flexible, effective and secure alternative to offline-delivered coupons. Coupons, Inc. clients and licensees include the majority of top consumer packaged goods companies such as Johnson & Johnson, General Mills, Kimberly-Clark, Kraft Foods, McDonalds and Clorox as well as hundreds of grocery retailers including Kroger, Safeway, CVS, Walgreens and Kmart. Coupons.com, its flagship consumer Web site, is the largest printable coupon site on the Internet. The company is also the provider of CouponSuzy.com and CouponBug.com online coupon Web services, as well as the popular grocery list iPhone application, Grocery iQ. Based in Mountain View, California, the company is a 2008 winner of the Red Herring 100 North America award, recognized as a company leading the next wave of innovation on the Internet. To start printing coupons, visit www.coupons.com. To learn more about Coupons, Inc. visit www.couponsinc.com.

→ Informative, yet not too long

† Nielsen NetRatings, June 2009

Contacts

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Permalink: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20090803005967/en>



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Topic 3: Press Release Don'ts

- ◆ Avoid trite pet terminology/phrases. Examples include “a new leash on life,” “a breed apart,” “gone to the dogs,” “perrrrrfect opportunity,” “flying off the shelves” and “who let the dogs out?”.
- ◆ In correlation with the above, avoid subjective adjectives. Overly used adjectives include: “unique,” “special,” “state-of-the-art.”
- ◆ Don't write fluff. A press release is not an advertisement.



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Topic 3: Press Release Don'ts (CONTINUED)

- ◆ Don't exaggerate. Tell it as it is.
- ◆ Avoid hype and exclamation points (!)
- ◆ Story telling is rarely necessary in a press release. Stick to the facts.
- ◆ Don't send out a press release just to send out a press release. Make sure it is newsworthy. (See Reasons to Send Out a Press Release.)



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Example of an Ineffective Press Release



July 31, 2009 08:55 AM Eastern Daylight Time

HydroponicsWholesale.com, The Biggest Online Gardening Store Just Expanded Its Online Operations With ~~\$100,000~~ Investment Into a Mega Store

→ Hype

VENICE BEACH, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--HydroponicsWholesale.com announced today that it just added over **1,000** at low prices and fast shipping times for plant growing [products for hydroponics](#).

→ Errors

HydroponicsWholesale.com is a retail-discount hydroponics online store which, carries a wide variety of New [Hydroponic Lighting Systems](#) from Hydrofarm. "I elected to drop our prices online because of low rent and give back to the customers that buy online VS our land stores" says Michael Rotkin, CEO/Owner of Hydroponics Wholesale LLC.

"The new prices and shipping experience will be effective August 1st, 2009 online, with our new credit card secure terminal. We just installed a full [video blog on how to grow hydroponics](#)," said Michael Rotkin. "We hope this will help our visitors watch free grow videos and learn how to grow plants indoor and eat their own vegetables."

→ Better as two separate items

HydroponicsWholesale.com just got the [multi flo bucket systems](#), which are a hot seller distributed by Greentrees.com. These multi flo systems have more piping than last year and cover more plant width for organic plants indoor than others."



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Example of an Ineffective Press Release (CONTINUED)

HydroponicsWholesale.com took our old line of products off and added our new line of [aeroflow systems](#), which are small plant grow systems that come with grow pots, hydroponics nutrients.

HydroponicsWholesale.com just added a new line of low cost light bulbs, which are energy efficient for the [mh hps light bulbs](#) category.

The new [digital ballasts](#), which provide energy efficient use of electricity to grow plants and power the light bulb to grow the hydroponics plants, are now in stock.

HydroponicsWholesale.com added a greenhouse line of products for co2 and Environmental controller and [Mega Gi Grow Machines](#) for growing up to 336+ plants in a small area within the greenhouse.

HydroponicsWholesale.com just created an Free E-Hydroponics Book Online for Our Customers. [Learn how to grow plants here](#) free and bookmark our page.

→ Most important last

[Hydroponics Wholesale Gardening Store](#) now accepts Visa, Mastercard, Discover and money orders, as we just upgraded our system. We just enabled live chat functions or if you would like to order hydroponics and grow the plants you want, [sign up and create your account free here](#).

Contacts

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Topic 4: Additional Tips from Sponsor



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Topic 5: Questions from Participants



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Topic 6: Downloadable Files to Assist with Publicity Goals

To download the press release template go to:

<http://www.petproductnews.com/PRtemplate>

To download the image guide go to:

<http://www.petproductnews.com/ImageGuide>

To download the press release check list go to:

<http://www.petproductnews.com/PRCheckList>



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