

What makes a story 'newsworthy'?

15 things you need to know to get your business in the news!



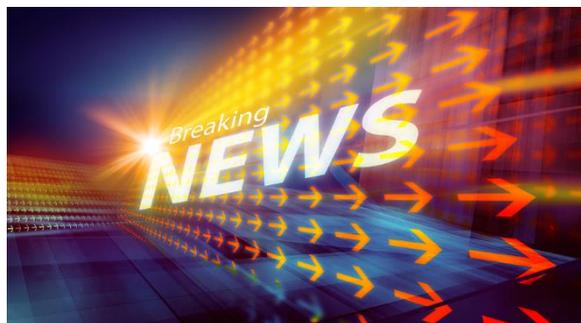
A practical guide for **Realise Business** members brought to you by

About this guide

'Realise Business has a new website.' Could that be considered 'newsworthy'? What about: 'Realise Business is launching a new tool that allows its members to easily share news with over 300,000 Sydney businesses?' – well now you are talking!

We've developed this practical guide to help you understand firstly, what makes a story newsworthy, and secondly, how you can present it in a way that will make it irresistible to those in charge of content, whether it be for the Realise Business newsletter, the local newspaper or an industry newsletter.

The importance of being newsworthy



'Why bother?' with creating company news we hear you ask. We know that running a small business means you don't have a lot of time to spare for writing stories. However, gaining news coverage for your company can reinforce your value with existing customers, open doors, attract partners and investors, and ultimately build your customer base.

The positive effects may not happen immediately but regular messages about how well and how interesting your company is will make a difference.

What makes a story newsworthy?

So you think you've got some fantastic news? It could be you have reached sales targets or appointed a highly experienced sales manager. Sorry for the yawn but while that sort of company news is exciting for you and your staff, it unfortunately has little appeal to a wider audience.

There is no doubt that your company is most definitely newsworthy with intriguing stories to tell! But you need to deliver it in a way that those ruthless beasts – otherwise known as editors, journalists and content publishers – believe is 'newsworthy'.

Essentially a newsworthy story needs to speak to people's interests, needs, preferences and pain points. For example, if you are sponsoring a charity, the story would need to emphasise who is being helped and in what way and why this is important, rather than your company's contribution.

The aim is to produce a quality story that is interesting and enjoyable rather than producing an 'in-your-face' product or service promotion. And it's actually not that hard.

15 questions to ask yourself before submitting content

- 1. Do you know who you are trying to reach and what you are trying to accomplish?** As with anything to do with marketing and public relations, establishing who your audience is, what they need and what you are trying to accomplish are key starting points.
- 2. What is your unique point-of-difference?** What makes your product or company different to your competitors? How is it special and why does it matter to people? What solution are you offering? People love to know about how your service and product can make a difference in their lives.
- 3. Is your news 'fresh' or part of a current news cycle or trend?** News has a 'use by date' so don't submit something that's too out of date. Also, is there something happening in the news that relates to your company's services or product? For example, new research or statistics that backs up what you are doing, making your news top-of-mind.
- 4. Are you an industry disruptor?** Industry disruptors create businesses, products and services that are better – less expensive and more creative, useful and impactful – and scalable. Think Uber and Snapchat. People love to hear how a business is changing the ways things used to be done.
- 5. Is your service or product unrivalled?** If you can legitimately claim you are the 'first', 'biggest', 'best', you will have a more newsworthy story.
- 6. Can your news be used as part of a special day feature?** Those in charge of content are always looking for stories that relate to regular events, whether it be the start of the school year, Anzac Day, Valentine's Day, Fathers' Day or even Halloween.
- 7. Is there a human interest element to the story?** Has an individual or family been helped by your service or product? People are interested in people so featuring them with a quote and photo will make the story more appealing.
- 8. Have you got a killer heading?** This is the hook to bring readers in. Using humour, a double entendre or statistics always works well. The heading needs to sum up your story ideally in 10 words or less.
- 9. Is your introduction right?** Start with the most important points first. A good rule is to think about how a news presenter would introduce the story. Grab the reader's attention first and fill in the details later.



- 10. Does it contain Who, What, When, Where and Why?** Add in 'How' and you have ticked off the most important information to include.
- 11. Is it short and punchy?** Try to keep the copy concise – under a page is ideal. Get to the point quickly.
- 12. Is it overly salesy or blatantly self-serving?** Remember this is a story not an advertisement. If the content can inform or assist your intended audience, they will remember you and view you positively if you have helped them in some way.
- 13. Have you presented it in the right way?** A media release is a standard way to present a news story. It includes a heading, introduction and 3–4 paragraphs of copy on the first page. At the end (or on a 2nd page), include who to contact for more information and a small company blurb.
- 14. Do you have an interesting photo you can include?** Including an original photo, preferably featuring people doing an activity, will make it immensely more appealing to any editor.
- 15. Has it been proofread?** There is nothing more off putting to a professional editor than having typos or grammatical mistakes throughout a submitted story. Also double check dates and contact details.



Every small business owner is adept at juggling the many roles that they must tackle each day. However, if writing your own news stories is too much of a stretch, communications companies and freelance writers are readily available to do the work and make your life a little easier.

If you have some news to submit to the Realise Business Newsletter please email editor@realise.business.

About Infodec Communications

Each member of Infodec Communications is an experienced and creative storyteller who is well-versed in writing to specific platforms and formats. We have also worked in newsrooms of major media organisations. If you would like to engage us for PR or writing services, contact us on (02) 9531 5595 to find out how we can help you with your content needs. www.infodec.com.au