



Preparing a Press Release

Connection Team

Press Releases

A press release has one job, and only one job. The job of a press release is to get the editor to notice you. Once she or he notices you, your release will get passed on to a reporter.

A lot of times, reporters are LOOKING for news to report. By sending a press release, you make your FCCLA chapter very accessible to them...and that's exactly the goal of the Connection Partnership Pilot Program, to promote FCCLA.

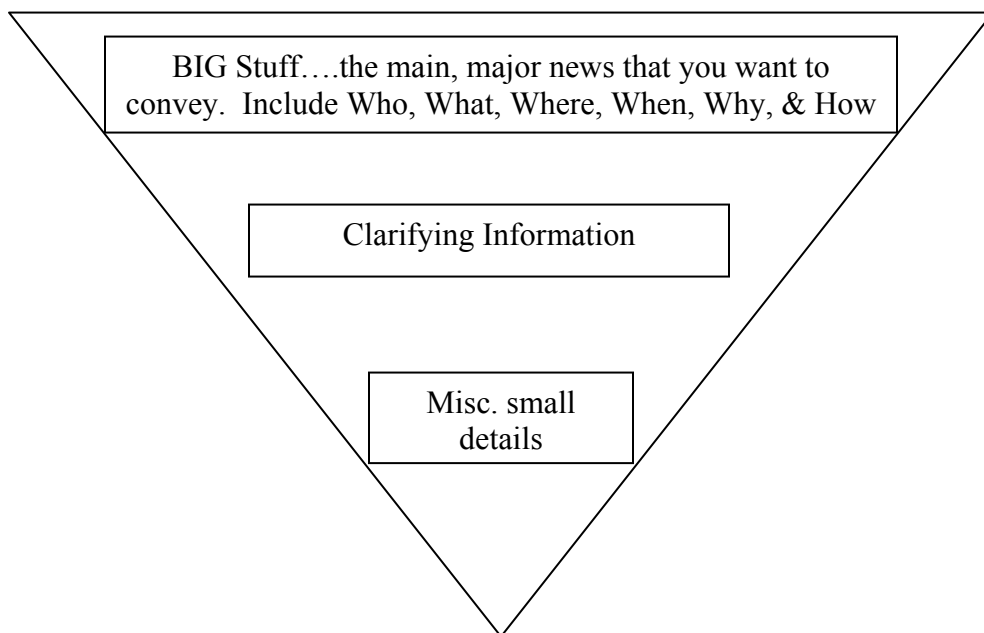
There is a catch though. In order for a reporter or editor to take you seriously, there's a few things to take into consideration:

- 1. Make sure your press release is in the proper format.**
- 2. If there's a time factor involved in your news, send the release early enough to meet any deadlines the publication may have.**
- 3. Make sure your press release doesn't have any spelling or grammar errors in it. Remember, professional writers will be reading it. This means run spell check, but have at least two people proofread it. Start with a classmate or friend, then have your adviser read it, and if possible, an English teacher too.**
- 4. Send it to the right person.**

Sounds like it could be a bit of work, but it's actually pretty simple. There's an easy format to use...

Inverted Pyramid Format

A lot of journalists may refer to the “inverted pyramid.” It’s actually much more simple than it sounds. The basic concept of the inverted pyramid is to start with the big stuff, and end up with the small stuff at the end of the press release. You want the small, less important details at the end, just in case anything needs to be cut when the article is published.



*Always include **the 5 W's and the H** in your Press Release in the first paragraph-
Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.*

KISS! (Keep it short and simple)
Remember, your press release should only be one page long, double-spaced.

What goes on a Press Release?

1. “For Immediate Release”
2. Specific Contact Information. List a person, not just the name of your school or chapter. You should also list this person’s *direct* phone number. Email, and mailing. Usually the best person to list is either you, or your adviser (only with his/her permission).
3. The Headline. This should be 10 words or less, and be extremely interesting. This is 90% of your press release, so you should spend 90% of your time coming up with a good headline. Without a good headline, your reader most likely won’t read on.
4. The Body. The body of a press release should be **double spaced**, and have these parts:
 - a. Begin with the location and date, followed by the summary. For example: “Ypsilanti, MI, April 17, 2001—Michigan FCCLA began packing for our annual...”
 - b. Summary: Immediately following the location and date you should start your summary. In the example above, “Michigan FCCLA” was the beginning of the summary. In just two or three sentences, tell your whole story. Don’t give too many details, but give a clear, concise, interesting summary. Remember to include the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.
 - c. Some details. Usually this section should include a quote from someone. When quoting someone, be sure to give some credentials. If you were quoting your adviser, you would want to make sure the reporter knew who he or she is. For example, look at the two examples listed below. Which one do you think is correct?
 - i. “...are pleased to host this event,” says Mrs. Jacobson.
 - ii. “... are pleased to host this event,” says Mrs. Jacobson, an adviser for Pickford FCCLA for over 10 years.Of course, it’s example ii. When you give someone credentials, make sure it says who the person is, and what he or she has to do with the story.

This section should also include a brief description of FCCLA. Most reporters will not know who we are. You may want to mention that we were formerly known as FHA-HERO.

- d. Call to action. This is where you ask the reporter to contact you for an interview, or if they need more information.
5. End the press release with “ ### ” or “ –FCCLA– ” centered on the bottom.

Common Problems with Press Releases

- ◆ Leads that are confusing or too wordy
- ◆ Missing information
- ◆ Spelling or grammar mistakes
- ◆ Bad contact information, or the contact isn't available much of the time

Other Tips...

- ◆ In any communication with any media outlet, be friendly, clear and concise.
- ◆ Don't ask a reporter to bend a deadline for you. Always have things in at least a day or two before a deadline, if there is one.
- ◆ Proofread, Proofread, Proofread!
- ◆ Avoid quotes that are cliché.
- ◆ Write from your audience's perspective.
- ◆ Many reporters like some handwritten comments, or even the envelope hand-addressed, but the press release must always be typed.

Who should you send it to?

Daily newspapers:	Education Editor
Weekly newspaper:	Education Editor
Magazines:	Education Editor
Radio Stations:	News Department
T.V. Stations	Education Reporter

More Information

For more information, or if you have questions, contact Brad Schmidt, State Coordinator, at Michigan FCCLA. The number to the office is (734) 487-8657. His email address is: bschmidt@emich.edu

Information used in this workshop was taken from:

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