

How and Why to Write a Press Release for Newspapers and Social Media

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Way back when, we all learned that a press release is the easiest and quickest way to get free publicity. It is a cost-effective way to grab the reader's attention and *should* drive people to your club, event or project. Here are some rules that CBS News recommends you follow that will encourage the public to contact you (modified for use by a garden club).

- **RULE #1: Use the press release as a sales tool for your club.** The idea is to communicate a message to readers and prospective members, through the vehicle of a print or online article, hopefully adding the authority and credibility of the publication, website and/or reporter to the message.
- **RULE #2: Have a newsworthy story.** To get your message communicated through the publication, you need to convince the reporter/editor that your message (or the story surrounding it) is newsworthy. So it's got to have appeal to the entire readership of the publication.
- **RULE #3: Write it like a reporter would write it.** If your press release looks and feels like a real article, reporters will often just file it as a story with minimal editing. Therefore, it's up to you to make sure that your press release looks and feels like a real article.
- **RULE #4: Provide some good quotes.** Contact the club president, award honoree, scholarship recipient or project chairman (whatever you are writing about) and have them say something memorable and personal, if possible. Identify the name and title of the person quoted.
- **RULE #5: Contact your top outlets personally.** In addition to sending a press release, personally contact the reporters or editor that you really want to cover the story. Send them a personal note asking them to accept the release for publication or ask them to write a story. Ask them if they want the release attached to an email or within the email. Ask them what format they prefer — Microsoft Word, hardcopy, etc. Many newspapers have a form available to use on their website. You might want to write the press release to fit their beat and send a photo or graphic they may use. If it is a project or event to take place in the future, call the paper well ahead of time and ask them to send a photographer to the event. Don't forget to write a **shorter** release for the MFGC Facebook page. *Include pictures* and send to Annie Mollock, dragonflydragonfli@yahoo.com. Consider sending the release to the editor of **Montana Gardens**, too. Patty Schlaeger, tamarackgroup@yahoo.com

Other pointers from Hubspot.com:

- Setting up the press release for success starts with your headline. You only have one line to work with, which can seem scary, but consider diction carefully to make your headline captivating. You might write the headline after you've written the story. Use action verbs, clear, understandable language, and keep your headline simple and short. Most importantly, make it interesting: Keep in mind that reporters/editors get dozens of releases each day, so invest the time to write a compelling headline. It's worth the time and effort on your part.
- The first paragraph of your release should cover the who, what, why, where, and how of your project, event or development. Reporters don't have time to sift through details and fluffy background information -- they just need the facts that'll help them tell your story to someone else from a position of authority. There shouldn't be any new, crucial information covered after this section that the reader could potentially miss because many readers stop reading after the first paragraph.
- In the follow-up paragraphs, keep in mind that the reader already has all of the vital details and information they need to file a story or spread the word. It can be tempting to provide superfluous facts and tidbits about your club or the development of your announcement. However, a press release **needs to be helpful and concise**. Offer details here that strengthen your narrative, like creative or noteworthy ways the club developed the project or announcement at hand. Or, when applicable, comment on future implications of your announcement.
- Describe what your club does in clear, plain English, include a link to your Facebook page or the MFGC website homepage early on, and make your boilerplate succinct and straightforward. If you cite data, include a reference link for the data source, and make sure every name in the release has an associated title and company as well.

Press releases are usually no more than one or two pages long and contain complete media contact information, a headline, dateline, the body of the press release, and three hash marks that state, in journalistic terms, 'THE END.'

Here's a sample taken from the Internet about an environmental story:

Kill The Cup CEO Challenges World Coffee Leaders to Take Earth Day Pledge at SCAA Expo in Seattle

SAN DIEGO, April 16, 2015 -- The unofficial "heads of state" of the coffee world met in Seattle this past weekend for the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) Expo, the world's largest coffee conference. Joining them was Drew Beal, CEO of [Kill the Cup](#), a 501(c)(3) environmental nonprofit social enterprise that has a solution for the 158 million paper coffee cups that are used in America each day. Beal challenged the world's coffee leaders to take the Earth Day Pledge to carry a reusable cup on April 22.

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Photo - <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20150415/198837-INFO>

In an effort to raise awareness amongst coffee drinkers this Earth Day, Kill the Cup is challenging 22,000 people to take the Earth Day Pledge to carry a reusable cup on April 22. Participants can sign the pledge by visiting [KillTheCup.com](#) and entering their email address. Reminders will be sent out in the days leading up to Earth Day, April 22.

"We are making it fun for people to bring their own cup," says Beal, who leads the San Diego-based organization that implements grassroots campaigns focused on reducing consumer waste.

This weekend, Beal met with Samantha Veide, chair of the SCAA Sustainability Council, which works to drive the SCAA's position on sustainable coffee, influence industry practices, and execute initiatives that support those positions.

"As an industry we need to constantly explore ways to reduce our environmental impact," says Veide. "We are excited to explore ways to work with Beal and his organization to bring the sustainability message of the reusable movement to the cafe community and consumers."

Entering into its second year of operations, Kill The Cup is a nationwide environmental initiative on college campuses. This past October, Kill the Cup held its inaugural University Challenge at eight schools across the United States. Kill the Cup hopes to have 24 schools participate in the fall 2015 program.

The typical Kill the Cup campaign works like this: individuals upload coffee selfies with a reusable cup for a chance to win gift cards or other prizes. People that check-in to a sponsored location receive additional entries for weekly and grand prize raffles.

"The result is triple bottom line," explains Beal. "Less waste from paper cups, more excitement around sustainability and improved financial performance for partner organizations."

As part of the Earth Day Pledge, participants are encouraged to donate to Kill the Cup to help the organization scale out of the startup phase. "From one dollar to one thousand dollars, any contribution amount will help us grow our environmental and social impact," said Beal, who volunteered 15 hours to offset costs to attend the Expo, and will do so again at the Sustainable Brands Conference in San Diego this June. Sticking with the "22" theme, Kill the Cup has a fundraising goal of \$22,000 by April 22.

To participate in the Earth Day Pledge and learn more about Kill the Cup, visit www.killthecup.com, and spread the word by following Kill the Cup on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA)

The [Specialty Coffee Association of America \(SCAA\)](#) is a non-profit trade organization and the world recognized lead-

er in coffee knowledge development. With over 12,000 members located in more than 40 countries, including member companies and their employees, SCAA members represent every segment of the specialty coffee industry, including producers, roasters, importers/exporters, retailers, manufacturers, baristas and other industry professionals.

About KillTheCup.com

KillTheCup.com is a project of Social Ventures for Sustainability, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that partners with campuses and communities to encourage environmentally responsible consumer behavior. KillTheCup.com's campaigns offer prizes and rewards to consumers for behaving in ways that will save them money, reduce waste and improve sponsoring organizations' bottom lines.

Contact

Contact Person: Drew Beal

Email: [Email](#)

Phone: 848-992-0299

Website: <http://killthecup.com>

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Here's a sample release regarding education.

Leading Learning Symposium Bringing Together Influencers and Decision Makers in Fields of Adult Continuing Education and Professional Development

CARRBORO, N.C., April 17, 2015 -- Those in leadership positions who have a 21st century vision for their education business are encouraged to register for the first annual Leading Learning Symposium. Created and hosted by Tagoras, Inc. (<http://www.tagoras.com/>), a consulting firm for the adult and continuing education and professional development sectors, the symposium will be held on October 27 and 28 at the Lord Baltimore Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, with a special Executive Institute for senior leaders (vice president and above) on October 26. Interested parties can register online at <http://leadinglearning.tagoras.com/>.

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"Lifelong learning is more important than it's ever been, and the future of the industry appears bright," explained Celisa Steele, co-founder of Tagoras. "Our inaugural symposium will provide an opportunity for leaders in education to connect, share insights and ultimately facilitate broad performance improvements via research-based instructional practices. We believe this is a first-of-its-kind offering for the industry."

With its conceptual focus firmly set on the business aspects of lifelong learning and adult education, the Leading Learning Symposium's concrete deliverables will include critical knowledge and practical skills for leadership in the 21st century. Morning sessions will consist of content pods wherein faculty will present essential material and concepts that will be put into practice during the afternoon applied learning workshops.

The Leading Learning Symposium represents a new approach in Tagoras' mission of building a strong professional network within the continuing education industry. As part of this overall shift, the company intends to connect directly with leaders and executives, delivering actionable insights based on the consultancy's many years of experience and hands-on expertise.

Tagoras Co-founder Jeff Cobb suggests that anyone serious about maximizing the reach and revenue of his or her education business should strongly consider registering for the Leading Learning Symposium. "Learning is an inherently social project," said Cobb. "The insights that can be gained from spending just a couple of days in the company of fellow leaders could be invaluable."

Registered attendees of the Leading Learning Symposium include the executive director of a major medical society, the VP of learning and development for a high-profile marketing association, and the CEO of an international professional association.

Steele and Cobb will each lead sessions during the symposium; joining them on the faculty will be Seth Kahan, founder of Association Transformation, Wes Trochlil, president of Effective Database Management, LLC, and Lisa Bing, president of Bing Consulting Group. Other faculty will be added as the event approaches.

Current sponsors for the event include Digital Ignite, makers of the Crowd Wisdom learning platform, Higher Logic, a provider of private online community software, and Classroom24-7, a full-service online education company.

Since its founding nearly 10 years ago, Tagoras has provided expert consulting and advisory services, speaking engagement and informative workshops, and highly regarded, research-based publications. The company's mission is to help continuing education and professional development organizations reach their full potential, in terms of both market share and impact of offerings.

The upcoming symposium will be officially announced at the May 1 Leading Learning Spring Summit 2015 in Washington, DC. More information on the summit is available at <http://www.tagoras.com/summit2015>. Tagoras expects to announce more upcoming events throughout 2015 and beyond.

About Tagoras, Inc.

Tagoras provides expert strategy, marketing and technology consulting services to organizations in the business of lifelong learning. Clients include associations and other membership organizations, publishers, learning technology companies, training firms, and consultancies.

The firm was founded in 2007 by Jeff Cobb and Celisa Steele, seasoned entrepreneurs with a unique blend of experience in marketing, technology, and education.

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Here's a slightly different news release sample about an event:

Contact:

Bill Jackson
Angelo's Fish House
(516) 555-9000

It's Bluefin Tuna Month at Angelo's Fish House

**The Bluefin Are Running Again,
And They're Making Their Way to Diners at Angelo's**

Note: Join Chef/Owner Angelo Marzunni as he prepares his world famous blackened barbecue tuna outside Angelo's Fish House on Thursday at noon to officially open Bluefin Tuna Month. Chef Angelo will be joined by several very special surprise guests (we can't tell you who they are, but you might know them from Angelo's "Celebrity Row" portrait gallery). Photo opportunities available.

SEASIDE VILLAGE, N.Y., July 27, 1996 -- Angelo's Fish House will celebrate bluefin tuna season by adding 8 special bluefin dishes to its renowned menu.

Bluefin Tuna Month will feature special appetizers, entrees and salads from the kitchen of chef/owner Angelo Marzunni -- including his famous blackened barbecue tuna and a brand new marinated tuna carpaccio. They will be available to diners only during the month of August, when the bluefin make their annual run along the coast of Long Island.

To open Bluefin Tuna Month, Chef Angelo will host a special cooking demonstration on Thursday, August 1 at noon. He will be prepare the blackened barbecue tuna, and share other bluefin tuna recipes. Entertainment will be provided by several "mystery" guests, long-time patrons and friends of Angelo's.

"The bluefin is one of the great eating fish -- meaty, delicate, and delicious," said Chef Angelo. "Unfortunately, they're only available for a short time. We want to celebrate the season by giving our customers the chance to enjoy this giant of the deep." - See more at: <http://www.smetoolkit.org/smetoolkit/en/content/en/250/Sample-Event-Press-Release#sthash.0NWQWDqb.dpuf>

Copies of Chef Angelo's Blackened Barbecue Tuna recipe are available for publication by contacting Bill Jackson at (516) 555-9000.

Angelo's Fish House, located on the water at 848 Main St. in Seaside Village, has been serving innovative seafood cuisine since 1982, It is open Tuesday-Sunday for lunch and dinner. Reservations suggested.

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