

A woman with short dark hair and glasses is focused on writing on a notepad with a pen. She is wearing a grey sweater. The background is blurred, showing green foliage. A large, semi-transparent green shape is on the right side of the image.

How to... **Write a Good B2B Press Release**



Introduction

Ingredient companies have many communications tools at their disposal. One of the most cost-effective and impactful is the press release.

Press releases allow businesses to share their news and information easily and quickly with thousands of customers and potential customers around the world via business-to-business (B2B) magazines and websites.

Many of the news stories you read every day online and in print will have originated from a press release. But for every successful release, there will be many more that failed to get coverage.

Getting it right can bring real benefits. An effective press release can help you to:

- ✓ Deliver positive messages about your business
- ✓ Communicate the unique selling points of your products to customers and potential customers
- ✓ Reinforce your company's position as a thought-leader in a particular area
- ✓ Improve SEO and drive traffic to your website

With all that in mind, we've prepared this straightforward guide to writing and distributing a good press release. It offers suggestions in a range of essential areas, such as identifying your story, writing impactful copy, and issuing your release in a way that maximises its chance of success.










Is My Story Really News?

The aim of a press release is to communicate news to journalists and, ultimately, to their readers. But not everything is news. A particular development might be interesting or important to you and your company, but it doesn't automatically follow that it will get coverage in the media.





As a starting point (and as the word 'news' suggests) whatever you announce in your press release should be new information. It shouldn't be something that has been common knowledge for months already. Be honest with yourself. Presenting old information as fresh news could damage your credibility among journalists. It might also confuse your customers.

Having established that your story is indeed new information, the next stage is to evaluate it objectively to determine if it is going to be considered genuinely newsworthy by reporters and editors. To do this effectively, think about the type of stories the B2B media prefer to run. Try putting yourself in the position of an editor and ask whether or not you would publish it.

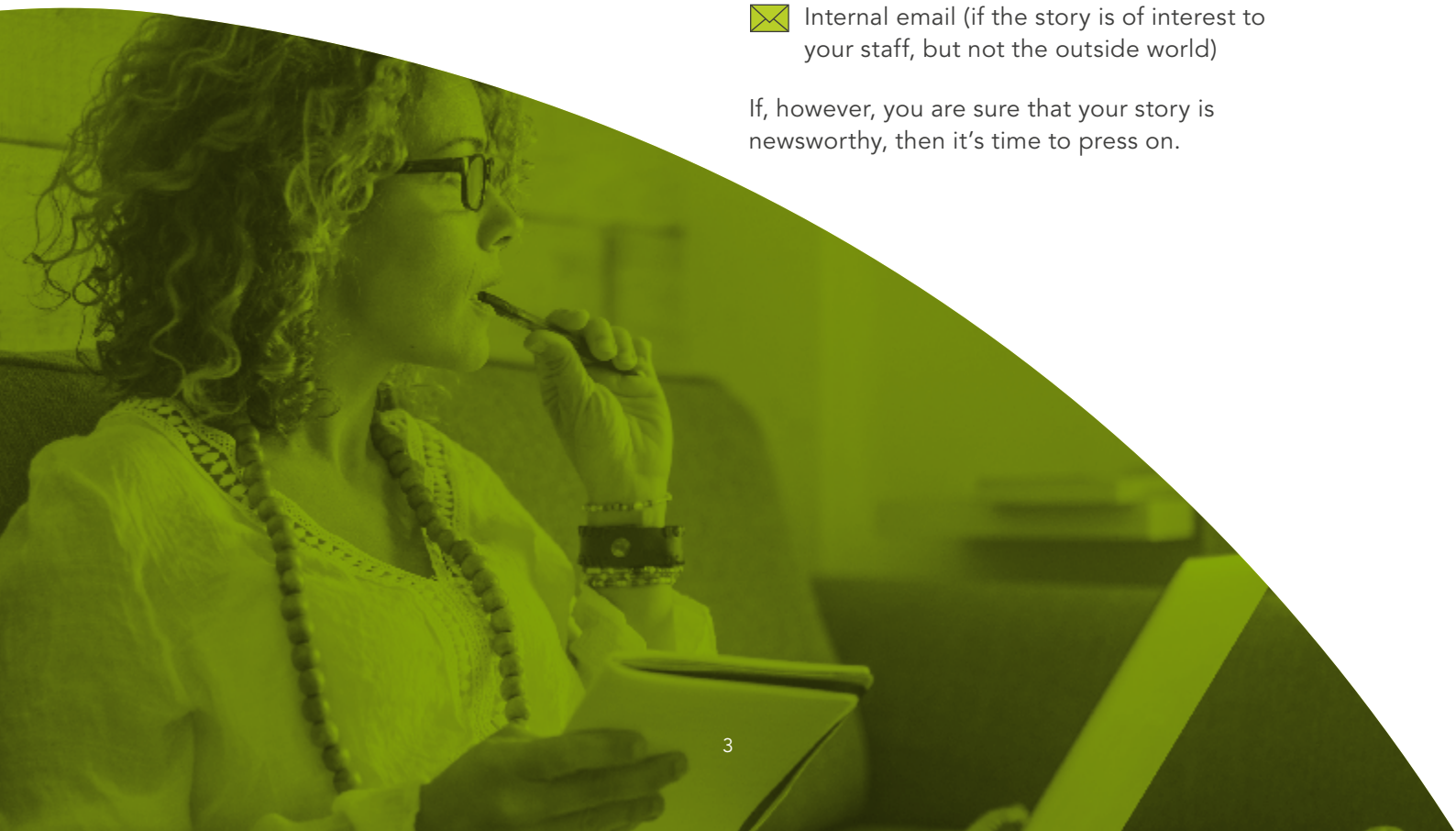
In the ingredients industry, stories that commonly get coverage include:

-  Corporate developments such as takeovers, mergers and acquisitions
-  Product launches
-  New scientific studies
-  Fresh insights into consumer attitudes, e.g. the results of surveys
-  Innovative solutions to technical challenges, e.g. a way to overcome the bitter taste of a particular ingredient

If, after consideration, you conclude that your news is not suitable for a press release, don't panic. A press release is not the only way to communicate what you want to say. Alternatives include:

-  Feature articles
-  Media interviews
-  Videos and social media posts
-  Internal email (if the story is of interest to your staff, but not the outside world)

If, however, you are sure that your story is newsworthy, then it's time to press on.





What Journalists Want

When it comes to B2B PR, reporters and editors are the gatekeepers. They will decide whether or not to give space to your story, so it's critically important to understand what they want from a press release. Ingredient Communications has spent years working with journalists and here are a few of the things we've learned about them.

They are very busy

B2B journalists work under tight deadlines, even more so now that daily online news is the norm. This means that they are more likely to reward you with coverage if you can make their lives easier. Sending them a well written, audience-relevant press release that contains a clear and genuinely newsworthy story is a sure-fire way to make a busy journalist happy. It will grab their attention from the outset, encouraging them to read on and add your press release to the list of stories they plan to publish.

They are in great demand

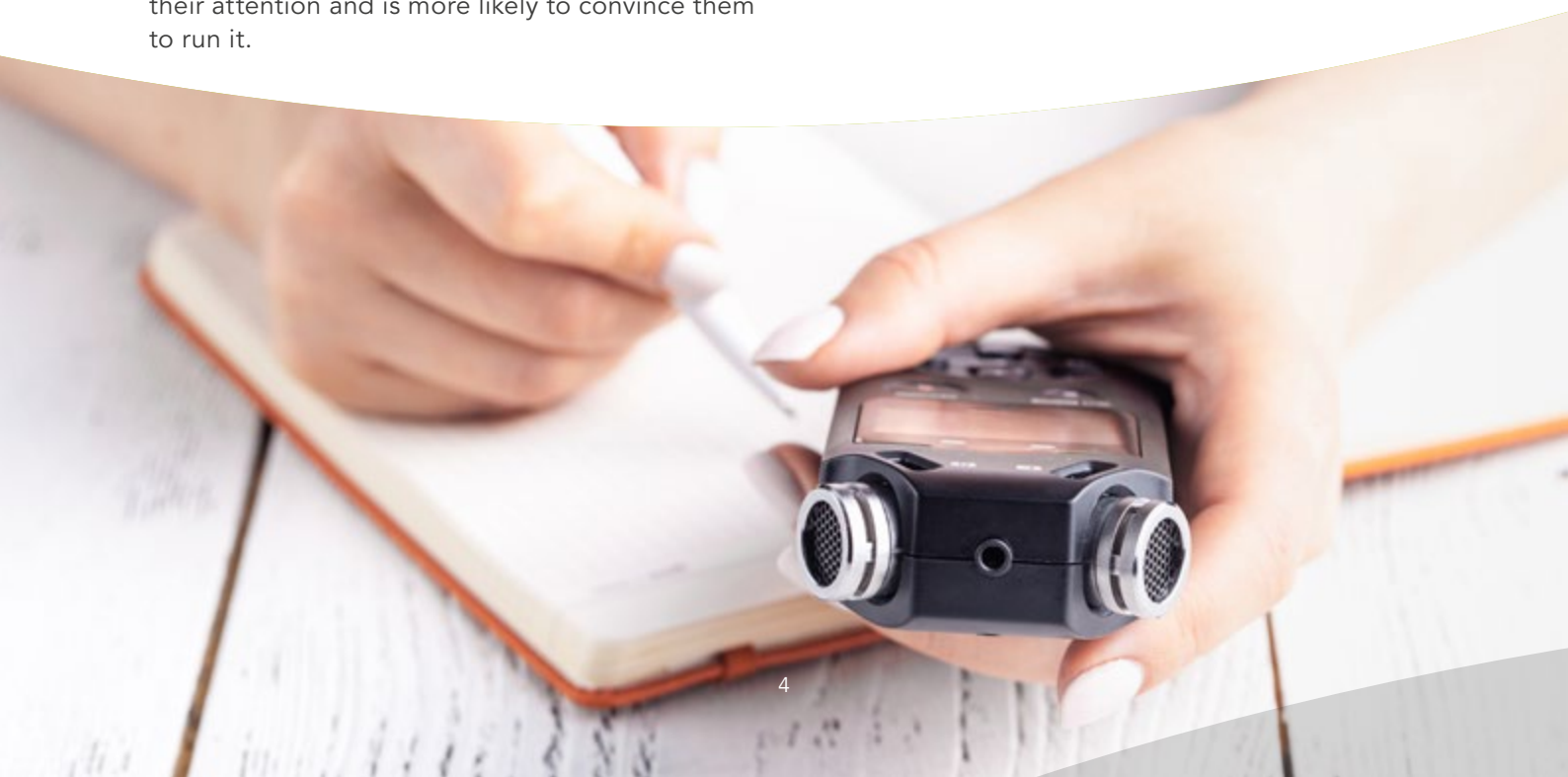
As well as being time-pressed, journalists receive dozens – even hundreds – of press releases every week. This means you are competing with many other companies for their attention. Sending them a good press release will help bring your news to their attention and is more likely to convince them to run it.

They are unlikely to be specialists in your field

Many B2B journalists writing about the ingredients industry have never actually worked in the ingredients industry. Furthermore, most of them are covering a wider range of topics than your company's area of interest. This means it's important to ensure your story isn't overcomplicated and doesn't assume they have a high level of expertise in your field. However interesting your story is, if a journalist doesn't understand it, the chances of them running it will diminish greatly.

They like exclusives

If there's a magazine or website whose readers are particularly relevant to your business, you might consider offering the editor your press release as an exclusive story, which means you promise not to send it to any other titles. Your story still needs to be newsworthy, but exclusivity could help bring it to an editor's attention in a way that a widely distributed press release might not. Bear in mind, though, that this approach will limit the amount of coverage you get overall.





Writes and Wrongs

By now, you have identified your story and gained a better understanding of how journalists operate. Now it's time to get writing. Here are some tips on how to do it in a way that will increase your chances of getting coverage.

Find the right tone of voice

It's not just journalists who need to find your news interesting. The chief reason for issuing a press release to the B2B media is to communicate with customers and potential customers, so always keep them in mind. You could even imagine they are sitting in front of you as you write!

Using an appropriate tone of voice is important. In B2B communications, a professional but readable style tends to work best. You are probably writing for an audience with a diverse skillset – some will be sales and marketing experts, others will be food technologists, and some will be scientists. Keep your style accessible to all of them.

Identify your 'top line'

The 'top line' is the essence of your story condensed into a single point. It's critically important to get this right, because it will ensure your message gets across even if the reader doesn't read the whole story.

Sometimes the top line will be obvious, such as the announcement of a takeover. Other times, there might be several potential angles to choose from. Avoid squeezing multiple top lines into your press release – it makes things confusing for the reader. It could be that you have to choose one of several good storylines to lead the way.

Once you've decided on your top line, you can now communicate it simply and effectively via your first sentence, which should tell the thrust of the whole story in a snapshot.

Ensure a logical progression

With your first sentence written, now it's time to walk the reader through the details of the story in a way that makes sense. Make sure you provide simple and effective links between ideas where necessary. Only include what's relevant. Trying to cover too much, or overdoing it on the detail, will make it harder to maintain a logical flow that's easy for the reader follow.

Include a quote

It's common to include a quote attributed to a company spokesperson in a press release. This is a nice touch because it helps to humanize your story and raise the profile of an individual in your organisation in a positive way. Avoid using the quote to deliver information that is vital to the story. This is because, when space is limited, editors will often cut quotes out before anything else. Instead, use them to create some extra context or explain some background to the story – for example to explain why a new product is important to the industry.

Keep it concise and clear

A good press release usually doesn't need to be longer than 300 to 400 words. Avoid long sentences and keep the language direct and straightforward, avoiding waffle, clichés, puns and excessive jargon. This is particularly important in the B2B ingredients industry, since many of the people reading your story will not have English as their first language.

Include contact details

After receiving your press release, journalists may have follow-up questions, or they might wish to conduct an interview with a company spokesperson. To ensure their enquiry is dealt with efficiently, include your contact details on the press release, or those of your PR agency if you have one.



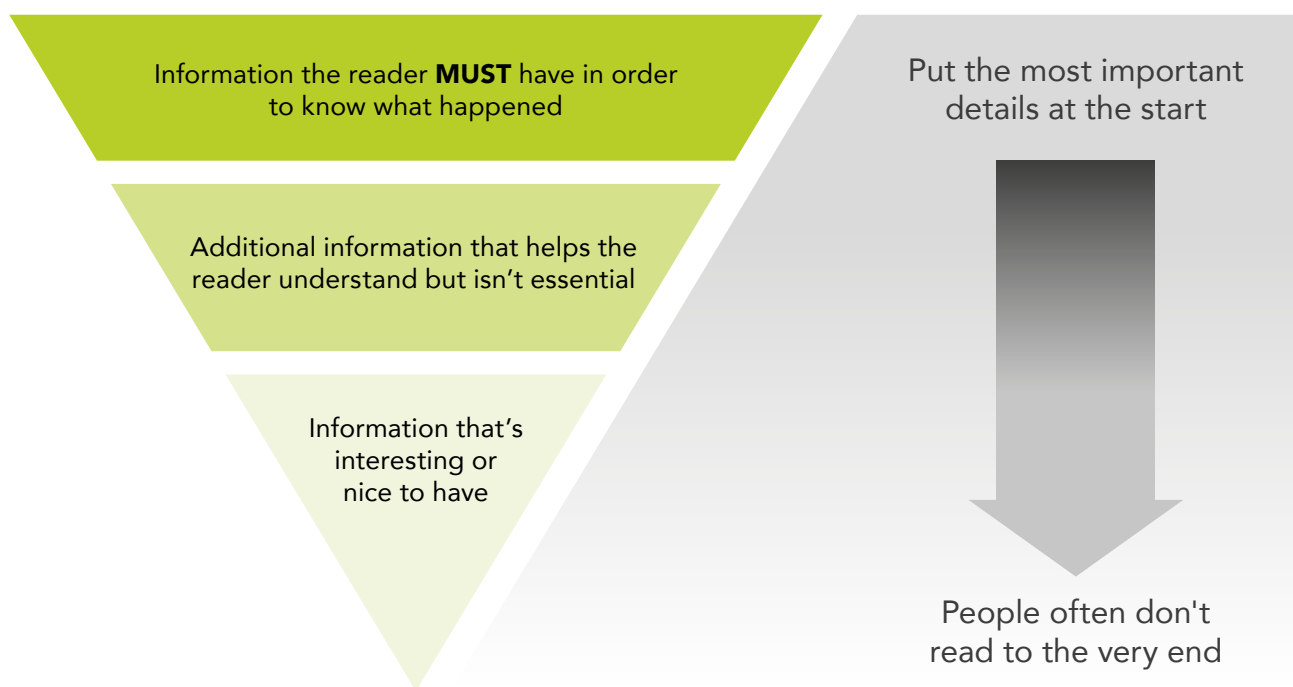
Create an impactful headline

The headline is a really important part of your press release. It will be the first thing the reader sees and will play a major role in helping them decide whether or not a story is interesting. If the headline is so important, you might be wondering, why is it so low on this list? It's because it is good practice to create your headline after you've written your press release. If you write your headline first, you might find yourself trying to get the story to fit the headline. It should be the other way around – let your finished story dictate your choice of headline. In any case, a good headline is much easier to write when you have the whole story in front of you to provide inspiration.

Be objective about your work

Lastly, it's often said that the best writing is re-writing. However good a writer you are, it's rare to get it exactly right first time. So, after your first draft, give yourself time to read back what you've written. Ask yourself if it could be even simpler or shorter. Cut out anything you don't really need. Then re-read it and do the same thing again. If you can, show it to someone else – a second pair of eyes is the best way to identify any mistakes, anything that doesn't make sense, or any other improvements that could be made.

The Inverted Pyramid



The 'inverted pyramid' is an approach to news writing that applies equally to press releases. It involves placing the most important information at the start, followed by further details or explanation, and the least essential information at the bottom. This structure communicates the most interesting details at the top of the story, grabbing the reader's attention and getting the key points across, even if they don't read to the end. It also helps editors when they need to reduce the size of the story as they can quickly remove copy from the bottom without worrying about losing the sense of the story or any key information.

The Art of Distribution

Once you've written your press release, it's time to issue it to the media via your database. But before doing so, think carefully about your target market. For a number of reasons, it's really important only to send the release to relevant media outlets.

Firstly, you want your press release to be widely covered. But the amount of coverage itself should not be your ultimate, or only, goal. In terms of reaching your audience, it's much better to get 10 pieces of coverage in target-right titles than 30 in titles that are less relevant and therefore less likely to be read by your customers.

That's not all. If you send journalists a story that is not relevant for their readers, you risk losing credibility. They might look unfavourably on your stories in future, or – worse – even unsubscribe themselves from your database altogether.

Consider, too, where in the world you would like the story to be published. There might be good reasons why you should only target a specific region, such as regulatory restrictions. Otherwise, you should send it to as wide and relevant a list as possible, making use of an up-to-date database of key media contacts around the world.

Secondly, think about which languages are appropriate. English remains the primary language of the global food industry. But if your company has completed a takeover in France, for example, it will probably make sense to issue the press release in French as well, so that local media outlets are more likely to pick it up.

Timing is also critical. If your press release is connected to an industry event, it's important to issue it in time to be included in show previews. For print titles, that may mean issuing it at least six to eight weeks prior to the event.

As a general rule, press releases should be sent out early in the day to the journalists in your main target region. That gives websites the chance to get the story online in time for their newsletters, which are usually sent out from midday onwards.

On the day the press release is sent out, make sure somebody at your company is available to field any follow-up queries. Some journalists may also request exclusive quotes, so having a suitable spokesperson on hand can be useful.



You're Not Alone

Delivering effective press releases is not always easy, but there is help at hand. Ingredient Communications is a specialist PR agency with a specific focus on ingredients. We know all the secrets to producing a great press release and we can harness them on your behalf to increase the chances of your story achieving maximum impact.

We are:



Global

Based in the UK with media contacts all over the world



Experienced

A long track record in the food, beverage, nutrition, personal care and pharmaceutical sectors



Writers

With backgrounds in senior positions in journalism and PR



Connected

Our own database of hundreds of relevant journalists

To find out more about how Ingredient Communications can help you, get in touch with our friendly and professional team today:



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