



HOW TO DISTRIBUTE A MEDIA RELEASE

YOUR MEDIA RELEASE NEEDS TO REACH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Once you have written a media release (see [how to write a media release](#) for tips on this step), reaching the right people is important.

Distributing a media release is a challenging and time consuming activity when it's done well. You should aim to have three stages to your media release distribution plan:

1. Sending the media release
2. Following it up
3. Utilising all available channels to amplify its impact

SENDING THE MEDIA RELEASE

This is the most challenging and time-consuming component of the process – setting up your distribution list. This can be done cheaply in an excel spreadsheet, or if you have some cash to spare you can enlist the support of a media distribution service. Media distribution services will charge either an annual subscription, or a flat rate for each media release sent. For more information on this, reach out to us at info@sta.org.au.

The main points of contact information you will need for your media distribution list is a full name, an email address, a phone number, and the name of the person's publication/outlet/publisher. It's always best to email an interested individual as well as a generic email address (such as news@mediaoutlet.com.au). Think about who you're sending the release to and why they might be interested. Is it local to their outlet? Do they regularly cover this kind of news? Are they somebody you've met in the past?

CONVENTIONS FOR SENDING A MEDIA RELEASE VIA EMAIL

- Your subject line should be clear, relevant and catchy – “MEDIA RELEASE: [insert heading]”
- Your recipients should be **blind carbon copied (BCC)**
- You should always include a media contact at the end so journalists can follow up on the release and/or request interviews (name, email and mobile number)
- Add a short (50 word) synopsis of your organisation at the bottom of each release

It is crucial that you send the media release at a time when journalists or producers are going to read it. We recommend before 11am Monday to Thursday if possible. This means you are targeting a weekday publication, and sending the email at a time when the journalist or producer has time to discuss the story with their editor at the morning planning meeting, and cover the story for the news that day.

You can also send an **embargoed release**, which is a signal to the reader that nothing can be published until a certain time and day. This won't always be honoured, but if you have the chance to send the material to a few contacts you trust a few days early to give them time, this makes coverage more likely. Be sure to include in **red bolded letters** the exact time and date that the embargo lifts.

At all times, remember to stay relevant. Know who you are sending your media release to, and make sure they are likely to be interested. Be sure they are writing stories relevant to your release, that they have an interest in your work, and that they won't see the email and think “why am I getting this?”.

FOLLOWING IT UP

Newsrooms are extremely busy places, and media professionals can receive hundreds of emails daily. This means it is really easy for your media release to get lost or deleted. By following up with a phone call, you dramatically increase your chance of getting a journalist or producer to read your emailed media release.

Don't feel uncomfortable about making a cold call – the media are keen to work with people who are enthusiastic and passionate. This follow up shows that you are exactly that.

Usually, when you call and ask if they received your media release (don't ask whether they will be writing something), they will generally say no and ask you to resend it. Be sure to confirm their email address, say that you are happy to provide anything else they need, and then after the call has ended, send the release again as quickly as possible so it goes to the top of their inbox while its still fresh in their mind. Include a personal message thanking them for their time on the phone and indicating that you're re-sending the release as discussed.

UTILISING ALL CHANNELS TO AMPLIFY

A great way to add weight to your media release, and to extend your reach to more media outlets, is to share your content through social media. Don't be afraid to publish a copy of the release on your website immediately after you've emailed it out, then look for ways to share the link online.

By tweeting highlights, and posting to Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, you can use your followers, members and stakeholders to help spread your story further.

A lot of journalists check their Twitter more often than their emails, so you can also follow up with direct messages to those you think might be interested. This can help cut through the noise too, and help you establish relationships with people in the media.

WHAT IF YOU DON'T GET COVERAGE?

Media releases can be hit and miss, and can depend a lot on factors out of your control – what's making news that day, has the media outlet published 'too many' science stories lately, or maybe your contacts are on holiday or have moved on to a different media outlet.

It's important to realise that even if your media release doesn't get coverage, it's still valuable. If you are sharing it via your website, then your followers are still hearing about your news, and it also means the media is learning that your organisation is commenting on issues in your area. If your release is political, it will also likely land on the desk of the relevant staffers and politicians even if it doesn't make the news (this is particularly true when it's been distributed through a media distribution company).

It is vitally important to remain relevant and discerning. If you spam media outlets constantly with media releases that aren't valuable, you will quickly get a bad reputation and find your releases are deleted straight away. However, if you are making regular, valuable commentary in your field, you will quickly become a go-to for media outlets when they are covering a story that is relevant to your organisation.

Finally, if your release is about a scientific breakthrough or science news, you should consider working with the Australian Science Media Centre to promote it. AusSMC works with a range of self-selected science-interested journalists and presents an excellent opportunity to have your voice and story heard. You may also be interested in signing up with the AusSMC as a registered expert – this way the media knows you're available and interested in commenting on issues relevant to your areas of expertise.

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- [AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE MEDIA CENTRE](#)
- [THE 10 THINGS YOU MUST DO WHEN DISTRIBUTING YOUR PRESS RELEASE – ENTREPRENEUR ASIA PACIFIC](#)
- [5 WAYS ON HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION – EVA DIAZ](#)
- [DISTRIBUTE A PRESS RELEASE – WIKIHOW](#)

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EMAIL: INFO@STA.ORG.AU

TEL: 02 6257 2891