HOW TO WRITE AND SEND A PRESS RELEASE

One of the best ways to reach your target audience is through the websites, magazines, newspapers, TV and radio shows that they might read, watch or listen to. For motorsport events, these will usually be motorsport and local media outlets.

The motorsport press will be read by a captive audience of motorsport enthusiasts, while local and mainstream titles will allow you to reach new audiences, which is important if you want to grow your reach.

A common mistake is to bombard media contacts with incessant press releases repeating the same old lines. Instead, make sure your press releases are planned as part of your wider marketing strategy, and only send a press release when you have news to announce.

WHAT IS NEWS?

A commonly used definition is that 'dog bites man' is not news, whereas 'man bites dog' is. In other words, news is something that is out of the ordinary – this is your 'news hook'. In the case of a motorsport event, this could be for instance; confirming a star driver, achieving a record entry, signing a new sponsor, attracting a record number of volunteers, or raising a significant amount of money for charity.

HOW TO WRITE A NEWS STORY

Think of a story like an upside-down pyramid; as well as the news hook, you want to get as much important information in at the top as you can.

Consider the five Ws: who; what; where; when; why. In the following example, we cover off four of the five Ws in a sentence:

The Colnbrook Motor Club [who] has attracted a full entry [news hook] for its inaugural closed-road race [what] in Slough [where] this weekend [when].

Try not to overcomplicate the subject matter. Stick to the key points and always remember to keep it simple.

The media will also want a quote from someone involved in your event. Make sure to include contact details for further information or to request an interview in your release.

SOURCING IMAGES

News outlets are more likely to publish your story if it is accompanied by a high-quality image. Ask your club photographer or club colleagues if they have any appropriate high-resolution shots that you could include. Always make sure to ask the photographer's permission before using their photo in a release.

When sending your release, make sure to add your images as attachments so that they are not compressed into the release itself and are easy to access for the journalist. You want to make everything as easy for the journalist as possible!

BUILDING YOUR MEDIA LIST

Once you have written your news story think about the audiences you want to reach and the news outlets they might consume.

Local newspapers are often short of resource but desperate for stories. They should definitely be on your media list and are a great way of reaching those local to your event or club.

When researching contact information for your chosen publication, make the effort to search for the name of the editor of the website or publication, or the correspondent relevant to the subject of your release. Sending your release to specific journalists and editors will see it more likely to be published than if sent to a generic *newsdesk@mylocalpaper.co.uk* email address.

HOW TO SEND A PRESS RELEASE

You should proof-read the release carefully to eliminate spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes. It's also a really good idea to get someone else to read through it and get their perspective on what you have written.

Rather than just write an email, we suggest you write the release in Word or similar, save as a pdf, and then attach the document to the email, with a few covering words in the body of the email.

When sending the email, it is bad practice to put the recipient list in either the 'To' or 'cc' address bars, as this would mean that all recipients will be able to see each other's email address when they receive it. Instead, put the recipients in the 'Bcc' (blind copy) address bar, and put your own email address in the 'To' address bar.

For a more professional look, you could try an email marketing platform. There are plenty out there, so have a look around to find one that works for you. Mailchimp for example is very user-friendly and free to use, providing that you have a contacts list of no more than 2000 email addresses.
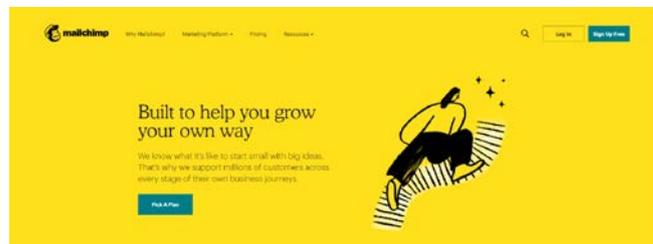
Using a platform like Mailchimp also gives you access to analytical tools, so for instance you will be able to see who opened the email, when they opened it and which links they clicked on.

For more guidance on producing press releases for your club please contact the Motorsport UK Learning and Development Team on club.development@motorsportuk.org.