

New-school PR



Why the press release still matters - and works

The state of PR today

- In a digital-dominated world, making your personal or professional brand seem credible is increasingly challenging
- The press release is still one way to communicate your legitimacy and be taken seriously
- Much of the “good press” you see today is paid for, so earning a place to Tell Your Story takes strategy, time, and diligence
- Ultimately, you are playing matchmaker for journalists, convincing them that your story is one their readers either need or want to hear



Why do I need a press release?

- Brands yourself or your product
- Serves as an 'on file' point of reference for now and in the future
- All-encompassing overview of your product, service, or announcement that includes context about you/brand, the news referenced, and additional ways to engage with you/brand
- It's 'evergreen' content for your social media feeds - at time of press and for reuse after (in part or in whole)

Press release ideas for the COVID era

- Safe activities, such as outdoor, distanced wine tastings, are always of interest to media, especially now as 'bad' news continues to dominate
- Updates on openings/closings, different hours, new menu or product offerings available for delivery or takeout, etc. are worthy of a press release
- Is your business approaching safety precautions or distancing measures in a particularly unique way? Tout that in a press release.
- Journalists are eager to begin covering stories in person again, so if your venue can safely provide an on-location opportunity for them, pitch them!

Building a release: A formula

Don't let it intimidate you! Follow this simple formula to identify and write the elements of your release.

Headline: Lead with the interesting part!

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Sub-headline: What's the takeaway?

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Your intro: Use this to introduce yourself, even if for the 50th time

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The meat: Everything the readers need to know about the NEWS. This can be 1-2 short paragraphs tops.

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The endorsement: One or two quotes - and don't just say you're 'excited'! Get creative here

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The potatoes: What else can you take the opportunity to say here that will engage readers going forward?

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The closer: Have a boilerplate which communicates your who/what/where/when/why mission

Example



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Headline

Atlanta Rolls Out First-Ever ArtPop Street Gallery Across Metro Region

Billboard displays of art from 30 inaugural #ArtPopATL class members to begin installations the week of June 22, with additional exhibits and program benefits set to follow

Sub-headline

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (June 16, 2020) – [ArtPop Street Gallery](#), a 501c3 organization that gives communities across the country greater access to art through advertising displays, announces its first group of artists juried in to the nonprofit's inaugural Atlanta program. The 30 artists, which include adults and one high school student, Abigayle Christensen, represent diverse backgrounds, art expressions, and home communities inside the Atlanta metro area's 21-county region.

Your intro

At a time when access to local art is significantly limited by budget cuts and COVID-era gallery restrictions, the Cultural Arts Council Douglasville/Douglas County and Explore Douglas provided the financial support needed to initiate the program in Atlanta – which will start by offering its signature benefit: Billboard-sized exhibits of local art across the region. The exhibits will be installed the week of June 22-26, and are provided through the generosity of Lamar Advertising, Clear Channel Outdoor, and OUTFRONT Media. Future digital installations planned at additional areas in the region, including at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, are supported by Clear Channel Airports, Blackbird Media Digital, Integration Media, and Link Media, respectively.

The meat

Financial support will determine ArtPop's ability to offer additional benefits on top of the advertising space displays, as they do for other cities like Charlotte, NC, and Columbus, OH. The organization has launched a [fundraising initiative](#) to combat budget constraints related to the Coronavirus economy, with the goal of securing full access to the rest of ArtPop's signature program offerings for its Atlanta artists as soon as possible. Benefits pending funds raised include [Artists U](#), an education-based incubator for changing the working conditions of artists; a scholarship for the high school senior artist; and [a reveal event and pop-up shows](#) throughout the year.

Example

Forthcoming financial support will determine ArtPop's ability to offer additional benefits on top of the advertising space displays, as they do for other cities like Charlotte, NC, and Columbus, OH. The organization has launched a [fundraising initiative](#) to combat budget constraints related to the Coronavirus economy, with the goal of securing full access to the rest of ArtPop's signature program offerings for its Atlanta artists as soon as possible. Benefits pending funds raised include [Artists U](#), an education-based incubator for changing the working conditions of artists; a scholarship for the high school senior artist; and [a reveal event and pop-up shows](#) throughout the year.

"We're delighted to bring joy through art to the residents of Atlanta who need it most," said Wendy Hickey, ArtPop's executive director. "ArtPop Atlanta ensures Atlantans can experience local art, regardless of the current economic or healthcare-related parameters. Art is a healer, and we look forward to continued support that will enable us to bring the full program to this area – to the benefit of artists and residents alike." *Full information about each artist along with an image of their featured work is included [here](#). The artists collectively represent Atlanta, Douglasville, Tyrone, Decatur, Austell, Marietta, Fayetteville, Lithia Springs, Hiram, Powder Springs, Carrollton, and Roswell, Georgia.*

Donations of \$10 or more are appreciated and can be made [here](#). To inquire about getting involved with ArtPop, please contact Wendy Hickey at (734) 320-1601 or wendy@artpopstreetgallery.com. Learn more about ArtPop at <http://www.artpopstreetgallery.com/> and keep up with the latest from ArtPop on [Instagram](#).

The endorsement

The potatoes

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About ArtPop Street Gallery

ArtPop is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that gives communities across the country greater access to art, by supporting the artists that create it. Through the generous donations of media companies across the country, ArtPop promotes local artists' work on available advertising space — including on billboards, on the sides of buses, across news racks, and in airport terminals. Charlotte, N.C.-based ArtPop operates today in four cities, and has displayed the work of more than 400 artists in its street galleries across 15 cities, from Charlotte to Las Vegas, since its founding in 2014. For more information on ArtPop's

The closer

Tips for a non-boring, high-impact release

- **Short, Sweet & to the Point:** Aim for one page long exactly. Do not exceed 2 pages long.
- **Toot Your Horn:** Play yourself up in the opening. Now is the time for horn-tooting!
- **Do NOT DIY:** Have a second and third “fresh set” of eyes on it
- **Link it Up:** Pull reference points from timely storylines or studies to link and reference
- **Help a Reporter Out:** Reserve the most newsworthy elements for the sub-headline; this is often a readymade content opportunity for media
- **Paint the Picture:** When possible, include images or embedded videos that illustrate your brand, product, or announcement

I wrote my release! Now what?

You know that saying, “If you build it, they will come”? Unfortunately, that does NOT apply to writing press releases.

Coverage requires strategy!



Your press release distribution strategy

First ask yourself: Who needs to hear this news, and where are they located?

If a national audience, plan on:

- A paid distribution through the wire, i.e. a one-time purchase through [PR Newswire/Cision](#)

If local, plan on:

- Developing and utilizing a 'DIY' outreach list in a spreadsheet format, with tabs organizing media outlets by either location, beat (topic reported on), or medium (TV, print, blog, social, etc.)

Wire distributions

There are both paid and free options to distribute your press release through the wire. Both guarantee *some* pickup. The difference is the *quality*.

Paid option examples

- PR Newswire/Cision *recommend
- pr.com

Free option examples

- Issue Wire
- pr.com

Email distributions

Your email should include:

- A personal greeting (unless a large 'blast', in which case general greeting is OK)
- A quick 'pitch' note providing a snapshot of your news and what you want the reporter/readers to do with it
- The press release below the pitch note and/or attached as a PDF
- Any supportive materials that correspond with the news or offer relevant supplemental info regarding your brand, product, or news (images, brochures, etc.)

Nail the Pitch

Best practices

- Greet the reporter by their first name
- Open the note with a reference to anything that might make a personal connection to them - a nod to a recent articles that might relate to your news, a shared personal connection, reference to when you met in person, etc.
- Play up your biggest selling point, early on: Are you 'first' at something? Got a new eye-catching stat fresh out of a study?
- Include 3-5 sentences that give the high-level download on what you're pitching them
- Offer next steps

Take Your Pitch Somewhere: Action Steps

Think back to your original goals for this press release. We've sent to those you'd like to share the news with. Now, what do we want them to do with this information?

- Buy your product? Offer the reporter a sample or an exclusive demo for their story.
- Engage with you? Offer the reporter a one-on-one interview with yourself or whoever the brand or announcement spokesperson is.
- Go somewhere? Provide the who/what/where/when/why in a short bulleted list as the bulk of your pitch. Shout out any notable partners/attendees that add to the draw. And don't forget the RSVP link.

Example pitch

Good morning, Ashley –

Thought you might be interested: Drew Porcello and I are working with a healthcare furniture company in the final stages of opening a multi-use showroom Uptown this spring.

[Stance Healthcare](#) designs healthcare furniture that, put simply, doesn't look or feel like the doctor's office. Research shows the healing environments Stance's products aim to create can support recovery and induce shorter stays, among other benefits. Their award-winning lines of intuitively-designed furniture and case goods are quickly establishing them as a leader in the healthcare design space – in particular, for Behavioral Health treatment centers, which is where their new showroom comes in.

Plans are still being finalized, but I can tell you Stance intends for this new space do much more than showcase their products. The showroom will also host thought-leadership seminars and workshops that educate and engage the community about Behavioral Health, and the link between good design and healing environments (think: addiction recovery, mental wellness, etc.).

I've included the press release on their latest design industry award win below. Does the showroom sound like something you'd like to chat about further?

Hope to hear from you. Thanks for reading!

Allison

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Follow-ups

Reporters have endless emails and phone calls coming at them all day long. How do you stand out from the pack and get your news, well, in the news?

- Follow ups are KEY. Build the relationship and show persistence/enthusiasm.
- But don't annoy! Reach out no more than 2x/week and mix up email/phone.
- Avoid outreach on Mondays or Fridays
- Get creative when you don't hear back the first time. Provide a new angle for the story that might connect with timely news running concurrently.
- Try others at the publication, perhaps in different departments. Often, going straight to the editor vs. reporters can help.

Questions?

Thank you!

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