

***A Guide to Using Press  
Releases to Promote  
Your Business***

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## What is a Press Release?

A press release is a **newsworthy story about your business that you submit to various media outlets** ~ newspapers, radio, television, magazines, etc. If the media is interested in your story, they may just interview you or run your press release in their publication.

A press release follows a specific format and is sent to solicit interest in your business. It's very important to remember that a press release is not an advertisement about your business. It is a **newsworthy story** that the media might just be interested in picking up. When thinking of press release ideas, put yourself into the shoes of someone reading a newspaper, watching a show, etc. What would they want to hear about? You need to convey that information to the reporter, editor or producer effectively. This guide will show you how to do that.

The most important thing to remember is...***don't wait for news to happen...make it happen!*** Use your creativity when writing your press releases and create news. This guide will help you create newsworthy stories for your business and will show you how to write them in a way that will interest the media

## Why Use Press Releases to Promote Your Business

There are so many reasons why press releases can be good for your business.

Here are just a few to get your mind racing with new ideas:

- ▶ **The great thing about a press release campaign is that it is AFFORDABLE to the small business entrepreneur.** Getting attention in the press puts small and big businesses on an even playing field.
- ▶ **You really can't buy exposure like this.** People are naturally suspicious of ads, but will take a story presented by the media as an endorsement of your business. You can end up on the front page of a newspaper or be featured on a talk show for 10 minutes. Could you imagine how much it would cost to pay for an ad in spots like that? Most major newspapers don't even let you buy ad spots on the front page. And if you want a 30 second commercial on TV, you'll pay hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars.
- ▶ **You can create brand loyalty.** If people hear about you in the paper frequently or they hear you on their favorite radio program, you can become a household name for your product or service. Even if they don't use your product, you are in the back of their mind when someone else is looking for a product just like yours.
- ▶ **Steady Stream of Website Traffic.** When you submit a press release to various online newswires, they can spread like wildfire. They are picked up by other websites – and very frequently Google News & About.com. I'll show you where to place your release for potential inclusion on these sites.

## **Before We Get Started – You NEED a Website**

If you run your business from your home, you don't have a storefront that is visible to the public. Your website serves as your storefront and it's much more affordable than any brick and mortar store.

### **For your press release campaign, you will need your website for:**

- ▶ **A public relations section** – You will provide your press releases, press kits for download and other information for the media.
- ▶ **24/7 access to your business for the media and potential customers** – With a website, your business is available for browsing and information searching at ANY time on ANY day.
- ▶ **Special landing pages to funnel the media into your website** – You may send a release on a specific topic and want to send traffic to your business to learn more about that topic. With a website, you can make special pages to send traffic to with that precise information.

For example, If you want to send the "over 65 magazine" to your website, you will present them with information that will appeal to retirees. If you are sending releases to the "upper class", you can have a whole different section of your website to present to them.

**Most importantly, reporters and editors don't always want to pick up the phone to call you.** A website gives them the opportunity to get to know your business thoroughly before contacting you. Your website is also available 24/7 for reporters who are working on a late night deadline. You can get publicity while you sleep!

## **Resources for Building your Website:**

If you're proficient in HTML (the language used to build websites) or have a little time to learn you may be able to save some money by building your own website on software such as Macromedia's Dream Weaver or the one I still use, FrontPage 2003.

If you don't have the experience or the upfront cash to invest in the software you can consider hiring a webmaster. Contact me and I will give you a recommendation as to who to use. Both of my webmasters do work very inexpensively, and do a much better job than I could ever do.

## **I Recommend:**

### **Hosting:**

If you don't go for a website builder and use a website building software instead, you'll need a web host that stores your files on the Internet for you. <http://BlueHostSolutions.com> provides reliable and affordable hosting solutions, and this is my affiliate link. When you sign up through this link, I'll install your first Wordpress site at no charge.

In addition, you'll need a shopping cart for your site if you plan to sell products. Look at <http://WildWestCart.com> for an affordable option that not only includes your shopping cart, but will also manage your mailing lists for you and allows you to create your very own affiliate program. That is my link, and I provide ongoing training at no additional charge.

### **Domain Names:**

A domain name is the online name for your company. When choosing your company name, you might want to secure the domain name at the same time (if you are just starting your business). A lot of domain names are taken, so you'll want to make sure yours is available and buy it right away.

You can purchase your domain name through GoDaddy, and my discount link for this site is:

<http://ConnieLoves.me/domainsale>

However you decide to build and use your website, it can be a valuable tool for your business that will serve as your 24-hour storefront (without all the hefty leasing fees) and a place for the media to learn about you.



## **When to Send Out a Press Release**

You need a good hook for your press release to get attention. Remember to show benefits to the media's audience – Why would they be interested in this? Shift the focus away from you and self-promotion. Your audience is most important. Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

**The launch of your business or website** – What is unique about your business? What problem does it solve for people? What are the benefits to your visitors or customers?

**Adding new services & products** – Again, make it newsworthy. Make sure to focus on the benefits and why your target audience would be interested in the new services and products. It's all about benefits. Will it take 10 years off their appearance? Will it save them 10 hours every week? Will it increase their income by 2%?

**Be the expert** – This can't be stressed enough. Even if you don't think you are an expert, take some time to think about it and you'll see that you are. If you are a web designer, be the web usability expert. If you operate an errand service, be the expert in personal service. If you can find that expert angle and build a relationship with the media, you'll have the media calling on you for your expert opinion on related stories.

**Celebrities or public figures who are doing something with you** – Are you interviewing a famous author? Has a celebrity endorsed your product? You can seek out these opportunities and when you do, tell the media all about it.

They don't have to be huge names. Just local celebrities or people who will be known by your target market will do.

**Events** – Announce your special events, like public speaking engagements, open houses, seminars, fairs you are arranging, etc. Create quality events just to get publicity. Be unique, set yourself apart from other events and make sure your contributing to the community.

**Sweepstakes & Contests** – Write a press release about your contest or sweepstakes while it's running.

**Follow-Up to Your Sweepstakes & Contests** - Then send a release announcing the winners once the contest is over. Check legalities in your area.

**Fundraisers & donations** – If you are running a fundraiser or making a considerable donation (ex. 5% of your sales for the month of September), write a press release about it.

It will bring attention to your business and help you run an even more successful fundraiser. Make sure your story encourages others to help you make those contributions – offer your customers an incentive, have a theme, give a little gift.

For example, if you are supporting breast cancer charities, give out a little pink candle with a pink ribbon for every purchase over a certain amount.

**Follow-Up on Your Fundraiser** – When your fundraiser is progressing or is over and the results are in, send out a follow-up.

**Free stuff** – Do you have a great freebie on your website? Everybody loves free stuff. Whip up a press release announcing your freebie.

**Community service** – Do you offer training or apprenticeships to students or unemployed individuals? Does your business sponsor a local sports team? A press release is a great way to let people know about your community service.

**Major awards & accomplishments** – If you've been given a prestigious award, write a press release about it. Just keep in mind that a press release is not your opportunity to brag about yourself. You still need to focus on how that award shows you can help others.

**Interviews you've been a part of or books you've been featured in** - If an interview has been published on a website, newspaper or other media, this is a newsworthy event in its self.

**Conduct surveys or statistical analyses** – Survey a sector of the population on a topic of interest and report your findings in a press release. For example, if you are an aromatherapist, conduct a survey to see how many people believe scents affect moods.

**Create a special day** – Create a “National Day” for something related to your business. If you're a hot dog vendor, make a National Hot Dog Appreciation Day and celebrate with hot dog specials.

**Offer a free booklet or report** – Information is very valuable. If you can create a free report on a relevant topic, people will come running. If you are a parenting expert, you could create a booklet on dealing with difficult toddlers, for example. Don't forget to include some good promotion of your business in that very informative book.

With your website, you can do this in digital format – like a .pdf file, an audio mp3 or even a video – but make sure your target market is tech-savvy. Or better

yet, offer a digital format and a hard copy format so that people can make their choice.

Digital is perfect for people who want their information NOW and know how to download off the Internet. Mailed information is for non-technical people or ones who prefer to have the information right in their own hands.

**Announce Your Grant Program** – If you don't currently have a grant program, consider setting one up. It's a great thing to do for your community and is good publicity. Think of your target market in figuring out which type of grant to offer. If your market is parents with older children, consider offering a grant to high school students going into college.

**Open up your phone lines for support on your hot topic** – This will likely take more financial resources and/or time than the booklet, but allows you a more personal approach to delivering the information.

You could also schedule a teleseminar. You can do that for free at several sites, or you can sign up at <http://TeleseminarStrategies.com> when you are ready to do it for your business.

**Check news stories** (newspaper, magazines, TV news or online news websites) and look for stories related to your target market, expertise or product. Share your opinion and possible solutions to the problem shown in the news story. Here's another idea: If there's a heat wave and you sell purified water, choose a date and offer free samples for a few hours.

**Tie in your story with a TV show or popular movie** – With today's crazy TV reality shows, there are endless possibilities. If you're a couple's therapist, write

a story on the effects of programs like *Temptation Island*. If you sell camping gear, tie in a fun promotion with *Survivor*.

**Tell them when you start an email or print newsletter** – If you're starting an informative newsletter, tell the media about it.

**Find a problem and solve it** – If your product or service solves a problem, write a story about the problem and offer your expert advice on its solution (part of which will be your product!).

**Tie into holidays** – Holidays are a great time to get a little extra publicity. Throw a Halloween party for kids so they have a safe environment to enjoy the festivities. Run a food drive for needy families at Christmas time.

**Give out awards** – Sure, it's great to tell people when you get an award, but why not turn things around and offer awards to people in your community? These could be certificates, bursaries or even scholarships.

## Proper Press Release Format

Your press release should follow a specific format and include a few key components. There are a few sample press releases and a template at the end of this guide. Reporters and editors receive many releases each and every day. You only have a few seconds to grab their attention, so write a succinct and interesting story. The headline and first paragraph are often your only chance to get attention before your press release ends up in the shredder.

**And Never Forget!** This story is for your readers (the editor/reporter and ultimately, their audience) ~ tell them why it would interest them. You are not important.

### Here's what your press release should include:

#### ▶ Date Instructions

"For Immediate Release";  
"For Release Before [date]" or  
"For Release After [date]"

Use one of the latter two if your press release is of a time sensitive nature. For example, if you are holding a public speaking event, you will want to use the "For Release Before [date]" and make sure you input the final date for registrations. If you are using the "For Release Before [date]" ensure you are sensitive to media deadlines. Send your release out well in advance.

#### ▶ Headline

Use an attention-grabbing headline. There's a fine line between a promotional headline and a headline that gets attention, but don't be too mundane and factual in your headline. That's boring. Here are a few headline ideas:

**A Headline for a Nutritionist:**

76% of People Surveyed Eat at Fast Food Restaurants More Than 3 Times Per Week, Contributing to a Growing Obesity Program in Canada

**A Headline for a Night Club:**

Single Richmond Residents are Invited to Find Their Soul Mate at Valentine's Day Dating Game Fundraiser

**A Headline for a Florist:**

Local Residents to Be Awarded in an Upcoming Rose-Growing Challenge

▶ **Contact Information**

Include as much information as possible here. Make it easy for the media to contact you. Include your phone number, address, company name, fax number, email and URL. Include the hours you are available at the listed phone number and add an after hours phone number, if applicable.

▶ **Summary**

Before you get into the body of the release, write a sentence or two to summarize your press release. Make it interesting, you want the recipient to keep reading. Also, include the area to which this release is relevant.

▶ **Content**

This is the meat of your press release. Again, write a benefits-oriented story. Think of the target audience as you are writing. Your target audience is partly the editor or reporter who will be reading the release. Ultimately, however,

your target audience is that editor or reporter's readers or audience. You need to write a story that will be of interest to them.

The first paragraph should answer all the important questions - Who, What, Where, When, Why & How? You only have a few seconds to keep an editor's or reporter's interest. Here's your chance.

▶ **Signify the End of Your Press Release**

The end of your press release is shown by a few simple characters. Place ### at the end of your release.

**Other Important Formatting Tips**

- ▶ Keep your release to about 1 page (or 2 pages maximum).
- ▶ Number your pages 1 of 2, 2 of 2, etc.
- ▶ Avoid the hype. Don't use big words and adjectives. Stick to the facts in plain English, ma'am.
- ▶ Focus on benefits: What problems do you solve for your customers or website visitors?
- ▶ Use bold headlines to get attention.
- ▶ Break up your paragraphs for easy reading.
- ▶ Tweak your release when sending to different media outlets. If you are sending it to the local paper, your content may be slightly different than if you are sending it to a trade journal.
- ▶ If you are sending your release by mail, use 8 1/2" x 11" letterhead. Use only one side of the paper. If your release is more than one page long, write "more" at the bottom.



- ▶ If you are sending your release by email, never send an attachment. Copy and paste your release into the body of the email.
- ▶ Back up your claims with facts and statistics. Often the media will publish your press release without interviewing you or making substantial changes. They may not even have time to check your facts, so if they are dubious, then they may just toss out your release.
- ▶ Send samples. If it's cost effective, send out a few samples with your release. If you are an author, send a copy of your book. Just remember, if you send these things unsolicited, the goodies may be appreciated, but your press release may get tossed. Carefully evaluate your expenses and the results of sending freebies.
- ▶ If you're snail mailing your press release, don't send it in a white or manila envelope with typed labels. This is a great tip I received from The Publicity Hound, Joan Stewart. They don't stand out and look like all the other mail editors receive every day. Use a brightly colored envelope, handwrite the address and add a unique marker like a sticker or rubber stamp. Make your envelope get attention and beg for attention.
- ▶ Consider sending out a Press Release Kit, instead of just a simple press release. Here's what you can include:
  - Cover Letter
  - Press Release(s)
  - Business Fact Sheet
  - Your Biography
  - Samples, Photos, etc.
  - Company Literature
  - Your Business Card

You need to evaluate the cost of sending a full press release kit. You may want to indicate that you will send samples upon request as an alternative.

However you decide to send your release, you need to stand out from the crowd. You need to create a press release that would interest the editor and her target audience.

## **How Your Website Comes into Your Marketing Plan**

Ensure that your website is welcoming to the media and include a section of your website just for your media information and press releases. Include a history of your company, contact information, your press releases, and media coverage. This page should be easily accessible from every page on your website.

### **Make a Media-Friendly Media Page:**

- ▶ Allow visitors to your media page to sign up for your press release mailing list. That way, interested parties can stay up to date on all of your website's news and you can stay in contact. Send out news regularly to keep your business in the forefront of your subscriber's minds. You can deliver your news by email (most cost efficient) or snail mail (more work and more expensive).
- ▶ Ensure your online releases have hyperlinks to all the relevant areas of your website. This is much easier to integrate in an online release as links are a natural part of the Internet. In your offline releases, you should limit your links to your contact information and usually just the end of your release. Too many links in a printed or emailed release will look self-promotional.
- ▶ Offer printable versions of your press releases. You can make them PDF files (read with Adobe Acrobat Reader), but remember that the media may want to run your press release in their publication as is so you need to have a way for them to have a format they can copy and paste. In those cases a rich text file (.rtf) may be the best solution. This file type is universal and anyone can open it no matter what type of word processing program they have.

- ▶ You can save a text file or a Microsoft Word file as an .rtf by going File → Save As → yourfilename.rtf. You can also save it as an .rtf file by selecting "Rich Text Format" in the drop down box beside "Save as type:"
- ▶ Offer instructions on how to get a press release kit and include information about its contents. You can always have the printable portions available for download and printing.

## **Create and Build a Media List**

You need to build a media list and it will likely take some time to get a really good list going. If you've just begun building your media list, start locally and small. And start online so you can build traffic to your website.

Local and/or small media are most likely to be interested in your story and it's the perfect way to hone your press release writing skills. Besides, a lot of the larger media outlets scan the smaller outlets to find stories to pick up. Also, as you gain experience and build-up your portfolio, you can work your way up to bigger media outlets.

Try newspapers, trade journals, topic specific magazines, websites, radio shows, television show ~ whoever would be interested in your topic.

Always remember to get specific contact information for your press release when possible. A release addressed to a particular person will receive a lot more attention than a general release sent to the media outlet. You'll also want to update your list frequently as staff may often change.

Familiarize yourself with the editor or reporter's work. Find out the method she prefers to receive press releases in. Don't automatically send them by email – some will prefer mail or fax. Find out their deadlines.

If you are sending your release by email, never send an attachment. Copy and paste your release into the body of the email. Never send a bulk email. Address emails individually.

## How to Build Your Distribution List:

1. For your local media, check the publication or their website for information on how to submit a release. Find out the precise editor or reporter you should be addressing your release to. You may have to pick up your phone to get this information or hire an assistant to do the calling and information gathering for you.
2. Do a search on your favorite search engine for websites in your industry that might just be interested in running your story.

3. Here's a few websites to help you build your list:

- ▶ **Media Post** <http://www.mediapost.com> - extensive directory for US media
- ▶ **NewsLink.org** <http://www.newslink.org> - directory for a number of countries
- ▶ **ABYZ News Links** <http://www.abyznewslinks.com> - directory for a number of countries

**Please note:** If you choose a free resource to build your list, realize that the information may not always be completely up-to-date. A paid resource will often provide more current information and if they don't, ask them for a refund!

4. Submit your site to a few online newswires and news websites. A number of them require payment, but here are some, both free and paid.

- ▶ **PR Web** <http://www.prweb.com> - They do a great job, but no longer offer a free service - (<http://pr.com> and <http://free-press-release.com> are free).
- ▶ **PressMethod.com** <http://www.pressmethod.com> - free press release distribution center.
- ▶ **PRFree.com** <http://www.prfree.com> - free press release distribution
- ▶ **24-7PressRelease.com** <http://www.24-7pressrelease.com> - free service. You can also contribute funds to receive better placement for your release.

**Please note:** Don't spend a lot of time submitting to a bunch of free online places. The exposure will be limited, so it's not something you should focus solely on. I've been using <http://webwire.com>, and find that it is well worth the \$24.95 fee.

### **Extra Exposure from Google & About.com with Your Press Releases**

Google.com often takes press releases from PRWeb.com. You may be buried in their news section, BUT if someone searches for keywords on Google related to your press release topic...your release may be featured at the top of the results.

About.com also scours press releases to add to its various sections and you might just find yourself listed without submitting to them. If you're not familiar with About.com, they are a huge website with information on just about every topic there could possibly be. I've had press releases and articles listed there and they can bring you tons of extra traffic on an ongoing basis. If you think your

press release should be listed, contact the editor of the appropriate section and suggest your press release for inclusion...or you can even just ask them to list your website as a resource.

### **More Potential Resources to Get Media Outlet Ideas**

**Magazines, Newspapers & Radio Programs:** You can also search places like [magazines.com](http://magazines.com) and [newspapers.com](http://newspapers.com) for ideas on target publications. The focus of these websites is not to build a media list, so you'll have to do some digging for the appropriate contact information. Still, you might find publications you won't find in the other resources.

<http://www.magazines.com>

<http://www.newspaper.com>

<http://www.radio-locator.com> (radio stations with websites)

<http://www.npr.org/stations> (radio stations in the U.S.)

**Internet Radio:** Although, the distribution is probably not as great as with mainstream radio, you may want to search targeted programs on Internet radio. Here are a few places to look:

<http://www.live365.com>

<http://blogtalkradio.com>

<http://www.penguinradio.com>

<http://www.worldtalkradio.com>

<http://www.wsradio.com>

**Websites:** Do a Google search for websites listed for your target keywords. Find websites that tend to be informational and like to deliver content to their visitors. You can also search directories like:



<http://dir.yahoo.com>

<http://www.dmoz.org>

## **Creative Ways to Get Publicity**

A press release is the traditional way to gain publicity for your business, but it may not always be the best way. Here are a few creative ways to gain free publicity for your business.

### **Pick up the Phone**

Reporters are busy but sometimes a personal touch will work. You may also make that call at just the right time. The reporter may have a deadline looming and space to fill.

Use your judgment when making phone calls. Don't try to get Diane Sawyer on the phone, but if you'd like a spot on a local radio show, why not give the host a call? Besides, radio is a very verbal media and they want to hear your voice and see if you'd be a suitable guest. If you do call, show you're serious and don't use the 1-800 number.

### **Send a Personal Email to a Website Publisher**

If you are looking to be interviewed by a website publisher, check her submission guidelines. She may just appreciate a personal email instead of a formal press release. It shows you took the time to write that publisher instead of sending "canned" information about your business. Take the time to talk about the publisher's own website and speak in very specific terms.

Don't send the same message to a number of publishers. Experienced publishers will know when they are being sent a form letter.

### **Letters to the Editor**

You can send letters to the editor to promote your business. If you read a story on a subject of which you are an expert, send in your opinion. Word it so people know who you are and what you are doing.

Example: "As a nutrition and weight loss counselor for four years, I find your story on....", and if you can, sneak in your business name in the signature.

Again...be the expert!

### **Speak at Public Events**

Volunteer for speaking engagements at public events. This will help establish you as an expert in your field.

### **Submit Articles to Newspapers, Websites, & Other Publications**

Publishers are always looking for content for their publications. Submit articles and ask that your business information and website URL be included when the articles are published.

## **What to Do When a Reporter Calls**

So, you sent in your press release and guess what? A reporter calls and she wants to run your story. Be enthusiastic, but stay calm...you'll get through this. Hopefully, you are already prepared for this call with the following:

- ▶ A list of points you would like to cover in an interview.
- ▶ Documentation with supporting information - for your reference and to send to the reporter if she requests it.

### **Here are a few tips on what to do and ask when the reporter calls:**

Grab a pen and paper and write down the important details, including:

- ▶ reporter's name and phone number
  - ▶ what publication/show they are from time, date, & location of interview, if it isn't going to take place right then on the telephone
1. Find out what angle the reporter wants to take on the story. Make certain that this angle will be favorable for your business or illustrates your expertise.
  2. Ensure that you are the most appropriate person to answer the phone calls on behalf of your business.
  3. If you feel you need preparation, ask for a few sample questions that will be covered.
  4. Ask if your website URL will be published in the interview. After all, the purpose of sending your press release was for publicity. If they won't publish your URL, you'll have to decide whether the interview will be worth the exposure for you or not. If this is one of your first interviews, you might want to jump at the chance for experience.

### **What if it's not a good time?**

If the reporter calls at an inconvenient time, or if you're not quite ready, ask if you can call back shortly. Gather your thoughts and documentation and call back promptly. If your kids are screaming and you're sure to be flustered, it's a much better idea to call the reporter back.

### **If the Interview Will Take Place in the Future**

Announce your coverage on your website and make an announcement to your newsletter subscribers. Tell them where they will be able to listen to or read your interview. It definitely adds credibility to your image and helps create trust with your readers.

### **How to Handle the Interview**

Congratulations! Don't forget to breathe...everything will be fine. Just remember a few key points and you'll do great.

1. Take a moment to think about your answers – especially if the interview will be edited or put into print. And remember, what seems like an eternity-long silence to you, is likely only a couple of seconds.
2. Speak in plain English. Don't use technical jargon and explain any industry-specific terms you do use.
3. Speak in a friendly, yet convincing manner. Hide those nerves and be sure of yourself. After all, you're being interviewed because you are the expert.
4. Back up your claims with facts and give examples.
5. If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification.
6. If you don't know the answer to a question, you can say, "I don't know offhand, but I can certainly find out that information."

7. Don't speak "off the record". You can never be certain that it won't end up in the interview.

### **Tips for Television Interviews**

1. If you're working from home and the television press is coming to interview you, don't wear a suit! Be natural. Clean yourself up and get out of your pajamas, but be sure to look natural.
2. Wear solid colored clothing. Patterns can be quite distracting on television.
3. Look at the reporter, not the camera.

### **If You Have to Send More Information after the Interview**

1. Find out the preferred method: fax, mail, email, etc.
2. Ask the reporter's deadline and ensure the information gets there in time.

### **After the Interview**

Announce your coverage on your website and make an announcement to your newsletter subscribers. If possible, link to the story or offer a transcript.

Always keep the contact information of the reporter or whoever ran your story. Be sure to thank him after your story runs and contact him personally when you have a new story.

### **Press Release Samples**

On the following 4 pages, you'll find real-live press release samples. Read through these to really get a good idea of the format of a press release, the way they are written and how they promote a business or a person – without sounding like an ad.

You want your press releases to look at lot like these!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Local Entrepreneurial Student Creates Business to Benefit the Starlight Children's Foundation with the Future Goal of Creating Her Own Charitable Organization**

**Contact:** Amanda Raab

**Company:** Pure Pearls

**Address:** 1425B West 26th St Houston, TX 77008

**Phone:** xxx-289-2206

**Email:** [pearls@purepearls.com](mailto:pearls@purepearls.com)

**URL:** <http://www.purepearls.com>

**Austin, TX** – Online pearl retailer, Pure Pearls, makes a difference in sick children's lives as a Starlight Children's Foundation Featured Store

Entrepreneur and university student, Amanda Raab, is an Austin-based online retailer of discounted pearl jewelry. Although Raab sells luxury items, she's giving back to the community by partnering with the Starlight Children's Foundation. The foundation is a charitable organization that works with hospitals to improve services and facilities for seriously ill children.

Raab has committed to donate 10% of her sales to the foundation and Pure Pearls is also a featured store in Starlight Children's Foundation's *Gift of Dreams*. Says Raab, "Children with special needs have a special place in my heart. I work with these children on a daily basis as a speech-language pathologist."

Jenny Isaacson, Starlight Children's Foundation's Director of Marketing and Promotions, says, "We are delighted to welcome Pure Pearls into our *Gift of Dreams* family. We hope customers will enjoy purchasing beautiful pearls, knowing that they are also helping sick kids at the same time."

In addition to being a business owner, Raab is a Master's Degree student at the University of Texas. She is studying speech language pathology and specializes in child-language development. According to Raab, "My ultimate goal is to have my own foundation for children. The original motivation behind starting the pearl business was the need for funding. Being involved with Starlight Children's Foundation ensures that I am contributing to the cause right now."

More information about Pure Pearls and its involvement with the Starlight Children's Foundation can be found at <http://www.purepearls.com>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Local Mom Runs a National Business Alongside Her Young Children**

**Contact:** Audrey Hurley c/o: A Great Gift Idea  
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**Website Home Page:** <http://www.agreatgiftidea.com>

*Jefferson, SD – Local mom runs her own business from home and serves customers from all over the country.*

It has always been important for local business woman, Audrey Hurley, to be close to her two young children, even while she pursued a career. That's why she decided to start a business right in her own home. She recently launched her business, *A Great Gift Idea*, a company that creates and sells personalized gifts and promotional items.

Living in a small town like Jefferson and working from home, Hurley knew she would have to find a way to reach a larger targeted customer base. Thus, her website, [www.agreatgiftidea.com](http://www.agreatgiftidea.com), was born. This website serves as her storefront for all her business.

"Without a traditional brick and mortar business," says Hurley, "it's important to have a place where customers can view your products and see that you are a legitimate business. Whether my customers are down the block or across the country, my website serves that purpose."

Hurley has met very few of her customers face-to-face. Says Tara Crooks of Nixa, Missouri about her experience as a customer, "I was afraid with not having the personal contact that I might have with my local printer. Despite the distance, Audrey was able to create some marvelous advertising materials for my businesses at affordable prices."

Starting this business has been rewarding financially and personally for Hurley. She is able to stay home with her children, but also receives the fulfillment of building a little enterprise from her living room.

"I personally think that being here for my children is one of the most important jobs in the world, but I also wanted to achieve some career success for myself, not to mention I can now help pay some of the household bills," says Hurley.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Babies Are Learning Speak to Their Parents Before They Develop Verbal Skills**

Contact Information Removed by Request

**XXXXXX** – Simple hand gestures can eliminate frustration for parents as they try to communicate with their babies.

Long before a baby can speak, he has the ability to understand language and even communicate. Certain biological development is required to communicate verbally, but parents can teach their babies different hand gestures to communicate various needs and desires.

This communication is commonly called "Baby Sign Language". With simple gestures, babies can tell their parents when they are hungry, thirsty or when they want more. They can even communicate more complex concepts like wanting to play on a swing, seeing a bird fly in the sky or if they would like a hug.

Some people worry that teaching sign language will stunt oral development. However, according to baby sign language expert XXXXXXXX, "Sign language is not a replacement for verbal communication. In fact, most children we've studied who learn to sign often develop more advanced verbal skills than children who do not sign, as they are accustomed to communicating their thoughts."

XXXX continues, "Babies who can use sign language to tell their parents what they want will likely will be more confident and experience less frustration. Babies understand more than we think."

Parents may feel overwhelmed at the thought of teaching their babies a whole new language, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. Parents can start with simple things like "food" and "drink" and go from there.

Parents will also likely find that the more babies learn, the more eager they become to learn more, as do the parents. Parents are encouraged to instantly pick up a free report on teaching their baby sign language at XXXXXXXX or call toll-free XXXXXXXX to order their free report by mail.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Mom Helps Military Wives Earn a Living No Matter Where They Live or How Often They Relocate Their Families**

Contact Info Removed Per Request

***Nixa, MO:*** *Military wife has found a way to earn an income from home and offers the same opportunity to other military wives.*

Tara Crooks is a military wife whose life involves frequent moves across the country. Crooks wouldn't have it any other way, but the moves make it difficult for a military wife to contribute to the family income. In the reality of today's economy, a two-income family is often a necessity.

Clearly, this mobile lifestyle does not lend itself to starting a traditional brick and mortar business. That hasn't stopped Crooks from achieving her dream of being home with her daughter and contributing to the family income.

Crooks now runs her own portable online business. She has created *The Candle Coop*, a business specializing in apothecary jar candles. Crooks actively markets her busy site to other work at home moms and her business is growing daily.

In order to help other military wives achieve the same goal, Crooks has extended her business opportunity to others. The flexibility of her business is what makes it a great fit for the military lifestyle. These *Candle Peddlers*, as Crooks calls them, can either keep inventory or have their orders drop shipped. They can do personal sales or they can sell online, all with The Candle Coop name.

Says Judith Titus, Crooks' newest *Candle Peddler* and military wife, "Tara has created a program that I can fit into my schedule—which is extremely busy—not the other way around. I can make my money my way."

Crooks is very emphatic when asked about her life as a military wife, "I simply think I am the luckiest person on earth. I am so proud to be a part of our U.S. Military Family," and adds, "To be able to raise my daughter to know she has a successful Mom and Dad she can be proud of means the world to me. Being able to stay at home and work my business with her by my side is something I never dreamed possible. If I can offer this to any other military wives out there, I am honored to have the opportunity."

More information can be found at: XXXXXX

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## Press Release Template

On the following page, you'll find a handy template for putting your press releases together. Fill in the blanks, follow the instructions and refer to Chapter 4 on Proper Press Release Format.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / FOR RELEASE BEFORE XXXXX /  
FOR RELEASE AFTER XXXX**

### Attention Getting Headline Here

**Contact:** Full name

**Company:** Company Name

**Address:** Mailing Address of Location

**Phone:** Phone Number

**Email:** Email address

**URL:** Precise Website Address of Where to Get More Information

***City, Town or Location Where Story is Relevant*** – Summary that draws the reader in to learn more.

First Paragraph answers "Who, What, Where, Why, When". Get to the point!

More information.

Add quote from a customer or somebody who corroborates your expert status.

Include a quotation from yourself and state who you are. Your quotes allow you to insert your opinion and provide more depth to your story.

Finish your press release with information on where to get more information on your website.

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## Closing

Press releases can be a great way to receive extra publicity for your business. It definitely takes time to build up a media list and improve your press release writing skills, but it's definitely worth it. Having the media feature you and your business is exposure that just can't be bought.

One of my favorite resources for publicity is 'Publicity Hound' Joan Stewart. Her background is in working as a professional journalist for many years, and she has been working exclusively online since the late 1990s. Visit her site and join her list at:

<http://ConnieLoves.me/PublicityHound>

Joan's excellent training, tips, information, and courses all receive my 'Green Seal of Approval'.

To Your Massive Online Success!

*Connie Ragen Green*