

Press Release Writing Best Practices

- Only write a press release if you have news to share: actual news. Things like “we are making progress as a business” or “We have re-defined our vision” are not news; “we announced X new service,” “we joined in a partnership with X,” “we won X award,” “Joe Smith of ShapeShift will be giving a keynote at X show” are all examples of news—concrete things that have happened very recently (most releases are of things that just occurred) or are going to happen (typically announcements for events) that you are telling the world about.
- Ideally, the news should be something a critical mass of people care about, such as users, the media, potential investors, or the industry at large. It should not be fully self-interested (only of interest to your company, employees, or the bottom line).
- Work to have an angle that is original, industry impacting, shows innovation—any angle that is new or different to catch a reporter’s eye.
- Headlines should be as short as possible to get the point across, must include our company name, and cut to the heart of the news powerfully and succinctly..
- Subheads can elaborate a bit more on why it is important to users, the industry, or others
- Think of press releases as news stories; they are not marketing documents, so should avoid excessive superlatives, fluffy language, first-person voice, and should read like a news story in a media outlet.
- All press releases begin with a dateline and then a company positioning statement: **“DENVER, CO — August X, 2022 — [ShapeShift](#) DAO, a decentralized, non-custodial cryptocurrency platform and community . . .** “ It must have a city (non-negotiable from distribution outlets), and it’s best to not have this city be different every time as it is customary for the city to be where the news is originating from. For example, if you choose to make it “San Francisco,” readers will assume the news is about the San Francisco branch office, or an event being held in San Francisco. The positioning statement is the same, every time, for brand reinforcement. It is OK to change it during rebranding exercises; but once you change it, commit to it and stick to it for at least 3 months or the brand shows little continuity.
- Prioritize your writing: Most important information first, then work your way down to least important information as you go.
- Include a quote by a named leader (or two, if it’s a partner joint announcement and they are willing)
- Always use STRICT AP STYLE. This means no Oxford comma; even if the house editorial style includes the use of Oxford commas, press releases do not. While not a hard and fast rule, disregarding AP Style rules marks the company as not knowing PR.
- If you cite a company, or a fact, or a product, include a hyperlink to their site or a citation.
- Do not disparage other companies or brands.
- If you use the name of a product of another well-known brand, use their preferred trademark symbols.
- End with the company boilerplate, every time, keeping the boilerplate the same for brand reinforcement, unless and until you choose to do a rebranding exercise.
- Provide a reliable media contact.