

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

Headline

This is not the time to play hard to get – your headline needs to shout out loud and clear what your story is. Leave clever headlines to the editors and use your headline to explicitly state the key information.

The Hook

The first thing to figure out is why would people be interested in your story? Running a crowdfunding campaign in and of itself isn't enough to get a story published – your story has to offer excitement (a quirky project like a giant water slide or a celebrity endorsement), stats (is this the biggest, fastest, most backers), human interest (what inspired you, what obstacles have you overcome..) or impact (what difference is your project going to make to the area – new job opportunities, increase house prices, include different aspects of the community).

With local press, often it's the community element that is most important. Once you find your angle you can start putting together your pitch.

What to include

Your first paragraph needs to tell the journalist everything they need to know including;

Who – the people involved

What – the objective of the project

When – the timeline for your campaign and the project as a whole

Where – the geographic location of the project and the greater area of people who will be positively impacted by it

Why – what's the reason for doing this, why is it important

How – your approach to making this happen



FOR ADDED IMPACT

Quotes – from high profile people in the area (businesses, celebrities, MPs etc.) and from the team behind the project.



Make sure to include:

- A high-resolution image – make the journalist's job as easy as possible by including photos that capture your story whether it's of the team, the project area or of a community event which highlights people's interest.
- Contact info – include the contact details for the person who can answer any queries, be interviewed if necessary and who will be able to sign off any quotes or the piece itself.
- Editors notes – this is where you can add links to any additional information that is relevant to your story whether its reports and stats or more information about the project itself

Getting your story out there

Your story is immediately more relevant to people in the area (and importantly they're the ones most likely to pledge to your campaign!) so start by contacting your local newspapers and radio stations first.

Is your project helping the environment? Or creating jobs? Or making something beautiful, weird or giant that people will want to know about? Consider which publications would be most interested in covering your story and hit them first.

Zoella is a YouTube celebrity with more than double the online following of the Financial Times. She might not be the best person to promote your project but it's a good idea to think outside of mainstream media and make a list of local bloggers, tweeters and community influencers (whether the head of the local Mumsnet group or the landlord of the most popular pub in town) who could help promote your project to an even larger audience.

Contact journalists early on in your campaign so that there are more opportunities for them to cover your story and so that any subsequent press coverage can help you to raise awareness and funds for your campaign.

So they didn't bite when you sent them the press release about your campaign launch? No worries. Get in touch again whenever you hit significant milestones – a crowdfunding campaign may not capture a journalist's imagination but 100 or more local backers, celebrity supporters or significant donations may well do. Because if at first you don't succeed, then do what the All Blacks rugby team would do... Try and try again.