

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
ФЕДЕРАЛЬНОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ БЮДЖЕТНОЕ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЕ
УЧРЕЖДЕНИЕ ВЫСШЕГО ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
«ИРКУТСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ»

Е.В. Подкаменная

Press Releases

*Учебно-методическое пособие
по обучению профессионально ориентированной письменной речи*



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Пособие состоит из четырех циклов, включающих теоретические сведения о создании англоязычных пресс-релизов различных типов согласно предложенной автором типологии. Практические задания построены на основе современных аутентичных пресс-релизов и направлены на формирование иноязычной профессионально ориентированной письменной речи.

Настоящее учебно-методическое пособие предназначено для студентов старших курсов направления подготовки Реклама и связи с общественностью.

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Introduction

What is PR Writing?

Over the first lesson we are going to discuss several points, summarized as follows:

1. People like stories. PR writers get paid (and paid well!) to tell stories.
2. PR writing is a particular kind of story-telling, requiring a particular discipline.
3. PR writers write for a very specific primary audience -- editors. Editors aren't interested in ideas. Editors are interested in stories.
4. Press release is one of the basic tools of PR.

People like to hear stories. There is plenty of evidence that this is very basic to human nature -- you might almost say it's how we think.

Most of the stories in the paper start as PR writing. Of course, some stories are initiated by the news media covering breaking events -- a train wreck, for example, is covered "live" by reporters who rush to the scene as soon as their scanners pick up emergency officials' call for help. But most stories are generated as part of an information campaign by someone.

It's rarely obvious exactly who's behind the PR. A reporter will never begin a story by saying, "I got a press release today and it said..." But you can often tell how the key information -- the **message** of the story -- started out.

TASK 1. Use your professional knowledge and draw the template of Russian press release. Explain what each part stands for.

TASK 2. Read the story "Deerfield Tries to Decide if Circus will Come to Town" by Courtney Flynn, Tribune staff reporter and answer the questions after it.

May 18, 2007

Two Deerfield charitable foundations imagined that a circus would be a hit with families and provide thousands of dollars for park and education programs.

But some Deerfield residents are upset about the plan to bring a traveling circus to town, saying that elephants are treated inhumanely. Deerfield trustees are expected to decide Monday whether to issue a permit.

"I feel like we all need to look beyond the entertainment aspect and look at what price the elephants pay," said longtime resident Michelle Shields. "I hope that the village will reflect on it and realize that it's not a good fit for a community like ours."

As part of a joint fundraiser planned for Sept. 18, the Deerfield School District 109 Education Foundation and the Deerfield Park Foundation want to host the Oklahoma-based Kelly Miller Circus at Brickyards Park on the south end of town.

Two performances under a tent could draw as many as 2,400 people and raise \$30,000 for the foundations. The education foundation would use its half of the money for teacher grants, special education programs and instructional programs, and park foundation's funds probably would go toward creating a playground or other park programs, officials said.

"We're all just volunteers who are trying to do good things for the kids," said Sandy Robbins, president of the education foundation.

Robbins and Deerfield Park Foundation Chairman Bill Smirles said their foundations spoke with circus representatives and officials with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which regulates and issues licenses for circuses, and were told that the Kelly Miller Circus has no current violations or citations. A spokesman for the USDA did not know immediately whether the circus had any violations, but said violations in general are "fairly rare."

"If we weren't comfortable, there'd be no way we'd be moving forward," Robbins said. "We've done our due diligence, and we're comfortable with moving forward."

Deerfield Mayor Steven Harris, who used to be chairman of the Deerfield Park Foundation, said the Village Board probably will defer to the research done by the two foundations in deciding whether to issue a permit.

"When people are coming to us for a permit, we have to rely on their good work," Harris said. "And they just better be right."

A representative of the Kelly Miller Circus did not return calls for comment.

Some towns, such as Naperville, stopped hosting the Kelly Miller Circus two years ago in search of other ways to raise money for the Naper Settlement, but the Wilmette education foundation and a Gurnee school PTO said the circus was successful in their communities.

"It was very well-run, very professional," said Lauren Weir, who helps organize fundraisers for the Gurnee District 56 PTO.

But some Deerfield residents contend that the elephants are too large to be transported to suburban destinations and spend too much time in cages. They hope that trustees refuse to issue a permit.

"Morally wrong is morally wrong," said resident Diana Paserba. "Perhaps Deerfield could be a leader instead of a follower in issues of humane treatment of animals."

Karen Rappaport, a Riverwoods resident whose children attend Deerfield schools, said the community might be supportive of circuses that use gymnasts instead of animals.

"I look at [circuses] as one of those outdated things, like rodeos," said Rappaport. "As we progress and evolve, they shouldn't be acceptable anymore."

Smirles and Robbins said their foundations are at ease with the circus and hope that the village issues the permit.

"We understand this is a concern for some residents in the community," Smirles said. "We feel comfortable that the Kelly Miller Circus treats their animals in a humane way."

a. Now answer the questions:

- **Who is doing something newsworthy?** Who is the indispensable factor without whom there would be no story?
 - **What is the important thing that he or she (or they) is doing?** What action, right now, are they taking that makes this an interesting story?
 - **Where did it happen?** Is this a local story?
 - **When did it happen?** ...this week? today?
 - **Why is this significant or newsworthy?** We know Who did What and now we need to know why or how it matters.
 - **Who do you think got this into the newspaper?** Did some intrepid reporter just happen upon this story? Or might one or more of the people or institutions mentioned in the article have made an effort to get coverage. Think about this and then reconsider your choice for a "Who" (and "What").
- b. Now, to show how news stories can vary, I want you to re-think the story presented in this article. Shift the point of view. Using the same basic facts, ask yourself:**
- **Who** else could be the center of this story?
 - **What** is it they're doing (or having done to them) that could make them the center?
 - **When** is it going to happen (or when did it happen)?
 - **Where?**
 - **Why** or how is this story newsworthy, with this new center of focus -- it could be the same as in the article, or it could have other significance.

TASK 3. One of your assignments today is to do a news analysis.

As you page through the paper, use your imagination. You won't necessarily know for sure, but with a little creative guessing you will usually be able to identify not only the structural elements of the story -- the **5 W's** -- but also the underlying message that launched this story into the "infosphere" -- the world of information exchange.

Doing a News Analysis

- First, go online and find a news article that you have reason to believe was generated as part of a public relations campaign. Use your imagination as to whose PR campaign it might be a part of.
- Copy the link to the story.
- Do a one-page analysis, "filling in the blanks" for the following questions:
 1. **In the upper left hand corner:** Your name, and the words, Lesson One News Analysis
 2. **Article headline, source, and date**
 3. **The 5 W's --**
 - **Who** is the story about? (Do you think this person could be the PR source of the story?)
 - **What** are they doing (or having done to them?)

- **Where** is it all happening?
 - **When** did it or will it take place?
 - **Why** is it happening? -- How is it significant?
4. **The Message** -- in a nutshell, what is the story trying to say? ...and since we have identified this as the successful result of a press release, **What was the take-home point that the PR writer wanted you to understand?**
 5. **Why do you think the editor has chosen this press-release for his article? Present the results of your analysis to the group.**

Here are some news links:

<http://www.foxnews.com/>

<http://www.cnn.com/>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

<http://abcnews.go.com/>

<http://news.google.com/>

Unit I

Lesson 1

Components of a Press Release

At this stage we are going to observe the general structure of English press-releases. Even though there are many different types of press releases, all press releases should include several common components. Here are the basic components of an English press release, and what should be included in each section:

Release Time – The release time of a press release is where you would note “For Immediate Release”, “For Release Before [date]”, “For Release After [date]” or “Embargoed Until” followed by a specific date (for releases that aren’t permitted to be published immediately).

***Contact Info** – Full contact info, or at least as much as possible, including a full media contact name, phone number, and email address. A mailing address, fax number, and cell phone number can also be included.

Headline – The headline, or press release title, should be attention-grabbing while still telling journalists the essence of the news contained in the press release.

***Dateline** – This will include the distribution date of the press release, followed by the hometown of the person or company presenting the news, and finally followed by the start of the first body paragraph.

Lead(the first paragraph) - The who, what, when, where, and why questions should all be answered in this paragraph if possible, followed by any quotes and supporting facts.

Press Release Body – The body of the press release will go into further detail about the news. Using a strategy called the *inverted pyramid*, the body of the press release should be written with the most important information and quotes first. This inverted pyramid technique is used so that if editors need to cut the story to fit space constraints, they can cut from the end without losing critical information.

Boilerplate – A press release boilerplate is a paragraph after the press release body, often preceded with a line saying “About CompanyXYZ,” which gives general background (not usually directly related to the news angle) about the person, organization, or company issuing the press release.

***Call to Action** – Generally a one-sentence closer following the boilerplate of the news release, and starting with something like “For more information about CompanyXYZ or this news angle...” followed by a media contact person’s name and phone number, and sometimes email address.

Closing – To close a press release (to let the journalist know there isn’t a second page), center ### or -30- at the bottom of the page.

** These parts can have different forms and places in press-releases of different companies.*

Here is press release template you can also use while writing:

Your Logo Here

Contact Information:

Program Director Name

Address for the site

E-mail

Website

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

“Title Here” (Example: **New Students Anxious to Get an Upper Hand on Technology**)

CITY, STATE (*Example: AUSTIN, TX*), DATE – This is the opening paragraph, and it should be really brief but explain all important points. This paragraph should be anywhere from 3 to 5 sentences. It should include the event that’s going on, the date, time and important people.

The next paragraph goes into more detail. For example, this section could explain the importance of the event and why it’s taking place. This is a good place to mention that the program and its participants depend on grants and other outside funding. In general, remember that most important information should be placed at the beginning of the article - information at the end is less likely to be read.

Another section could talk about the need for your particular program(s). This is where you’ll go in detail about how it got started and what services you offer. Once again, you should keep paragraphs at about 3 to 5 sentences in length.

The very last paragraph is called the “boilerplate.” It is usually no more than 2 to 3 sentences. *Example: The Digital Workforce Academy strives to meet workforce demands in the digital economy by providing technology skills to underemployed members of our community. The academy is a non-profit organization that fosters community revitalization through education and technology training.*

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Notice we're using the inverted pyramid style here. As you know from intro courses, this is the journalistic style that says **"Put the more important stuff at the top, the less important in the middle, and the least important at the bottom."** Reporters know that editors want to be able to cut a story from the bottom up -- if it's ten inches and they only need eight, they want to be able to simply snip two inches off the bottom. The story has to hold despite the loss of that last paragraph. Then, if necessary, the editor needs to be able to snip again and maybe again -- until only the top paragraph or two are left. With a well-crafted inverted pyramid, the story is still intact, even though now it's only a "news note" -- a brief item.

Task 1. Now compare the templates of Russian and English press releases and state the difference.

Task 2.a. Read the press-releases given below and define their structure. What information does each paragraph contain?

I.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Ted Collier

Surety Finance, Inc.

Phone: 303-677-2171

Email: info@suretyfinance.com

Surety Finance Breaks \$1 Million in Judgment Collection Accounts for 2003

Denver, CO---January 29, 2011---Surety Finance, Inc. announced that the company processed over one million dollars in judgment collection accounts in 2010. Surety Finance provides free service with no upfront fees to help individuals and businesses collect money awarded to them in a lawsuit.

While a judge or jury can award people with money through small claims or civil court, it is up to the individuals to physically collect those monies. Statistics show that 80% of all judgments nationwide go uncollected. Unlike collection agencies and law firms, Surety Finance requires no upfront cash. Clients only pay if and when Surety Finance collects the money. This new and unique service offers the help that the courts do not provide. Instead of paying money up front to a collection company and risk losing even more money, clients can enlist the aid of Surety Financial because Surety's investigative services are free. The company only makes money if it retrieves the money owed to clients through judgments.

Surety Finance spokesperson Ted Collier said, "We are very pleased to have hit the one million mark this year. We have a very dedicated team and great clients who know that we are providing a valuable service in collecting money that is rightfully theirs."

While Surety Finance encourages clients to seek all legal means to collect the judgments on their own, the company is frequently asked to step in to collect the money and close the cases when necessary. Surety Finance specializes in judgments that are anywhere from one to five years old in amounts ranging from as little as \$500 to as much as \$500,000.

With access to worldwide databases that are linked to hundreds of other judgment recovery professionals throughout the United States and abroad, Surety Finance's exploratory fingers reach far and wide. Surety Finance's high technology and investigative powers leave little room for individuals or businesses to hide. Their experienced investigative teams employ innovative and advanced methods of seeking and finding individuals and their assets. To seize assets, Surety Finance has the capability and the means that ordinary collection agencies do not have. In fact, many attorneys use judgment recovery professionals such as Surety Finance to aid in their own efforts to collect funds for clients.

For more information email info@suretyfinance.com or call 303-677-2171.

#

II.

FOR RELEASE AFTER NOVEMBER 12

Contact:

Stephen Thomas

Professional Investment Group, Inc.

Phone: 303-664-2291

Toll-free: 800-664-2291

Email: jthomas@pig.com

Web site: <http://www.pig.com>

Professional Investment Group (PIG) announces Jeremy Solis to join Board of Directors

Denver, CO---November 12, 2010---Professional Investment Group (PIG), a leading multi-manager investment group, today announced the addition of new Board Member, Jeremy Solis, CPA.

Mr. Solis is President of Highground Asset Management, Inc., a firm specializing in executive compensation and benefits design, funding and consulting. As a founder of HAM, Jeremy's experience in the executive compensation area spans 15 years.

PIG focuses on creating stable investments and optimized risk-adjusted returns and provides objective customized solutions to assist individuals, professionals and business owners in reaching their financial goals. PIG delivers measurable results from assessment, proven strategies, and excellence in execution.

Mr. Solis's expertise includes equity planning, executive compensation, benefits consulting, security alternatives and liability funding. Mr. Solis is a graduate of Michigan State University and is a CPA, formerly with Taft Associates in Newark, NJ.

"Mr. Solis brings years of experience to the table. We have worked together successfully in the past and he is a true asset to our team. We are happy to welcome him aboard," said Bartholomew M. Thomas, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. Solis joins a team of other Board Members, which include Gregory Vsticoff of CPGS Group, Bradley Hancock of Stregle & Traddeit, Ltd., Simon Fowl of Lerner Thomas, Inc., H. M. Herne of Brunner-MacDonaldson, Burgher Nelson of Nelson & Associates, and Bernard H. Soghren, founder and CEO of Professional Investment Group, Inc.

About Professional Investment Group, Inc.

Professional Investment Group, Inc. is engaged in consulting in areas such as benefits, actuarial, compensation, and plan administration and manages capital for a diverse group of investors including approximately 230 leading pension funds, financial institutions, endowments, and high net worth individuals. PIG's conservative approach and tolerance of complex investment situations have enabled the firm to produce consistently high risk-adjusted returns for investors on five continents. Professional Investment Group's corporate headquarters is located in Denver, Colorado.

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III.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Dennis Mauer

Rock Solid Construction Company, Inc.

Phone: 800-223-2600

Email: dmauer@rocksolidconstructionco.com

Web site: <http://www.rocksolidconstructionco.com>

Rock Solid Construction Company Announces Fourth Quarter Earnings

Chicago, IL---May 12, 2011--- Rock Solid Construction Company, Inc. (NYSE: RKC) today announced that it has scheduled its 2010 annual and fourth quarter earnings release conference call for Thursday, July 28, 2011, after market close.