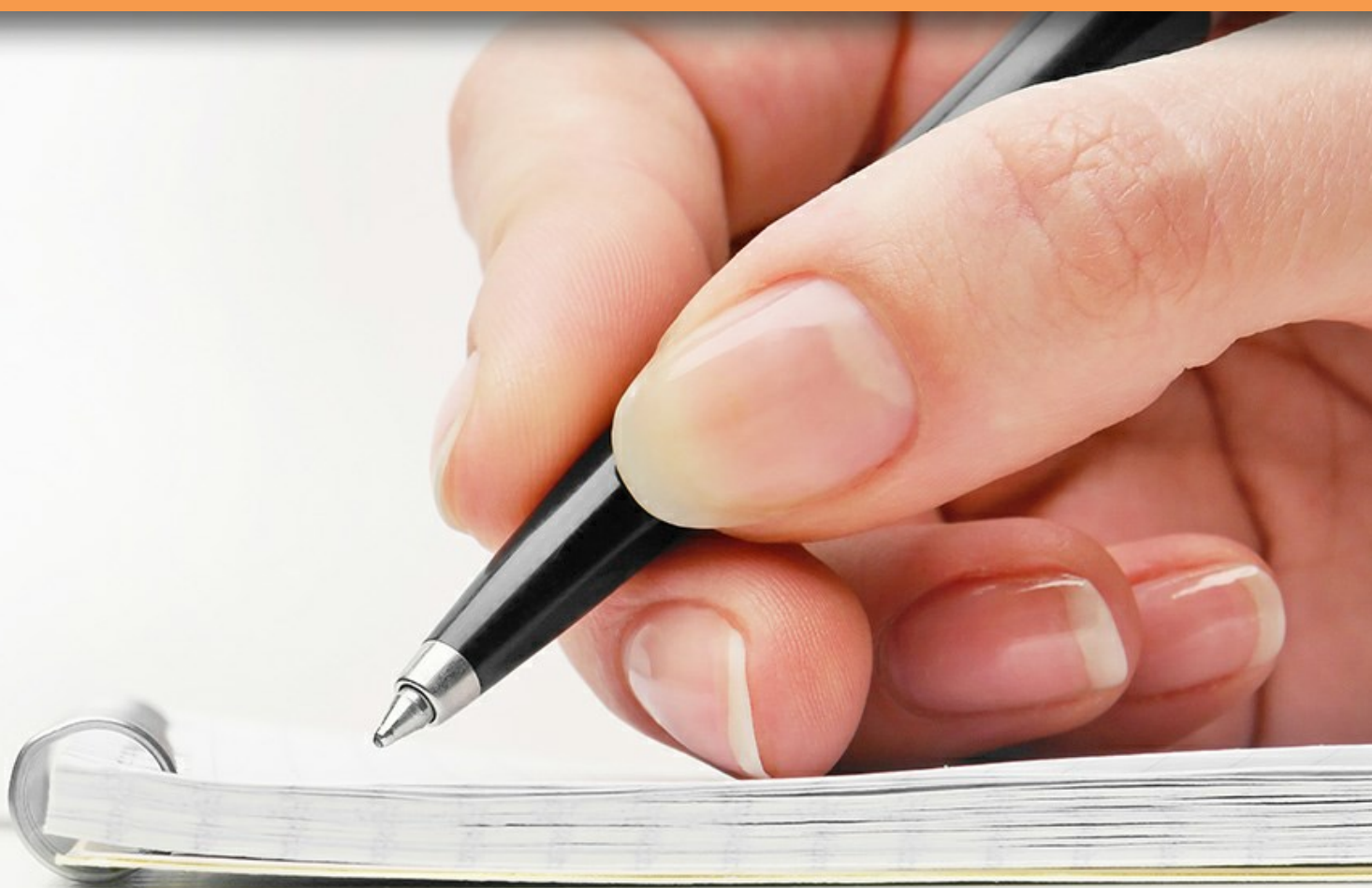


The Upside Down Guide to writing for the Press

Write like a pro and get published

Peter Rose




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The Upside Down Guide to writing for the Press: Write like a pro and get published


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The Upside Down Guide to writing for the Press

Since you are reading this – and your lips aren't moving as you do so – it is safe to make a number of assumptions:

- ✎ That you are literate
- ✎ That you are interested in the mechanics of writing for publication
- ✎ That you want to generate editorial coverage for yourself, your products or your company

If any of these is correct, continue reading. This book will help you understand:

1. The mechanics of producing a press release or article and
2. how to improve your chances of getting it published on-line or in print.

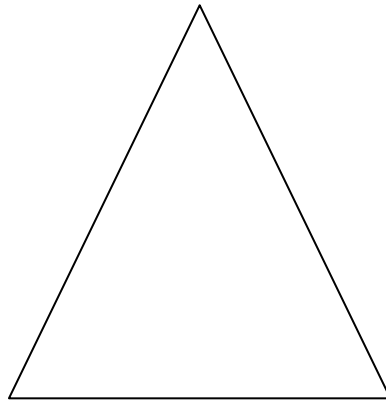
Why call the book “The Upside down guide to writing for the Press”?

Well, one of the main reasons is that the book is written not from your perspective but that of the editor. The job of any PR person is to secure the maximum coverage whether as column inches or web appearances. An editor's only interest, on the other hand, is generating copy for their publication. At first blush, the two aims shouldn't necessarily be mutually exclusive. But, it's the fact that they usually are that makes little books like this necessary.

The title also reflects one of the principal secrets of effective PR writing; the **Inverted Pyramid**. Believe it or not, but an upside down pyramid represents the ideal shape not just for a good PR piece but for most general news reportage.

What's shape got to do with it, I hear you ask. Bear with me gentle reader and all will be revealed.

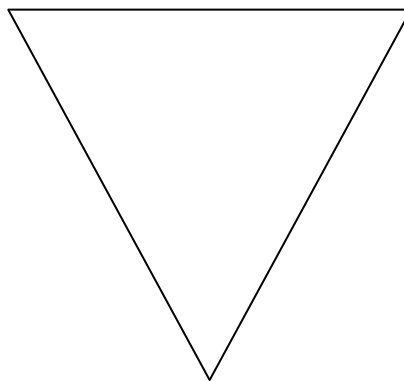
1 The inverted pyramid



This is a normal pyramid.

Actually, it's more like an equilateral triangle but I have neither the skill nor the software needed to draw a genuine pyramid shape which, as we all know, is a number of equilateral triangles glued together.

If you are a devotee of Nikola Tesla this represents the ideal shape for an energy chamber. If you are a Stargate fanatic, it's an interplanetary docking station. And if you were an Egyptian builder, tasked with creating a suitable tomb for your Pharaoh you had to build it this way because, had you tried it the other way up, the whole edifice would have toppled over.



This is the same pyramid turned upside down. In other words, it is **Inverted**.

Note that it is wider at the top than at the bottom. It's a lousy design for a building as we have already established. But, believe it or not, it's the perfect structure for just about anything you write for publication – a press release, for instance.

Basically, editors are very busy people. Every week, a couple of hundred press releases, some printed, most now electronic, arrive on their desk or virtual desktop. That's nearly a thousand a month. All of them are fighting for attention. But the editor can only use a tiny fraction of them. The rest get sent to the great recycling bin in the sky or, more probably, under the desk.

How do they choose the ones to publish?

Surely the one sent by the well-known PR consultancy?

Or what about the all-singing, all-dancing one with the cool video embedded? That must grab their attention?

If not, it has to be the one with the free gift attached?

Move to the top of the class if you answered: None of the above; or, at least, not necessarily any of the above.

What, generally, catches a journalist's eye is **NEWS: INFORMATION: FACTS & FIGURES.**

(Rule 1: If you have nothing new or interesting to report, don't waste their time and yours.)

And they want to see it straight away. Not buried in paragraph 3 on page 2. Not even in the bottom paragraph of page 1. They want it to leap out at them as soon as they read the opening paragraph.

Remember the inverted pyramid? This is where it comes into play, because, like the pyramid, your press release should be top-heavy, with all the important information you want to get across stuffed into the opening paragraph: Or two paragraphs if you have a lot of fascinating stuff to report.

The Inverted Pyramid enables the editor to decide quickly how relevant the piece is to her publication. Once she has made up her mind to use it, she will also find it quick and easy to edit, making it much more likely to find a slot somewhere in the publication.

Let's say you are launching a new gismo that will power cars without burning fossil fuels. It makes driving cheaper, slashes carbon emissions and saves the rainforests. THAT is what you put in your opening paragraph. That is the most vital and interesting piece of information you can impart. The fact that the CEO or Chairman thinks that your company is the market-leader, a sovereign boon to Mankind and generally the next big thing since Microsoft is neither here nor there.

It's simply an opinion.

The news, the good stuff that the editor is gagging for is all about your ground-breaking product. And that constitutes the top of your upside down pyramid. The self-regarding flannel gets consigned to the subsequent paragraphs so that, if the editor has to edit, it's the trivia that gets chopped and not the hard facts at the top.

Consider the following:

News from Atlas Industries

World leaders in controlled movement

Date: Immediate

Atlas Industries is one of the world's leading manufacturers of cranes and other heavy lifting equipment for the marine and associated industries. They have offices in 110 countries and employ more than 10,000 people worldwide. Their CEO is John Anon, a 45-year old graduate of Harvard Business School. Married with two children; a girl aged eight and a boy of four, he divides his time between offices in London and New York.

Two years ago, Atlas decided to broaden its business base by diversifying into armoured fork lift trucks designed specifically for use by armies in the field; particularly those involved in amphibious landings on mined stretches of beach. At the time, Atlas' traditional markets were under severe attack from less well-established rivals and Anon realised that their best chance of survival and growth lay in diversification. A total of \$40 million was invested in R&D and a new production facility was built on a Green Field site in Gdansk, Poland. The selection of the location for the new facility was key to the success of the operation, according to Anon, since the company was able to shave its overhead and wages bill by at least 12% by exploiting the cheaper, skilled labour available in the former Iron Curtain countries. This diversification programme paid off, yesterday, when the company announced it had received a \$70 million order for 100 of its A-Truck range from The People's Republic of China.

ends

Contact: Jesse Peers, Head of Product Communications
E-Mail: jpeers@atlasindustries.com
Phone: +1 728 5432

Wow! The news element is buried so far down the page that most editors would give it up as a bad job without ever reaching the important bit – you know, where they would find out about the \$70 million order that is probably going to save the company’s – and the CEO’s – bacon. Plus, there is no date on the release, leaving the journalist to try to figure out just how current – or outdated – the information is.

Look what happens when we **invert the pyramid** and get the balance right:

News from Atlas Industries

World leaders in controlled movement

Date: 21/06/2015.

Atlas fork truck range lifts \$70million order

Atlas Industries yesterday announced a \$70 million order from The People’s Republic of China for 100 of its newly developed A-Truck armoured fork lift trucks.

Atlas developed the A-Truck specifically for hazardous military duties such as amphibious landings on mined beaches. The company invested a total of \$40 million in R&D and also built a dedicated production facility in Gdansk, Poland; an area known for its skilled workforce and tradition of heavy engineering.

Commenting on the order, John Anon, Atlas’s CEO said: “This represents the culmination of two years hard work and investment. The A Truck range has enabled us to diversify successfully into completely new market areas and will form the core of a complete range of trucks for the specialised area of military logistics.”

ends

Contact: Jesse Peers, Head of Product Communications
E-Mail: jpeers@atlasindustries.com
Phone: +1 728 5432

Now, the editor has all the information at her fingertips, including the date of issue. Even if space is tight, she can use the first two paragraphs and still get the salient facts across; namely that the company has received an important order, who placed it and its significance in the grand scheme of things. If space allows, she may get around to the CEO's image-polishing quote but its omission devalues the release not one iota.

If you want to provide detailed background information of the kind contained in the first paragraph of the original release, the easiest way to do so is in the form of an Editor's Note attached to the back of the main story. This could take the following form:

EDITOR'S NOTE

Atlas Industries is one of the world's leading manufacturers of cranes and other heavy lifting equipment for the marine and associated industries. The company has representatives in 110 countries and manufacturing centres in Akron, Ohio in the United States, Gdansk, Poland and, through its Indian subsidiary Atlas Industries India Limited, Mumbai in India. It employs more than 10,000 people worldwide. Atlas Industries is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. The CEO, John Anon, is a 45-year old graduate of MIT with an MBA from Harvard Business School. He divides his time between offices in London, New York and Mumbai.

For Corporate News enquiries contact: John Sheehan, Senior Vice President, Communications;
jsheehan@atlasindustries.com

For Product News enquiries contact: Jessie Peers, Head of Product Communications:
jpeers@atlasindustries.com

Telephone:

USA: +1 728 5432

UK: +44 208 6754

All of which brings us neatly onto the next important topic: content and news value.

2 How do we define News?

Saying editors and journalists like a good news story is a bit like announcing that alcoholics fancy a drink every now and again. In fact, it is so obvious it probably qualifies as a cliché. Well, as I always like to say, there is nothing wrong with a cliché as long as it is well-used. In fact, what we are talking about here is not so much a cliché as a truism, but we'll leave other people with more time on their hands to sort out the semantics.

For now, let us just consider what exactly constitutes news. How do we define it?

On a national or international scale, it is fairly easy to work out what is newsworthy.

100 miners trapped a mile underground

Bomb kills hundreds in crowded shopping mall.

Both of these items would probably attract global attention.



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On the other hand **Politician accused of taking bribes** is the sort of headline that is likely to garner headlines purely on a national basis – unless it happens to be the President of the USA.

Lower down the scale, a headline like **Hospital to close** will always lead the news agenda at local papers and TV stations.

Do you see a pattern emerging here?

News, or to be more precise, news value, is determined by the relevance of any information to its target audience. Remember that sentence because, if you do, it will put you way out in front of the field when it comes to generating editorial coverage.

You might be shaking your head at the moment, thinking this is an insult to your intelligence. After all, any idiot could, surely, work this out for himself?

You would think so, wouldn't you? But the truth of the matter is that while most people can be objective when assessing the news value of a general interest story, their critical faculties shut down when they are asked to do the same with any story to do with their company and its products.

That's why a substantial chunk of all unsolicited press material (PR in other words) fails to get published. Not to put too fine a point on it, most PR stories are totally irrelevant to the publications they are sent to. If you don't believe me, make friends with the editor of your favourite trade magazine or even your local newspaper and ask to see all the press releases rejected or simply ignored in an average week.

How do you decide if something is relevant and newsworthy?

Think back to the sentence you were asked to memorise.

News value is determined by the relevance of any information to its target audience.

Consider for a moment, the mythical gizmo that not only saves fuel but also slashes carbon emissions with all the consequent benefits to the environment.

On a scale of 1–10, how relevant at any point during the last ten years would the introduction of that product be to just about every newspaper, magazine, web site and media outlet? Around **11** would be a safe guess.

So, there wouldn't be too many problems engaging the world's attention with that story. It is eminently newsworthy.

Unfortunately, the things that most of the rest of us are called on to promote are of little interest to the great mass of humanity. Products that are fascinating to a specific industry or profession are not, generally, the stuff with which the man in the street fills his day dreams. That is because either:

1. they are highly specialised
2. they are limited in their scope or application or
3. they are **genuinely** mundane and boring

But, for the sake of our company, our profits (and our jobs) we have to generate publicity for them.

This is when the relevancy test becomes key.

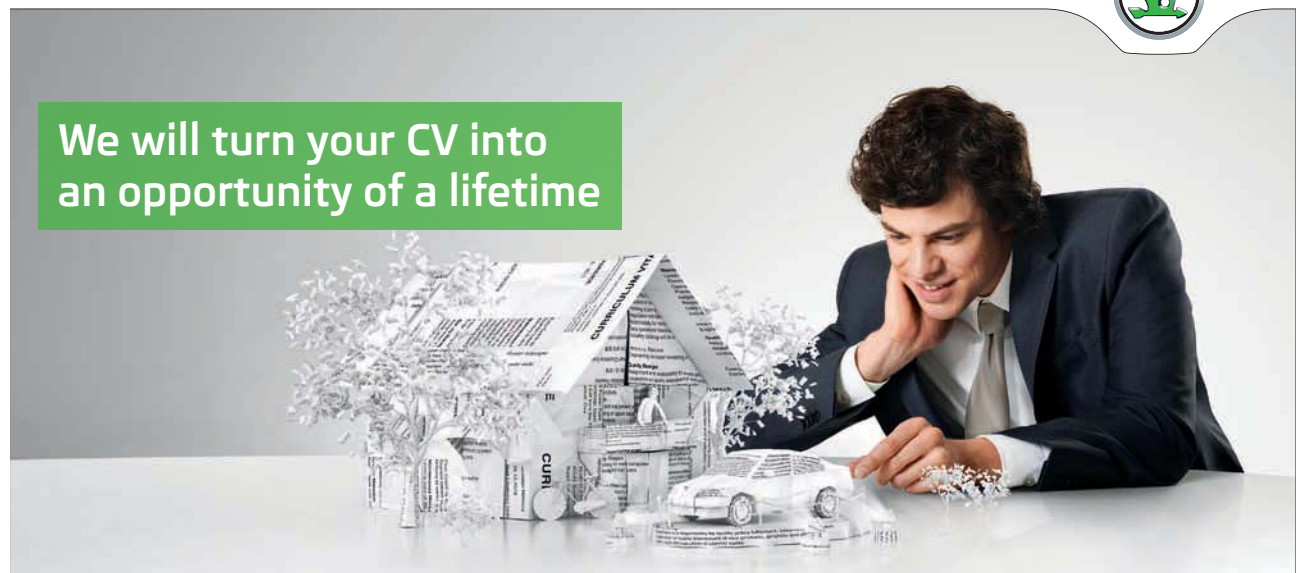
What most managers find really difficult to do – especially those in sales and marketing functions – is be truly objective about their products. Having gone through the agonies of development, testing and proving; given up evenings, weekends, holidays, sex and drink and finally, brought the thing to the point where it can be launched very few of them would be willing to admit that it's just another widget; yet another variation on an age-old theme.

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3 The painful birth of a press release

Although social media have given most news items the life-span of a Mayfly, the gestation period for a new product press release can still be anything from a couple of days to several months, depending on the complexity, importance and performance of the new product. And, of course, how many people are anxious to leave their fingerprints all over the document.

In most cases, the genesis of the release is the culmination of a long and painful sequence of events.



Step 1 normally involves mapping the market, using gap analysis and other tools to see where the proposed new product fits. Out of this, at some point, comes a detailed Marketing Plan which incorporates a Marketing Communications Strategy for the proposed launch. Buried somewhere inside that, like a babushka doll, you will eventually find a PR activity plan and, at the bottom, an outline Press release and a media list featuring a cast of thousands.

Step 2 comes when the Marketing Director looks the release over, eager to ensure that it reflects the blood, sweat and tears the team have spilled in bringing the product to market. He finds the first draft a bit thin and suggests an extra paragraph or two. This is the start of what I call the “fingerprinting” process; the point at which managers and executives smell something happening and want to be associated with any potential success.

Step 3 The improved (well, altered) version then gets sent to the CEO and other members of the board. They read it and can’t believe they spent so much money developing something that sounds so, well, plain ordinary.

Step 4 Can't it be spiced up a bit?

Why doesn't it mention how exciting the product is, the company's renowned commitment to excellence, to delivering customer delight and pushing the technology envelope?: All the sexy stuff that makes it so cutting edge and world class? And, while we are at it, shouldn't there at least be a quote from the CEO stressing our commitment to the environment, Mankind, the elimination of poverty – **and** innovative new products; even if that last part is desperately tautological?

By the time the PR team gets the text back, suggested amendments and additions have bloated a one page press release to three pages; including a potted history of the company up to the day before yesterday.

Now is when you need perspective. Now is the time to take a step backwards and analyse the relevance and newsworthiness of what you are going to send out. Before it leaves the building and ends up on an editor's desk. Before all of the effort that has gone into its production is left dangling on a spike or crumpled at the bottom of a rubbish bin. Ask yourself: **Who cares?**

Firing a shotgun blindly into the air achieves little except to make a lot of noise. Unfortunately, that is the approach most people are tempted to adopt when distributing press material. They work on the basis that, if they fire off their release to enough people, someone somewhere is bound to pick it up.

Why should they?

Editors receive enough interesting material everyday to make anything peripheral easy to ignore. Bombard them with irrelevant dross and they will not only dump it but also feel less than well-disposed towards the person doing the bombarding; namely you.

So, before you compile the distribution list for your release, answer one question very honestly.

Who really cares about your new product? Who is it likely to interest?

Existing customers and potential customers would probably be interested. But, beyond them, who?

If the answer is no-one, then composing your potential distribution list should be a piece of cake. Confine your list to those magazines and other media outlets specific to your markets.

These days, thanks to the Web, it is relatively easy to compile a distribution list. Take your time building a master list that covers your principal markets. Then, add to or tweak the list when you have information to share that moves outside your normal spheres. Time spent in these early stages will represent a good investment, since all that you will have to do is clean and update the list in the future.

If you do not have the time but do have the budget, there are many professional agencies that will not only provide lists but will actually undertake the job of distribution as well as provide copies of press cuttings and other coverage.

An advertisement for Linköping University, Sweden. It features three diverse students (two women and one man) smiling and holding up a large globe. The background is a light blue gradient. In the top right corner, there is an orange speech bubble graphic with the text "#1 in eco-friendly attitude". Below this, the text "STUDY AT LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN" is written in bold blue letters, followed by "RANKED AMONG TOP 50 UNIVERSITIES UNDER 50". Below that, a smaller line of text says "Interested in Computer Science? Kick-start your career with a master's degree from Linköping University, Sweden." At the bottom right, there is a blue button with a white arrow and the text "Click here!". In the bottom right corner, the Linköping University logo and name are displayed.

#1
in eco-friendly
attitude

**STUDY AT
LINKÖPING UNIVERSITY, SWEDEN**
RANKED AMONG TOP 50 UNIVERSITIES UNDER 50

Interested in Computer Science? Kick-start your career with a master's degree from Linköping University, Sweden.

→ **Click here!**

 **Linköping University**



4 Structuring a Press Release – The Six Ws

By now, you should be well aware that, to attract an editor's attention and get published, our press release has to be relevant and newsworthy. You should also know enough to use the Inverted Pyramid to cram all the salient points into the two paragraphs at the top of the story. Finally, everyone involved with the press release has to be convinced of the benefits of objectivity in assessing its newsworthiness and relevance.

So far, so good; now we have a fair chance of attracting some coverage.

But, let's be fair. Not everyone tasked with writing a press release is a PR specialist or writer. Frequently, it's someone like a marketing director, a sales and marketing manager or, even, in a small company, an assistant or someone else who has been given the job. The fact that you have made it thus far probably implies that you fall into one of these categories. Not being a trained writer or journalist, how can you be sure that you have captured all of the information that needs to be included?

The answer is the SIX Ws:

WHO

WHAT

WHERE

WHY

WHEN

HOW

Most journalists usually refer to the FIVE Ws that need to be answered to ensure a story covers all the angles. I prefer to think in terms of SIX Ws; the final one being that at the back end of the question HOW. Why is HOW important? Because, unless you can explain how something was achieved, the story, in most cases, is incomplete. It's not enough simply to say that a building burnt down, when and why this happened and who was involved.

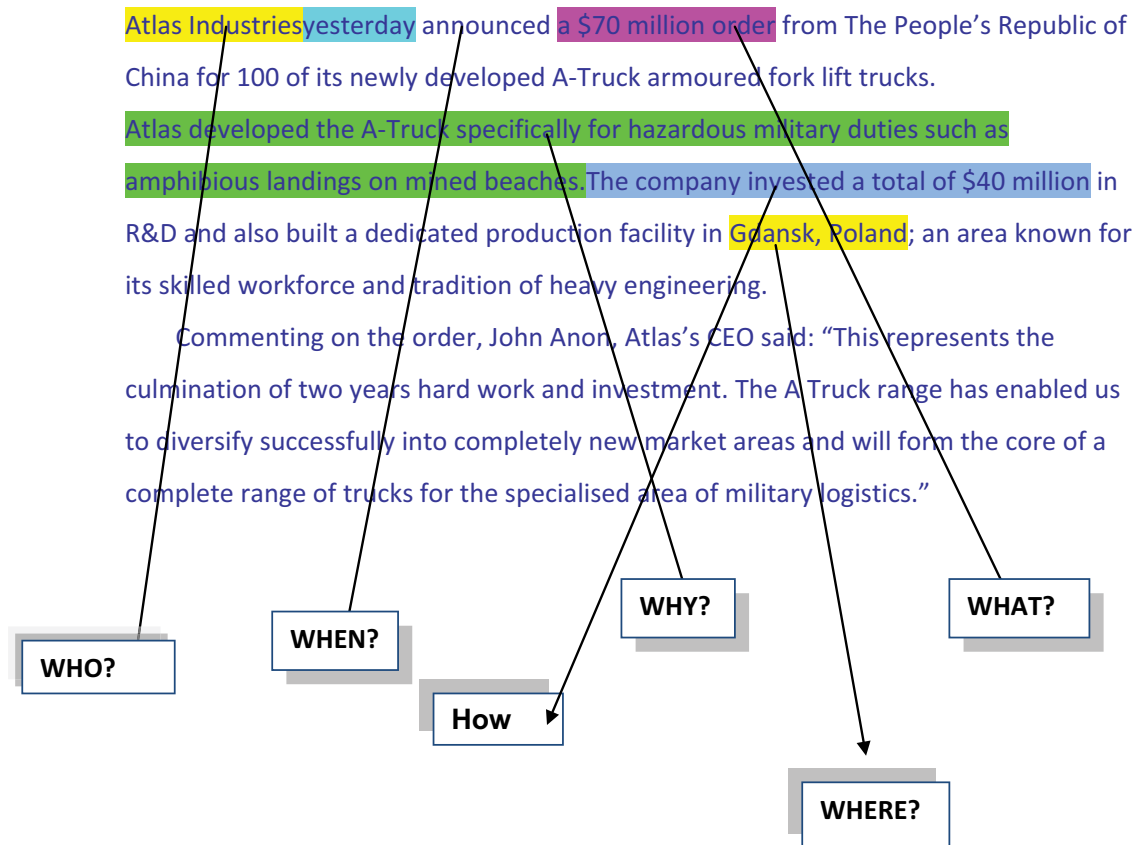
Assuming you can, you should also answer how. This is particularly true if you are writing a Case History (see the example in Chapter 5) where how something is achieved is of the utmost importance.

Simply by asking and answering these six questions, you can double check you have all of the salient facts and figures needed to make a press release interesting. Then the trick is to make sure that all of these essential points appear as high up the Inverted Pyramid as possible to catch the editor's eye.

Take another look at the Order Announcement for our good friends Atlas Industries to see how the SIX Ws concept helps to shape the story:

Date: 21/06/2015.

Atlas fork truck range lifts \$70million order



The answer to:

Who? Is Atlas Industries

What did they do? Won a \$70 million order

When did they do it? Yesterday

Why did they win the order? By creating trucks for specialised military duties.

How did they develop the trucks? By investing \$40 million in R&D

Where? In Gdansk, Poland.

TIP: If you are going to be involved in issuing press material on a regular basis, make up a Post IT note with the six Ws highlighted and stick it to your computer so that you can double check every time you produce a draft.

5 What can I put into a Press Release?

Remember to use the “what is news?” yardstick before you even consider drafting a press release. If your release passes that test, carry on. If it fails, stop right there. Don’t risk upsetting your target journalists and editors by sending them yet another piece of PR puff. They receive enough of those already.

As a rough guide, editors are happy to receive press releases about the following topics:

1. **New product or service announcements** (as long as they are genuinely new and not just updates or rehashes of existing products.)
2. **Order Announcements** of significant or unusual orders
3. **Company News** of important mergers, acquisitions or disposals, significant new appointments and other important personnel changes and company moves or new premises
4. **Exhibition News** detailing Involvement in exhibitions, trade shows and similar events
5. **CASE HISTORIES.**

[See following examples]

All editorial publicity has value. But, some press releases are worth more because of the depth of coverage and interest they generate.

What most technical and business to business editors really, really like is a good case history. Also referred to as a case study and, occasionally and incorrectly, a case story. As the name implies, a case history describes how a particular product or service has performed in a real-life situation by, for example, cutting costs, reducing energy-use, boosting productivity or improving efficiency; or by a combination of all of these.

What makes it “good” is simple.

There isn’t a company on this planet that doesn’t claim that its products are faster, more reliable, more efficient or cost-effective than its competitors’.

The purpose of a case history is to lend substance to those claims; to support them with facts and figures that have been quantified, verified and endorsed by an end-user.

In other words, it's getting someone else to put their money where your mouth is. More than anything else, it is this third-party endorsement that makes the case history so valuable to editors, readers and, by extension, to the company that issued the original case history press release. Here's an example of a case history release, detailing the exploits of our mythical engineers, **Atlas Industries** and their wonderful fork truck range.



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for Engineers and Geoscientists
www.discovermitas.com

Month 16
I was a construction
supervisor in
the North Sea
advising and
helping foremen
solve problems

Real work
International opportunities
Three work placements



News from Atlas Industries

World leaders in controlled movement

18/02/2015

New trucks deliver cost and efficiency savings at Midlands' distribution depot

Four large fork-lifts from Atlas Industries have driven down fuel costs by 35% while increasing productivity 40% at the huge Midlands distribution depot of Supermarket Logistics Limited.

Based at Meriden, Warwickshire, Supermarket Logistics' depot covers almost 40 acres and provides storage facilities for frozen and chilled grocery and green-grocery products destined for stores all over the Midlands and South of England. Over 1000 tonnes of food pass through the facility every 24 hours. Until recently, the depot relied on a mixture of 7 different types of fork lift and pallet trucks to handle this huge volume. Powered predominantly by LPG gas, the trucks were expensive to run and prone to breakdowns, with Downtime sometimes as high as 35% at peak periods.

Anxious to improve fuel efficiency and productivity, Ray Watkins, General Manager at the depot, used a review of the trucks' performance by an external analyst as the catalyst for action. "I had been anxious to improve the performance of our internal lifting and loading facilities for some time, said Ray. " But, other major projects swallowed most of the available Capex. However, armed with the analyst's report, I was able to demonstrate that, with the right choice, we should be able to achieve payback within a reasonable time scale."

.../.

Contact: Jessie Peers, Head of Product Communications
E-Mail: jpeers@atlasindustries.com
Phone: +1 728 5432

News from Atlas Industries

World leaders in controlled movement

New trucks deliver cost and efficiency savings at Midlands' distribution depot

Ray and his internal logistics team reviewed a number of different options before, eventually, settling on Atlas Industries' TZ400 fork lift trucks. Large enough to lift a fully-loaded ISO container, yet nimble enough to turn within its own length, the main attraction of the TZ400, according to Ray Watkins, was the revolutionary hybrid diesel/ battery power system which, according to initial calculations, would deliver fuel savings of at least 25% and provide pay back within 24 months.

In the event, the TZ400s delivered far more than the anticipated energy savings. After 12 months of operation, fuel costs are down by 35% and are set to improve further, following the development of a solar charging system for the batteries. Just as importantly, despite some early teething problems, Downtime has been reduced and the trucks' superior carrying capacity and speed has enabled the depot to increase throughput, without the need for additional equipment or labour.

All in all the fleet of Atlas TZ400s has increased Supermarket Logistics' productivity by 40%. And, according to Ray Watkins, that is probably a very conservative estimate. "We replaced 7 vehicles with a fleet of just 4 so the true productivity figure is probably even more impressive. At our current rate, I expect to have recovered the initial capital cost within the first 15 months of operation."

ends

Contact: Jessie Peers, Head of Product Communications
E-Mail: jpeers@atlasindustries.com
Phone: +1 728 5432

Here is an example of a typical Product Press Release:

News from Atlas Industries

World leaders in controlled movement

22/02/2016

Smart picker-loader provides 75% efficiency gain

The RoboPick from Atlas Industries is said to be the first fully-automated, smart picker-loader specifically for use in high density, order fulfilment warehouses employed by on-line retailers. Atlas claims that, in trials, RoboPick proved to be at least 75% quicker and more efficient than a manually operated picking system of equivalent capacity.

Developed for storage spaces of 1 million square feet or more, RoboPick uses an on-board array of cameras and sensors to familiarise and adapt itself to the configuration of any warehouse. As it is guided around the picking aisles, these on-board instruments record the layout of the warehouse and log the precise location, weight and height of every product it will be required to pick.

Its computers then use GPS technology to devise the quickest and most efficient route for every possible combination of product picks. From that point onward, no further manual guidance or intervention is necessary. Even routine servicing and maintenance are automated. At regular intervals, RoboPick connects remotely to its home computer for updates and to diagnose and fix any minor problems.

Add to this its self servicing feature and low annual maintenance costs and, according to Joan DeVane, Vice President, Engineering Futures at Atlas Industries, “We are confident that, in most cases, RoboPick will recoup its initial capital investment within the first 12–15 months of operation.”

RoboPick will make its official debut at the upcoming Moving & Lifting Expo in Hamburg in June of this year, where it will be the centrepiece of Atlas Industries’ 1000 sq. metre stand.

ends

Contact: Jessie Peers, Head of Product Communications
E-Mail: jpeers@atlasindustries.com
Phone: +1 728 5432

Remember the first press release we examined? That is a perfect example of a straightforward Order Announcement:

News from Atlas Industries

World leaders in controlled movement

21/06/2015

Atlas fork truck range lifts \$70million order

Atlas Industries yesterday announced a \$70 million order from The People's Republic of China for 100 of its newly developed A-Truck armoured fork lift trucks.

Atlas developed the A-Truck specifically for hazardous military duties such as amphibious landings on mined beaches. The company invested a total of \$40 million in R&D and also built a dedicated production facility in Gdansk, Poland; an area known for its skilled workforce and tradition of heavy engineering.

Commenting on the order, John Anon, Atlas's CEO said: "This represents the culmination of two years hard work and investment. The A Truck range has enabled us to diversify successfully into completely new market areas and will form the core of a complete range of trucks for the specialised area of military logistics."

ends

Contact: Jessie Peers, Head of Product Communications
E-Mail: jpeers@atlasindustries.com
Phone: +1 728 5432

Example of a company announcement:

News from Atlas Industries

World leaders in controlled movement

Atlas picks up Buster Trucks

Atlas Industries today announced the acquisition of Buster Trucks, a long-established UK fork lift manufacturer, for £420 million (\$650 million) using a mixture of equity, debt acquisition and cash to fund the deal

UK-based Buster has been manufacturing lifting and handling equipment since the mid 1930s but has concentrated on the agricultural sector for the last three decades. Today, it is the leading supplier of hay baling and lifting equipment to UK farmers.

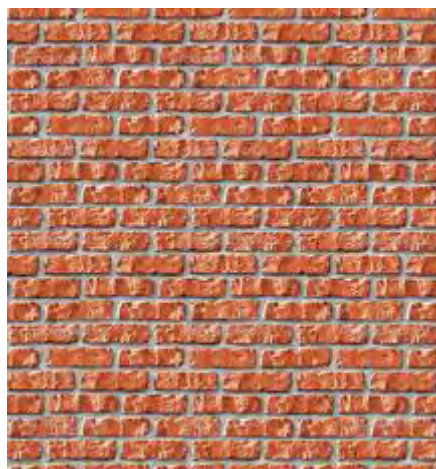
Commenting on the acquisition, John Anon, CEO of Atlas Industries Inc said, “We have been looking to expand outside our traditional markets for some time. The first step in this process was the development of military grade lifting equipment. Now, we are moving into a sector where we are currently under-represented, the agricultural market.

Buster Trucks have sector-leading products in hay and silage handling and I believe the combination of their experience and our expertise in heavier lifting will enable us to develop new products that will bring efficiency and cost benefits to farmers across the globe.”

ends

Contact: John Sheehan, Senior Vice President, Communications
E-Mail: jsheehan@atlasindustries.com

6 Getting the picture?



Placing so much emphasis on words may give the impression that they are all that matter in a press release or article. Without doubt, words provide the structure of the release. They are the bricks and mortar. But, pictures can provide the all-important decoration. The key is to apply the same rules to the choice of picture that we have established for text.

Any images you use must be relevant.



"I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"
Jane, Chinese architect

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Obviously, the picture must look great. But, does it add to or complement what the words are saying? For instance, what sort of picture do we want to accompany our new fork lift truck press release? How do we get it to project the sheer size and brute strength of the new machine?

Setting up the picture is vitally important. A backdrop of snow-covered mountains may sound like a great idea at first blush. After all, with great scenery and huge visual impact what is not to like?

Well, perhaps the fact that the scenery dwarfs the product, making it look small and insignificant when what it is meant to convey is size and power?

Just like creating a successful press release, good product photography demands time, plenty of thought and creative input. The picture can make or break the press release. So, forget the temptation simply to bang off a few pictures with the trusty digital camera, working on the basis that any flaws can be Photoshopped away afterwards. Plan your photo-shoot carefully. Either use natural light or, if indoors, set up proper lighting to make sure the product is lit to best effect. If necessary, get a pro to take the shots. Better to spend some money ensuring a quality image than to risk your press release being ignored because of inferior picture quality.

You will also need to take account of the different demands of the print and web publishers when it comes to print size. Print publications generally require large file formats to ensure high quality reproduction, while web publishers are looking for precisely the opposite; smaller file sizes that load more quickly.


Send the wrong size to the wrong publication and your chances of getting the picture – and your press release – published take an immediate nose dive. If in doubt, surf the publication's website to find out what file sizes they prefer, or, call the editorial offices to check.

7 Journalists' pet hates – and some ways to avoid them

How receptive do you suppose journalists are to calls from PR people and others trying to establish whether or not a press release is likely to be used? On a scale of 1 to 10 the answer is probably somewhere in the region of zero!

The people who make these calls rarely ask straight out: "Are you going to use my press release?" just in case the answer is a straight out NO which leaves them with nothing more to say!

The call is more likely to be along the lines of: "I sent in a press release last week, last month (*delete as appropriate*) and I was wondering if you had received it, had had a chance to look at it, had seen it?" (*delete as appropriate*).



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What most people using this approach fail to appreciate is that:

- ✗ The journalist has already fielded 10 identical calls that day.
- ✗ they rejected the press release on the grounds that it was about a new fork lift truck aimed at the marine industry and their publication is a highly-specialised electronics magazine
- ✗ the press release provided no clear contact information
- ✗ the release was not dated

In other words, your call is more likely to exasperate and annoy them than it is to enhance your current relationship, or help you to build a relationship should this be your first contact.

If targeted correctly, a press release can act as an out-rider for more substantial coverage. For instance, a simple new product announcement might prompt a journalist to request more information which, in turn, could provide an opportunity for you to offer them an exclusive article outlining the development of the product, from initial conception, through the Research & Development stages to its final launch.

Equally, many magazines run features on specific topics or themes throughout the year. The journalist might be putting a feature together that is relevant to your products and realises that the new product talked about in your release fits the theme of the feature perfectly.

Magazines generally publish a list of forthcoming features on their website and in their printed advertising rate cards. If you know, before you make any call, that a publication is planning a relevant feature, offer to write an exclusive piece for theme. Remembering, of course, that what you are offering must have news values and isn't simply an extended product advertorial.

Here is what journalist themselves have to say about people who contact them without preparing properly, plus a few other things that annoy them!. All of these are quotes are lifted from an article published on the website www.journalism.co.uk

“If the PR in question has time, have a quick look at the site they are pitching to, to get an idea of the tone of writing and the type of article that does well. Use this to make the press release a bit more relevant.”
(Rebecca Thomson, reporter, computer Weekly)

“Provide clear relevance to my ‘beat’. I hate it when I am the recipient of scattered buckshot that has no relevance for my publication but I have to plough through a lot of information before I realise this.”
(Gillian McAinsh, La Femme editor, The Herald, South Africa)

“Don't send the release as attachment only. A release under the phrase 'Press release, see attached' and no other details is likely to be deleted with extreme prejudice and the company added to a spam list.”
(Mark Robertson, journalist/producer, BBC Cumbria)

“Send a pretty PDF of the release to your client if you must, but send copy to journalists as plain text. PDFs and other formats often add weird character breaks and slow down the editing process.”
(Carlton Reid, editor of bikebiz.com)

“The headline should clearly contain the value of the press release to the reader. It should not contain the name of the issuing organisation – for example: 'NPR announces new special initiative' – obviously it's NPR, they're sending the press release.
(Matt Forsythe, social media manager, National Film Board of Canada)

“‘Why would people care about this?’ I think PRs should ask themselves that question when writing releases.”
(Rebecca Thomson, reporter, Computer Weekly, UK)

“Press release writers should make it clear why my readers need to know about their product. That is, provide a news angle to their releases.”
(Gillian McAinsh, La Femme editor, The Herald, South Africa)

“Summarise what you are selling early on in the release, preferably using the standard journalism 25 words of **'who, what, where, when, why'**. Releases often lack the time and place of an event, which can make all the difference.”
(Gillian McAinsh, La Femme editor, The Herald, South Africa)

“Once you've written your press release, go away and make a coffee. Come back and notice that the whole point of the release is in the last paragraph. This is because you were thinking to A4 scale and after writing seven paragraphs of waffle you had a space of one-paragraph left in which to squeeze your essential. Now make the last paragraph your introduction and go and have a second well-deserved coffee. It's a cliché, but the sting is often in the tail.”
(Tony Trainor, journalist)

“Fancy graphics or big pictures just fill up my inbox, meaning I might have to delete the release without really reading it. If I want pictures I'll ask for them, and graphics might look nice but they're just annoying to someone who gets hundreds of (uninteresting) emails each day. The release needs to be really easy to scan quickly and graphics can get in the way.”
(Rebecca Thomson, reporter, Computer Weekly, UK)

“But if images are really an essential part of what your release is about: Supply clear, usable photographs.”
(Gillian McAinsh, La Femme editor, The Herald, South Africa)

“Always include two or three pictures in the actual release rather than fob people off to a website where they then have to spend ages finding images that you [the press release writer] should have found for them.”
(Journalism.co.uk blog reader ‘Kate’)

“Don’t send out a release and then go on holiday for two weeks the next day. It’s amazing how often this happens. It’s very annoying if you need to speak to the author urgently.”
(Journalism.co.uk blog reader ‘Kate’)

If you are going to contact a journalist, make sure:

- ✗ you understand exactly what their publication specialises in
- ✗ the release you sent them is directly relevant to the publication
- ✗ the release was clearly dated and contained explicit contact information including the name of the person to contact and the relevant telephone number or numbers and e-mail address.
- ✗ You, as the author of the release, and anyone quoted in the story are available to field questions and requests for further information.

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8 PRINT versus DIGITAL – What price conventional Press Relations in the Twitter age?

According to many self-appointed experts, the advent of social media spells the end not just of conventional Press Relations but of written communication as we know it.

In their book, the future will be written in streams of 140 characters or fewer. Accompanied by the right visuals or a YouTube video, this “content” will be all that is required to convey even the most complex messages.

Could they have a point?

After all, Einstein managed to capture the essence of his Theory of Relativity in the pithy and apparently simple formula: $E=MC^2$. Twittering that to his followers would have been a doddle.

Another fan of brevity, the great playwright, George Bernard Shaw, once apologised for sending a letter, explaining that he “hadn’t had the time to write a postcard.” Being restricted to just 140 characters probably wouldn’t have presented him with any real problems, either.

But, his followers might have rapidly lost the will to live had they been fed the story of Androcles and his Lion in bite-size chunks of 140 characters per instalment.

And, although the bare bones of Einstein’s equation, $E=MC^2$ were enough to grab the initial attention of the scientific community, it would never have been enough on its own to alter completely our understanding of physics and the Universe.

Likewise, Twitter and other instant media might ignite interest in a new product, particularly anything consumer tech. But, they will never provide more than a heads-up: the foreword to a book, never the book itself.

Businesspeople, engineers and scientists need facts and statistical evidence to assess a new product or scientific claim effectively; something far beyond the capability of a short-form communication medium such as Twitter. Nobody in their right mind would try to evaluate – let alone buy – any technology based on a proposition couched in 140 characters – even one backed by a YouTube video or animated film, no matter how exciting or creatively produced.

On the other hand, only a fool – or someone who has been marooned on a desert island for the last twenty years – would deny that electronics have transformed the communications' landscape. The march of social media has been matched by similar explosive growth in on-line Web magazines, blogs and forums. What is really interesting, however, has been the effect of this growth on traditional printed media.

Faced with competition from the Web, the more astute publishing houses decided early on to embrace the new technology; not fight it. In fact, by launching on-line versions, many have given their more successful titles the publishing equivalent of a blood transfusion.

Just keeps on growing

In 2014, according to the UK Professional Publishers Association (PPA), there were more than 5000 Business to Business (B2B) magazines published in the United Kingdom. There were also more than 3000 Consumer magazines. Now, these are actual print publications, many of which also have on-line versions.

In the US and other major markets such as Germany, the picture is similar.

The US boasts over 7000 print magazines of all kinds. In 2012, perhaps surprisingly, more magazines were launched than were closed. In Germany, the magazine market encompasses some 6000 titles. Readership is also very healthy in Germany, with in excess of 78% of adults reading newspapers and magazines on a regular basis.

According to the PPA this figure is even higher in the UK, with a staggering 87% of all adults in the UK claiming to read magazines on a regular basis. Among the GameBoy generation, surprisingly, the figure is even higher. The PPA estimates that 91% of all young adults in the 15–24 age range are regular magazine readers.

Irrespective of whether they are web clones of existing publications or brand new start-ups, all of these outlets have one thing in common; a voracious appetite for material.

Factor in the creation of completely new media outlets – encouraged by the relatively low costs involved in setting up on-line – and the result is that some key industries and sectors are probably better-served in media terms than ever before. One specialist database, CisionPoint, claims listings for over 600,000 print and on-line publications around the globe.

So, despite the predictions of the Twitterati, not only is there still a role for conventional Press Relations in our brave new, electronic age. If anything, the opportunities to generate coverage and interest have never been greater.

9 Writing for the Web and other electronic media

Simply writing a press release and taking care with its spelling, grammar, presentation and distribution is no longer enough.

These days, we have the beast known as SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) to take into consideration. There is little doubt that SEO techniques are evolving rapidly, simply to keep pace with the increasing sophistication of the major search engines.

Despite these advances, one of the fundamentals of successful SEO is the choice and positioning of keywords in your story to optimise its chances of being picked up by the major search engines. Ideally, these keywords should appear as high up in your story as possible to be effective.

Now, does that strike a chord?

Of course it does.



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Because, as we all are now well aware, that is precisely what the **Inverted Pyramid** forces all aspiring writers to do. The important thing to remember is that the Web is now a fairly mature communications tool. In fact, it has been around so long that much of the “wow” factor has gone out of it. For the digital generation, it is just another way to research, receive and exchange information. They are not necessarily impressed or amazed by tricky graphics and flashy presentations. If they want bells and whistles, they have enough gadgets indoors and in their pockets to provide them at the touch of a button.

For those people, the Web is their principal information tool. What they want from it is the same as they would expect from a print magazine or book; well-researched, well-written articles that are easy to read, informative and compelling.

This signals, to some extent, the end of “content”, a label created by some sharp marketing types to try to differentiate the “special” words they craft from the run-of-the-mill copy produced by ordinary writers and agencies.

It is no longer enough simply to grind out copy whose sole objective is to attract the attention of the algorithms used by the major search engines. Now, it is much more important to write material that is enjoyable, covers the subject in depth and offers links to other sources for validation and enhancement.

Originality is also important. Most search engines reward sites that make the effort to share relevant content with their readers.

The fresher your material, the more original it is, the better visibility you will gain in search results. The more people who find your content helpful or entertaining, the more they are likely to share it with like-minded friends and colleagues. That is why, these days, quality trumps quantity. So, the first rule is to make it useful, enjoyable and engaging.

This is not a licence for self-indulgence, however. If you can make a point in 300 words, don't be tempted to write more simply to show off your creativity, command of the language or detailed understanding of the subject matter. Just like a bikini, your story should be brief enough to excite interest but cover all the essential points. So, keep your stories brief and to the point. Apparently, approximately 250 words per page is what keeps most search engines happy. That is sufficient words for the engines to analyse and be satisfied with the quality and, shareability of your copy.

Other studies indicate that it is also a comfortable number for the reader to absorb. Pages that bounce with animations, images and videos don't provide the same sense of involvement. Words draw them into the story more readily.

All of the most salient points should be made as high up the story as possible. Even before you start writing a release or article, you should have a clear idea which keywords to use. These should be used to compose your title, in your meta-tags and within the body of your story. A note of caution, though; don't over use them. Quite apart from the fact that multiple use could make your prose clunky, most readers are now savvy enough to spot what you are up to. If they feel that you are compromising the flow or content of your story simply to please the search engines – rather than them! – they may simply bail out, never to return.

As previously mentioned, it is important to use images that are directly relevant. Not only do they make your article more interesting, but you're able to employ relevant keywords to name your image files or graphics. Be sure to optimize the size of the image to reduce the time it takes to load. Make the image as small as possible without sacrificing quality and it will enhance your SEO.

Proof read your work. Check your spelling and grammar. If you are relying on keywords to help your SEO and you spell those words incorrectly or confuse one spelling with another it negates all the hard work that has gone into your work up to that point.

Many readers still react badly to poor spelling or grammar. They are left with an impression of slovenliness that reflects badly on the organisation releasing the information. See Chapter 10 for some tips on how to reduce grammatical and spelling errors.

The Inverted Pyramid is still in great shape

There are obvious differences between the print media and on-line publications. But, it is important not to get too carried away. The truth is there as many common areas as there are differences.

The main distinction is one that Einstein would have appreciated; that of time and space. A printed magazine is fixed in time, its currency limited. It is also constrained by its physical size and volume. Once printed, nothing can be done to extend or update its contents.

The on-line version of the same publication is much more fluid. It offers opportunities to include animations, presentations and links to related themes or subject matter on other sites. Web readers are also able to interact both with the site and each other as a story develops, in real-time, extending its life and currency.

That apart, and here is the crucial point, there are very few differences in the language and style of the stories. On-line;

- Paragraphs and sentences should be shorter.
- Bullet points should be used more frequently for emphasis.
- Links to related topics inserted at regular intervals.

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However, there should be no attempt to dumb down the content to satisfy a Web audience. This is particularly true of trade and technical magazines where the major stories of both print and web versions will be the same for much of the time.

Consequently, a succinct, accurate and well-written Press Release is as relevant to electronic media as it has always been to the print Press. Similarly, by-lined articles, opinion pieces, case histories and intelligently researched and presented white papers remain just as essential for stimulating, informing, and influencing decision makers whose buying choices are prompted by a defined need rather than fashion or peer-pressure.

And here is where the Inverted Pyramid demonstrates its relevance. Bury the main news in the second or third paragraph of an on-line story and there is every chance that a significant percentage of potential readers will miss it. There are far too many other eye-catching stories and links to distract them. Thanks to the discipline it imposes, the Inverted Pyramid is as useful in creating a successful web story as it is in the conventional, printed version, because it forces the relevant material into the earliest paragraphs.

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10 LANGUAGE: Confusion reins: or should that be reigns?

The more we develop new forms of shorthand for texts and on Twitter, the more liberties we take with the English language.

Lazy spelling, slapdash grammar and simplistic acronyms and abbreviations are already creeping into everyday use; often in the most unlikely contexts. Examiners increasingly have to deal with them in examination papers while stories about businesses having to train new employees in standard English usage are becoming routine.

That is why so many people depend on some form of SpellChecker to eliminate mistakes from their copy. But, and it is a big but, using a SpellChecker is a bit like relying on a calculator when you are doing complex maths: When you are trying to make sense of your last quarter's expenses, for instance.

Anyone who can add up fairly well, should be able to determine whether or not a calculation makes sense, before ploughing on to the next stage of the sum. But what if their basic mental arithmetic skills weren't up to the task? They would have to take the calculation at face value and trust what they saw on the screen. Without that safety net, it is much easier for mistakes to occur. In other words, they are at the mercy of the calculator which turns from a benefit into a handicap.

The same is true of using a SpellChecker. True, it can highlight poor spelling and prevent horrendous mistakes– but only if the user already has a reasonable understanding of written English. For anybody whose English is limited, it can make a bad situation worse.

Even though many spellcheckers are context-sensitive, they still are not 100% fool-proof. Often, as long as a word is spelt correctly, it will not be highlighted for correction.

That is why I have used the example of *confusion reins* in the heading. It's now quite normal to see words used incorrectly or spelt incorrectly every day. In fact it is almost as normal as the misuse of apostrophes which are frequently abused or simply ignored.

Any writer who relies solely on a Spell Checker to proof their material is asking for trouble. And, if it is your job to publicise your organisation through Press Releases or articles, it could be you doing the asking.

The moral?

Check the SpellChecker. Or, better still, have someone with a good command of English proof-read your words before you finally commit anything to the public domain.

Here is a well-known spoof that illustrates the point perfectly. I have seen this attributed to many different authors but, personally, I believe credit for its creation belongs to the most prolific writer in the English language, Anon.

Owed two a Spell checker

I have a spelling checquer
It came with my pea sea
It plane lee marques four my revue miss steaks aye can knot sea
Eye ran this poem threw it
Your sure real glad two no
It's vary polished in it's weigh my checker tolled me sew
A checker is a bless sing
It freeze yew lodes of thyme
It helps me awl stiles two reed and aides me when aye rime
to rite with care is quite a feet
Of witch won should be proud
And wee mussed dew the best wee can sew flaws are knot aloud
And now bee cause my spelling
is checked with such grate flare
Their areknow faults with in my site of nun eye am a wear
Each frays come posed up on my screen
Eye trussed to be a joule
The checker poured o'er every wordtwo cheque sum spelling rule
That's why aye brake in two averse
By righting watts too pleas
Sow now ewe sea why aye dew prayssuch soft wear for pea seas

Here is how it looks spelled correctly:

Ode to a SpellChecker

I have a spelling checker
It came with my PC
It plainly marks for my review mistakes I cannot see
I ran this poem through it
You're sure real glad to know
It's very polished in its way, my checker told me so
A checker is a blessing
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It frees you loads of time
It helps me all styles to read and aids me when I rhyme
To write with care is quite a feat
Of which one should be proud
And we must do the best we can so flaws are not allowed
And now because my spelling
Is checked with such great flair
There are no faults within my sight. Of none I am aware
Each phrase composed upon my screen
I trust to be a joule
The checker pored over every word to check some spelling rule
That's why I break into a verse
By writing what's to please
So, now you see why I do praise such software for PCs

Should you be drawn to one of the many Grammar Checkers available on the Web, the same Health Warning applies. If you have ever used a saw, drill or any other tool, you'll be well aware that its effectiveness depends on the person wielding it. The same applies to Spell and Grammar Checkers. Use them wisely, but don't depend on their being 100% correct 100% of the time. Nothing ever is. The following list of commonly misspelt, misunderstood, mixed-up and misused words, illustrates the point perfectly.



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Word 1 Meaning	Word 2 Meaning
Accept: to agree to receive or do	Except: not including, excluding
Adverse: unfavourable, harmful	Averse: strongly disliking; opposed
Advice: recommendations about what to do	Advise: to recommend something or a course of action
Affect: to change or make a difference to	Effect: a result; to bring about a result
All together: all in one place, in concerted action	Altogether: completely; on the whole
Aloud: out loud	Allowed: permitted,
Alter: to change or adapt	Altar: Religious table or platform
Allusion: Making reference to	Illusion: Not real, a false vision
Amoral: without concern for right or wrong or accepted behaviour	Immoral: not adhering to accepted moral standards
Anal: relating to the anus	Annul: to cancel or finish a contract, marriage
Annual: Every year	Annul: see above
Appraise: to assess or place a valuation on something	Apprise: to inform someone about something
Assent: agreement with or approval of	Ascent: going or climbing up
Aural: concerned with the ears or hearing	Oral: concerned with the mouth or speaking
Ball: round object e.g. football	Bawl: to cry or shout loudly
Balmy: warm, pleasant weather	Barmy: slang meaning crazy, unhinged
Bare: naked, without cover	Bear: withstand, carry or endure <i>also animal as in Grizzly bear</i>
Bazaar: a Middle Eastern market	Bizarre: odd, outlandish,
Birth: emergence of baby from the womb	Berth: sleeping place on a ship or train
Below: underneath	Bellow: to shout or cry very loudly
Blue: the colour	Blew: expelled air
Boll: a ball of cotton	Bowl: circular dish or receptacle
Bore: someone tedious; the internal diameter of a tube or gun; to drill a hole	Boar: A male pig Also see Boor: someone loutish or uncouth
Borne: carried or endured	Born: having started life
Border: The dividing line between countries and provinces	Boarder: someone who stays as a paying guest
Bow: to bend the head, also front of boat or ship and weapon for shooting arrows	Bough: limb or branch of a tree

Brake: to stop a vehicle, the device used to stop a vehicle	Break: to damage or snap something
Breech: the loading area of a gun	Breach: a break or gap in a wall, to make a gap.
Bread: made from dough or flour	Bred: born and raised
Canvass: seek opinion or support	Canvas: strong material used for tents etc.
Censor: to cut or edit material from films, books etc. Also the person who does so.	Censure: to find fault with someone, criticise strongly
Cent: unit of currency; 100 th of a dollar	Scent: smell or perfume
Collision: A smash between two things	Collusion: Conspiracy or joint involvement
Cereal: grain crops, breakfast food	Serial: a continuing story, part of a series
Cord: a length of string or twine	Chord: musical sound made by combining several notes
Course: the route of a river, race or track, study subject, part of a meal	Coarse: rough, unrefined
Complaisant: eager and ready to please	Complacent: smug and self-satisfied
Compliment: praise	Complement: addition that improves or enhances
Coop: A bird house	Coup: assumption of power, generally by military means
Counsel: to advise, the advice or the adviser, e.g. Legal Counsel	Council: an official body that manages and advises
Cue: a prompt (theatre) or a stick used in snooker or pool	Queue: a line of people or vehicles
Curb: to restrict, rein in	Kerb: the edge of the pavement
Current: contemporary, up to date: also flow of water or electricity	Currant: dried grape used in cookery
Deaf: unable to hear	Death: the end of life
Dear: expensive; endearment	Deer: animal
Diffuse: spread widely	Defuse: disarm, as in bomb or reduce tension in a situation
Desert: arid, dry area (e.g. Sahara); also to abandon someone or something	Dessert: Sweet course at end of meal
Discreet: careful, private,	Discrete: separate and distinct
Disinterested: neutral and impartial	Uninterested: not interested
Doe: a female deer	Dough: used to make bread
Drought: prolonged absence of rainfall	Draught: current of air

Draught: current of air	Draft: initial attempt at story or article, also technical drawing
Draw: a tie or equal score in sport, also to sketch; pull out	Drawer: sliding storage space normally in a desk or chest
Duel: a fight between two people	Dual: consisting of two parts
Dye: to add colour to; e.g a fabric	Die: expire, pass away
Edit: to read and correct e.g. book	Edict: a command
Emit: give off sound or odour	Omit: leave out, fail to include
Energetic: full of energy	Ennervated: Lifeless, without energy
Elicit: draw out a response	Illicit: illegal, against the law
Endanger: to place at risk or in peril	In danger: to be in peril
Ensure: make certain something happens	Insure: to compensate for death injury or other catastrophe
Envelop: to cover something completely	Envelope: container for mail
Exacerbate: make worse, hasten deterioration	Exasperate: to annoy or confound
Exercise: physical activity, practise	Exorcise: drive out a ghost or spirit



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BI Norwegian Business School is one of Europe's largest business schools welcoming more than 20,000 students. Our programmes provide a stimulating and multi-cultural learning environment with an international outlook ultimately providing students with professional skills to meet the increasing needs of businesses.

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Fare: fee for travel	Fair: equitable, just
Find: to come across, discover	Fined: to have a charge imposed normally as punishment
Flaunt: To ostentatiously display wealth or other attributes	Flout: to consciously ignore or break rules
Flare: Bright, sudden explosion of light	Flair: creative talent
Flee: to run or escape	Flea: small parasite that lives on animals
Flex: length of wire; tighten and relax muscles	Flecks: tiny spots of dust, dirt etc
Flounder: move clumsily, stumble	Founder: fail, struggle physically
Flour: ground wheat or corn	Flower: part of plant
Foul: unpleasant, contaminated, dirty	Fowl: collective noun for chickens, ducks etc.
Four: the number between three and five	Fore: ahead, in front
Forward: onward, ahead	Foreword: Introduction in a book
Freeze: turn to ice	Frieze: decorative border
Friar: a kind of monk	Fryer: someone who cooks by frying
Gilt: decorative gold finish	Guilt: not innocence,
Grisly: revolting, unsightly, gruesome	Grizzly: a large bear
Grate: part of a fireplace for burning in	Great: large, superior
Garner: to accumulate, gather	Garnish: add sauce, ingredients
Home: Where you live	Hone: to sharpen, e.g. knife; to refine a skill or talent
Imply: to suggest something indirectly	Infer: to draw a conclusion from
Laps: circuits of a course	Lapse: fall from grace, fail to maintain discipline or commitment
Liable: responsible for	Libel: defamation of character
Liar: someone who tells untruths	Lyre: a stringed musical instrument
Leak: to let water or other fluids escape	Leek: a vegetable
Loath: be unwilling to	Loathe: hate something or someone
Lose: mislay, fail to win a game	Loose: not tight, ill-fitting
Male: masculine gender	Mail: post or message delivery service
Made: manufactured, constructed	Maid: young female; servant

Mall: large space for gathering, shopping	Maul: to wrestle, grapple
Maise: a type of corn	Maze: a puzzle or mystery
Meretricious: flashy , without merit	Meritorious: deserving of praise
Metre: a unit of measurement	Meter: machine for recording data
Mite: small portion, tiny young baby	Might: possibly could
Mist: light fog or cloud	Missed: failed to hit target
Mood: emotion, feeling	Mewed: noise cat made
Moor: expanse of heath land	More: extra; in addition
Night: dark hours of the day	Knight: someone who has been ennobled
Not: negative as in <i>is not</i>	Knot: formed by tying two or more threads together
Order: command	Ordure: filth, excrement
Pail: bucket, container	Pale: lacking colour
Palette: board for mixing colours, paints	Palate: roof of the mouth
Peal: collective noun for bells, sound of bells	Peel: to remove skin from fruit etc
Peace: not war, calm, without strife	Piece: portion, segment
Pedal: foot-operated lever or rest	Peddle: to sell or hawk goods
Place: location, position	Plaice: a species of fish
Plane: surface or level, tool for smoothing and levelling	Plain: undecorated, not pretty; large expanse of level ground
Prince: royal male	Prints: produces words or images mechanically
Pole: a rod or stick	Poll: canvass opinion
Pore: to read or scan intently; tiny opening	Pour: to tip liquid out of a container
Practice: business of a doctor, lawyer and similar	Practise: verb meaning to repeat regularly to improve performance
Prescribe: medicine or course of treatment	Proscribe: forbid something
Principal: first or major, head of a school or college	Principle: rule or belief
Rain: precipitation	Rein: lead for controlling horse
Rein: lead for controlling horse	Reign: rule a country
Rite: a ceremony or religious practice, transition	Right: opposite of wrong; an entitlement

Rite: as above	Write: create words and sentences
Rout: defeat, put to flight	Route: way to a particular place or location
Sceptic: someone who doubts	Septic: infected with bacteria
Secret: hidden, not generally known	Secrete: to hide; to release fluids
Seem: appear as	Seam: join in fabric, layer of coal
Sight: the ability to see	Site: location or place
Sole: only, bottom of shoe	Soul: human spirit
Source: origin of something	Sauce: gravy or similar
Specific: precise, discrete	Pacific: peaceful, also world's largest ocean
Stationary: immobile, not moving, stopped	Stationery: writing materials, pens etc.
Storey: a level within a building	Story: tale or account
There: indication of place or location other than here	Their: possessive third person plural, belonging to them
Tied: secured with rope	Tide: ebb and flow of the sea
Tier: a layer	Tear: rend or split
Tortuous: twisting and turning	Torturous: full of pain and misery
Turn: manoeuvre left or right	Tern: a bird
Two: number between one and three	Too: as well
Too: see above	To: preposition or adverb depending on use, also forms infinitive
Tyre: covering for wheel	Tire: wear down, exhaust
Vale: a small valley	Veil: cloth for covering features
Vane: indicator of wind direction	Vain: self-loving, haughty, proud
Vein: vessel for conducting blood	Vain & Vane: as above
Ware: goods or other stuff	Wear: dress in clothes
Weak: not strong, feeble	Week: seven days
Were: past tense of is, are	Where: location, place, question
Yore: the past, former times	Your: belonging to you

11 Summing Up

Never set out to write a press release – or any other communication – without first establishing:

- ✎ who the target audience is
- ✎ what exactly you want to tell them
- ✎ whether they will be interested in what you have to say
- ✎ what they won't want or need to hear

Use the SIX Ws and the Upside Down Pyramid to ensure that you include all the most important information as high up the story as possible. This applies equally whether you are writing with a print audience in mind or for the Web. By including key information up front you give the reader the chance to assess the relevance of your piece for themselves. They can then choose to read on or move off; something in this time poor world that they will undoubtedly appreciate.

Write to inform, not to satisfy the search engines. Quality copy is more important than an emphasis on keywords. Equally, remember the Bikini rule; copy should be brief enough to create interest but substantial enough to cover all the essential points.

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Watch the length

Particularly when writing for a Web audience, use bullet points for emphasis and to help key facts stand out. Keep page content short and punchy. Split topics or themes into separate, easily digestible pages to give the reader the option of reading all or part of a piece..

Remember, words provide the structure of a story, pictures the adornment. But, it's frequently the adornment that catches the eye first. So, ensure all of your visual material is the best possible quality in terms of content and presentation.

Pictures, graphs and other visuals lend interest and help get the message across more effectively.

When dealing with journalists always:

- ❖ be fully-prepared
- ❖ know the publication, understand its style and its readership
- ❖ be certain that your release is directly relevant to the publication
- ❖ ensure your release was dated and contained clear contact information
- ❖ anyone quoted in the release is available for further questions or comment.

Remember, this book was never intended to turn you into a prize-winning author or journalist. Stick to the rules it sets out, however, and you should see the uptake of your company's press releases improve dramatically. With any luck there will also be more Upside than Down in your personal career Pyramid in the future.

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