

Guidelines on Creating A Press Kit

Kinds of Press Kits

It used to be that press kits were cut and dry, but new technologies enable us exciting new ways to present our information. Here are a few different types of press kits.

Traditional – The traditional press kit is a collection of articles and information packaged in a presentation folder and sent via mail.

Online – Get it on the net! If you have a web site, I encourage you to put together an online press kit. This keeps visitors abreast of your company's latest news and events and accomplishments. Online press kits have the added advantage of being able to include audio and video clips.

Electronic File – Want to be on the cutting edge? Since the advent of ebooks, now you can create your press kit as a PDF file that you put on disk and mail out.

Anatomy of a Press Kit

Ready to put your press kit together? Remember to be selective: less is more. Don't put every article since the beginning of time. This will frustrate your reader. Only put the most recent and most pertinent to your target audience. Busy editors don't have the time or desire to sort through a 1-inch stack of articles, and they probably WON'T! (It may get "filed") Instead focus on the product or service you want to highlight. Here are some ideas about what to include in it.

- **Pitch Letter**: The pitch letter is the first thing your reader will see. It's important to create a good first impression, or you will lose the reader's interest. Tell them up front why they should care about what you are telling them. List the items enclosed. Create a call to action. Let them know you are available for interview or if they have questions how they can reach you. Use bold to highlight key points. Remember to include a PS! Although this is the last item in a letter, this is often the FIRST thing that is read.
- **Two Business Cards**: They can keep one copy and pass the other to a friend or associate.
- **Recent Articles**: Keep an ongoing file of your press coverage. This can include print media and ezines that reprint your articles. An easy way to keep a press file is to hire a clipping service. But you can search for articles yourself by doing a link check in the search engines:

Type Link:<http://www.yourdomain.com> in the search box. You can also search in Google or Dogpile by article title, author, and company name.

Still another idea is to search in media portals such as Mag Portal (<http://www.magportal.com>). This searches through all recent media and shows articles related to a certain subject area, author name or other criteria.

- **Press Releases**: Include only the press releases that are relatively recent (e.g., not five years old) and that are relevant to each specific audience.

- **Audio and Video Files:** Audio and video files of radio/television interviews, speeches, and performances. You can include a write up of the interview, an audio tape, or even a link to where readers could listen to it online.
- **List of Testimonials:** Limit to one sheet.
- **Sample News Story:** Frequently they will print this verbatim. Editors see ready-to-print-stories as an easy way to fill up space with little effort on their part.
- **Sample or Actual Product/Service/Performance Review:** This will let editors see what others are saying about you or help the editor to write his own review.
- **Other Items:**
 - Product Sell Sheet/Company Brochure
 - Investor News
 - Community Involvement Projects
 - Recent Awards
 - List of Events/Apearances
 - Photos (If appropriate)
 - Bio Sheets of Key Management (If appropriate)
 - List of FAQs (This helps the editor to think of questions to ask you in an interview or include in his/her article).

Create a Killer Package That Gets Noticed

Busy editors sort through piles of press kits each day. Packaging is the key to getting your press kit noticed! Start off by placing your kit in an envelope they can't miss. Try mailing your press kit in a colorful envelope or one of an unusual size. Send it Fed-Ex or hand deliver it to add a sense of importance. Try writing a teaser question on the outside of the envelope with the answer inside. For another eye opener, try adding a red sticker that says, "important materials enclosed" to spark interest. Package your materials in a nice presentation folder for a professional polished look. Take time to stack your materials nicely inside.

Don't Forget to Follow Up

It's crucial to follow up to make sure they got your press kit. Follow up calls provide the perfect opportunity for editors to ask questions, or schedule an interview. Take this opportunity to network and get to know the editors. By developing a relationship with important members of the media, you will build recognition and rapport and improve their chances of covering you. If you DO get coverage, be sure to send a handwritten thank you note.

Get a Move On and Do It

A press kit is an important part of your public relations effort. Don't wait till you NEED one to scramble and put one together. Savvy press kits can be a powerful PR tool to improve your media relations, create media coverage, and act as a sales tool to potential clients.

