



Writing the Perfect Press Release

A press release is the standard and most commonly used form of written communication when dealing with the media. A release follows a structured format which allows you to convey the necessary details about your news story in a style which is easily recognised by journalists. Most journalists receive many, many press releases every day so it's really important to make yours stand out and to make the information contained within it easily consumed; anything too fussy or over-complicated is only likely to find its way into the recycling bin! Listed below are some tips for writing your press release and a sample release can be found on the last page of this document.

Tips

1. All press releases must start with 'For immediate release: day/date/month/year'.
2. The headline should be short and informative. When a journalist is trawling through the numerous press releases they receive, a catchy headline will grab their attention.
3. The five 'W's and the 'H' - Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? This is the crux of all news. Any good news story provides answers to each of these questions.
4. Remember to mention your show is taking part in the London Alternative Fringe Festival - this increases the chances that your show will be mentioned in any article about the Fringe in general.
5. The first paragraph must be short and summarise the whole story. It must contain the 'five W's and the H' in a nutshell. You can provide further details later on. A journalist will glance at this one paragraph and make a decision on this as to whether they will read on making it the most important part of your release.
6. The next two to three paragraphs should repeat the story, explaining in more detail.
7. Try to keep press releases to one side of A4 paper. If it is longer than one page, use two separate numbered pages and write 'More follows...' at the bottom of page one.
8. Quote people: Include a short lively quote. Do not use "I" and "me" when you are quoting someone.

9. End your release with any background information you think is relevant, clearly labeled as **Note to editors**. This should include the information about the Fringe included in the sample below.
10. Keep sentences and paragraphs short and simple. Don't use flowery language and fancy words.
11. Good photos accompanying a press release can make all the difference to the impact of the story
12. Make sure that your release is being sent to the right person, at the right address, at the right time. Give the publication a call to find out who it would be best to send it to and their preferred format - most publications prefer to receive press releases in the body of an email, rather than as an attachment.

Please remember...

Just because you contact a journalist with a possible story, or supply an interview and/or images, they are in no way obliged to use it. If a journalist turns your story down or an article is dropped at the last minute, do not be disheartened or take it personally. Most newspapers need to be scrupulous about what they run as there is not always room for everything. Often they also need to amend pages at the last minute to make room for important breaking news stories.

Please note that the London Alternative Fringe Festival media relations team can not write or issue your press releases, but they can offer practical help and advice should you need it. Contact them if you need:

- Someone to check over a press release
- LAFF logos and boilerplates
- Help with a difficult media enquiry
- Help tracking down a media contact (within reason; we will not compile entire lists for you!)

The London Alternative Fringe Festival media relations team can be reached at press@alternativefringe.com



SAMPLE RELEASE

London Alternative Fringe Festival

1-31 August 2010

www.alternativefringe.com

News release

For immediate release: 18 May 2010

Media Relations: [name]

Tel: [tel] Email: [email address]

New London festival to showcase the Capital's vibrant alternative performance and nightlife culture

Audiences in London this August will be spoiled for choice as the Capital's arts scene is set to expand with the addition of the London Alternative Fringe Festival. The Festival will be a month-long celebration of alternative performance and nightlife including cabaret, burlesque, circus and live art. It will take place at venues across the Capital from 1 to 31 August.

The London Alternative Fringe Festival will join the vibrant mix of Fringe festivals in London this August to offer a focus on alternative performance and experimental theatre. It will offer audiences a truly eclectic and varied experience running alongside existing festivals, such the Camden Fringe Festival and London Festival Fringe, to create a rich festival experience throughout the month.

Artists and performers are encouraged to sign up to the newsletter at www.alternativefringe.com to receive regular updates and Festival news.

Alexander Parsonage, Director, London Alternative Fringe Festival, says, "The Festival is open to anyone who wishes to take part and now is the perfect time to submit your show ideas. We have some fantastic venues on board already and plan to re-launch the website in June 2010 giving performers access to whole host of promotional tools. We plan to make the London Alternative Fringe Festival a staple of London's summer calendar, complementing the Capital's existing events program."

- END -

Notes to editor

-/more follows

- The London Alternative Fringe Festival is a month-long celebration of all things cabaret, burlesque, vaudeville, circus, street performance, live art and experimental theatre
- The festival consists of over 50 different events in over 30 different venues.
- It runs from 1 to 31 August at venues throughout central London
- The Festival is free to anyone who wishes put on performance, giving artists a platform to showcase their work to new audiences
- For more information, visit www.alternativefringe.com