

# Promoting Your Group with Effective PR

Toot your own horn and become “known” to the campus community through group promotion. This will help your group become more effective and engaged in the life of your campus!

## Writing a Press Release

In order to grab attention for an event or initiative that your group is involved in, consider writing up a press release. Here are some tricks of the journalistic trade to get you started:

### Tip #1: Use the Inverted Pyramid Structure

The inverted pyramid structure means that you should put the most important or enticing information in the first few sentences of your press release, and then unfold the rest in descending order of importance. Don't bury your "best" stuff near the bottom.

For example, if you are announcing a contest with a large monetary prize for the winner, put that up front:

*"A \$500 bookstore gift certificate will go to the winner of this year's Creativity Challenge – the largest prize offered to date for the annual competition – which is open to all students."*

Many people tend to put less important information in the first sentence of a release. For example:

*"Joe Smith, President of the XYZ Club, today announced that this year's Creativity Challenge, open to all students, includes a \$500 bookstore gift certificate for the first-place winner."*

What's more important, your name, your title, and the organization name, or the fact that you're offering an enticing prize?

### Tip #2: Include the 5 Ws

Begin the release with a *concise* summary of **who**, **what**, **when**, and **where**. The

## Take 5

Five total paragraphs is a good maximum for each release. You're trying to get a fast-scanning editor's attention and if he or she thinks they have to slog through a lengthy description, they won't bother. If they have questions, they'll call you.

second paragraph should detail more about the what and **why**.

### Tip #3: Keep it Simple

Use plenty of action verbs and active voice. Keep the release simple and easy to understand. Use short sentences and paragraphs. Avoid negatives in order to keep the piece concise. For example ...

Passive: "It was announced by him that..."

Active: "He announced"

Passive (negative) "Workers decided not to accept the offer."

Active: "Workers rejected the offer."

### Tip #4: Include Formatting Items

Be sure to include: release date, contact information (your name/ position, your phone and email), headline, dateline, and the proper ending (at very bottom and center of the page, include -30- or ##).

*Adapted from a piece written by Lisa J. Hudson for Federal News Services, Inc., a division of PaperClip Communications*

## What's Happening?

Make it a practice to send out press releases and/or email announcements for various happenings within your group, such as:

- ▲ events that are open to the community
- ▲ the accomplishments of individual members
- ▲ group recognition from campus, community, or national sources
- ▲ community service initiatives
- ▲ recruitment drives, open meetings, and ways to get involved
- ▲ what your group offers to the campus community (who we are and how we can help you)

You can send these notices to: campus listserves, the school paper, the local newspaper, the office of public relations/ community relations, and the online campus calendar.