

How (and When) to Write a Press Release for Your Dental Practice

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Earned media, particularly mentions in the news, is probably the best brand exposure that your dental practice can get. Research has shown that earned media has a much greater influence on lead conversion than other brand exposure, potentially leading to nearly ten times as many new sales as blog posts.

A downside to earned media is that someone else needs to publish it, ideally a respected news outlet. Getting your dental practice's name in the news is easier said than done, hence, the popularity of press releases. However, if you don't follow a few simple rules, your dental news release will go unopened, unpublished, and possibly straight to the spam folder. Here's what you need to know.

Number one rule: Have a newsworthy topic

You can create videos, blog posts and other content on a regular schedule. In fact, it is highly recommended that you do so. However, press releases are unlike traditional content marketing. You don't create them on a schedule or send a release just because it has been too long.

Press releases are reserved for actual news. When you are unsure whether something qualifies, ask yourself this: if it was happening at someone else's business, would you expect to find it mentioned in the newspaper? If the answer is no, then it probably isn't a good press release topic.

With the right audience and media outlet, potential press release topics may include:

- **Oral health news** – Trends that you are noticing, warnings about unsafe products
- **Charity events** – Halloween candy buy-back programs, participation in free dental clinics

- **New location** – Opening a new dental practice, moving to a new office
- **New services** – In-house labs, advanced oral surgeries, other services not previously available locally
- **Sponsorships** – Your support of local school sports teams, non-profit organization fundraisers, or community events

Know where to send it

To some extent, newsworthiness is subjective. You might have a worthwhile press release, but not everyone will see it that way. Mass press release distribution services will send your news to dozens or hundreds of outlets, but the majority are likely not local or industry-specific. In other words, unless you have major news of interest to the general public, these may be a waste of time and money.

A better strategy for most press releases is to evaluate what reporters or media outlets are most likely to take an interest in. A few good options to consider:

- Industry publications for topics such as dental news, case studies, new research
- News stations with a health and wellness segment or reporters covering that topic area for oral health trends, warnings, or information
- Local newspapers, television, and radio stations for happenings at your practice location or in the community
- Event or culture reporters if you are hosting a charity fundraiser, sponsoring a local fair, or similar
- Business and finance reporters for new practice openings
- Environmental reporters to release your practice's year-end sustainability report

What does (and doesn't) go in a press release?

Again, remember that this is not just another piece of marketing content. It should be written in a clear, concise, factual, journalistic tone. While your press release may or may not be published verbatim, it should read like a news article.

What to avoid:

- **Superlatives** – Do not describe your customer service as superior or your practice as the best in town
- **Buzzwords** – Journalists do not want to see excess industry jargon or keywords, and neither do their readers
- **Filler** – Every word should serve a purpose; keep sentences and paragraphs as short as practical
- **Unsubstantiated information** – Again, everything in a press release should be fact-based or clearly stated as an opinion (e.g., if included as part of a quote)
- **Anything unnecessary** – Ideally, a press release should only be a page or two; if it is longer, you are likely including more details than needed

What to include:

- Clear and concise headline

- Essential details of who, what, when, where, and why
- A focus on whatever it is that makes your topic newsworthy
- A boilerplate statement (at the end) with a summary of your practice
- High-quality images with captions that include the photographer's name, date taken, subject, and a very brief description of what is happening in the picture
- Additional resources such as an event press kit or a link to a website for further details
- A compelling quote from someone central to the story
- The name, phone number, and email address of the media contact person at your practice

Creating the pitch

In most cases, you will be sending a press release by email, and the message that accompanies it is important. Journalists and editors may receive a multitude of releases each week or even each day, depending on how busy the media outlet is. Unfortunately, few of those routine press releases are actual news. You need to set yours apart instantly; it might get nothing more than a glance before ending up in the trash.

The same rules about promotion and promotional language apply here. If your message reads like an advertisement, the press release will look like spam. On the other hand, if the message is dull and uninteresting, it will frame the press release as non-newsworthy. This means you must walk a fine line between catchy and journalistic, powerful and factual. Here are a few tips to accomplish that:

- **Open with a compelling lead** – don't waste words with a long and winding introduction
- **Explain why your story is relevant** – present your case for why the topic is not only newsworthy but also important to this person's audience
- **Personalize it** – Mass emails carbon copied to a multitude of journalists are rarely taken as seriously as an individual email
- **Keep it short** – Make your pitch, then let the press release speak for itself
- **Descriptive subject** – Make the subject line short, attention-grabbing, and to the point

Conclusion

News coverage for your dental practice is invaluable for brand awareness and reputation building. Learning the art and science of crafting effective press releases can help you accomplish that goal.

References

1. <https://www.swordandthescript.com/2019/05/earned-media-value/>

About the Author



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