GUIDE TO WORKING WITH THE PRESS

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WORKING WITH THE PRESS

Developing a good working relationship with the press can be of great benefit. It helps to secure publicity for your company’s news, new product launches and innovations. Coverage in well-respected magazines such as KHL’s can have a huge positive effect because of the trust readers put in the information they get from such independent sources.

However, many companies miss opportunities because they do not prepare press releases and photography when they have a new product to publicise, or they do not respond to requests from editors in a timely fashion.
SUBMITTING INFORMATION

The best way to submit information to a magazine is by e-mail. When at trade shows and other events, you may also want to provide information on a USB memory stick in the press room and/or on your stand. A USB stick is preferable to a CD, as many of today's small laptops do not have a CD drive.

When sending e-mails, it is useful if the text appears in the body of the e-mail as well as attached as a separate document. Images should always be sent as attachments and NEVER embedded in a Word document or an e-mail.

Use the e-mail’s subject field to convey useful information about the contents - who is it from and what is it about? Don’t just leave it blank or simply write ‘Press release’. Try to avoid sending compressed (.zip) files, as these are time-consuming and cumbersome to handle.

Send information directly by e-mail, rather than directing editors to ftp sites, file sharing sites or remote servers. These are time-consuming to use and can be unreliable as posted files can time-out and become unavailable.

When sending a general mailing to numerous editors it is best to put all the recipients’ e-mail addresses in the ‘Blind Carbon Copy’ (BCC) field as opposed to the ‘To’ field. Recipients generally do not appreciate their e-mail addresses being divulged to your entire mailing list, and this may also infringe data protection laws.

NEVER ask to see an article before it is published (sight of copy). This is insulting to the journalist and crosses an ethical line for all reputable magazines that have editorial independence as a core value.

Always submit information before the editor’s deadline.

WHAT INFORMATION?
These are some of the basic types of information that magazines require on a regular basis:

- News of new products or services
- Application stories and site reports
- Comments on the industry and specific markets around the world
- Business news - news of acquisitions, mergers, joint ventures and joint marketing agreements
- News of appointments at your company
- News of large orders, contracts or large projects
- Good quality photographs and diagrams to support stories are essential (see section on photographs)

Make sure the information you send is relevant to the magazine. Your equipment may be used in a range of industries, but the editor of a construction magazine will not be interested in a story about an agricultural or forestry application, for example.

WHEN TO SEND INFORMATION
Sometimes magazines are looking for news for a specific feature, and will send you an editorial request together with a deadline for when material needs to be supplied.

However, you don’t need to wait for an editorial request before you send material. Journalists are constantly on the look-out for new and interesting stories. If you have a story to tell, then send it to the magazines.

DEADLINES
Publishing runs to a strict timetable - if you miss a deadline, you have missed an opportunity. Always find out when material is required and submit it earlier if possible.

Send press releases & images to editors via e-mail

Deadlines are critical in publishing - always send your information in on time.
WRITING A GOOD PRESS RELEASE

Even when companies issue press releases, they may not be used if they are not clear, lack crucial information or do not stress the nature of the news.

A GOOD PRESS RELEASE SHOULD:
- State clearly what is new and why it is important
- Be timely - cover new developments, not those that are months old
- State the critical facts - machine specifications for a product launch, for example
- Include quotes from a named spokesperson commenting on the most important points
- A 'Notes to editors' section at the end of the release can be used for background information that may be useful to editors, but which is not critical to the story.

Consider the ‘5 Ws’ when writing press releases - ‘Who?’ ‘What?’ ‘Where?’ ‘When?’ and ‘Why?’ to ensure the key facts are covered.

For example, a press release about a new product launch should say:
- Who launched it
- What it is (including basic specifications)
- What it does and its applications
- Where it was launched and where it is available
- When it was launched and when it will be available
- Why it was launched - What are the new and unique features?

Avoid technical jargon wherever possible. Where it is necessary to use a technical term or abbreviation, make sure it is explained in simple terms that anyone could understand.

Press releases should be in English or the language of the magazine the information is intended for. Documents should be in Microsoft Word format or one of the cross-platform formats such as rich text format (.rtf).
PHOTOGRAPHS

People in photographs should be wearing appropriate safety equipment.

Press releases should always be accompanied by an image or illustration. Unfortunately, it is often the case that good stories are not published because they were not accompanied by a photograph, or because the image was of poor quality or resolution.

Print media requires high resolution images, which is to say 300 dots per inch (dpi) or better at full print size. For example, a quarter page image in an A4 (297 mm x 210 mm) magazine would be about 150 mm x 100 mm in physical dimensions or about 1800 x 1200 pixels at 300 dpi - a file size of about 2 MB.

As well as being high resolution, pictures should be high quality. This means in focus, well lit and well composed with the subject filling the frame without being cropped. Resist the urge to take photos on mobile phones or compact cameras but use a high-quality single lens reflex (SLR) camera, or better still, commission a professional photographer.

Images can also be too large. There is no benefit in sending very large files (over about 10 MB) as the additional quality will not be translated into a better picture in the magazine.

Submit images by e-mail where possible. If you have to send a very large file, an ftp site or third-party file transfer service can be more appropriate. However, try to avoid sites where the link expires, as this often makes the image unavailable before it is needed and downloaded.

On-line press rooms can be a useful resource. However, they must be kept up-to-date and be easy and intuitive to navigate.

Use a high quality SLR camera to help ensure high resolution and high quality. Don’t use a compact camera and never use the camera on your mobile phone!

Use the more common image file formats such as JPEG or TIF

Publicity shots for the construction industry should also demonstrate safe working practices. Machines and people should not be shown in dangerous situations, and people should wear personal protective equipment such as hard hats, high visibility vests, gloves, safety boots, eye goggles, etc. as appropriate.

Do not attempt to excessively ‘improve’ your pictures in Photoshop. Unless done by an expert, images that have been over-manipulated or have had extra elements added or removed tend to look unrealistic. Editors often reject photos on the basis that they look fake.

Photographs for consideration as front cover shots should be of excellent quality and adequate size & resolution - at least A4 sized and 300 dpi. They should be in a portrait/vertical orientation. The top 20% or so should be relatively clear to allow placement of the magazine’s masthead without obscuring the subject of the shot. Similarly, there should be some space left around the subject to allow for the placement of the magazine’s cover text.

Cover shots need to be excellent quality, with a strong subject and room around it for the magazine’s logo and cover text.

North America
FEATURES

Most magazines publish an annual features list or editorial programme outlining the topics that will be covered over the course of the year. Targeting features that are relevant to your company is one of the most effective ways to publicise your company’s activities.

These are some of the steps you could take:

- Get a copy of the features list for magazines relevant to your company. These are usually on a magazine’s website, or you could contact the editor directly.
- Identify the individual features that are relevant to you
- Ask the editor what sort of information is required - new product news, case studies etc.
- Find out the deadline for submissions, and make sure you send information on time
- Suggest your own ideas and ask if there is any other way of helping - setting up interviews with specialists within your company for example

SITE REPORTS & CASE STUDIES

A site report or case study can often illustrate the benefits of a machine better than a straight-forward product release. Readers are interested in how projects are executed and how special equipment or techniques can be used to overcome challenges.

If you are writing a case study always think about the ‘5 Ws’ - ‘Who?’ ‘What?’ ‘Where?’ ‘When?’ and ‘Why?’ as well as ‘How?’

Essential information would also include; which are the main companies involved, what is the value of the project, what is the duration, where is the project being built, why it is being built and why it is needed.

Additional information might include; details of the construction techniques and materials being used (describe the structure), what are the major pieces of equipment being used (including model numbers, specifications, and any special configuration such as boom length, reach, height, etc.), main performance capabilities, is the equipment owned by the contractor or, if it is rented, where is it rented from?
WHAT TO EXPECT

While editors try to use as much relevant information as they can in their magazines, it is not always possible to include everything that is submitted. Sending in information does not guarantee publication.

It is also important to be realistic about how much of your information will be used. Reputable magazines rarely use press releases word-for-word or in full. Editors prefer to extract the key information for articles and present it in their magazines’ house style. Similarly, while it is useful to send a selection of images with each press release, often only one will be used.

If you feel you are not getting the appropriate level of coverage, it is a good idea to contact the editor directly to ask for constructive feedback. You may have missed a deadline, or the information you sent may have been inappropriate. Usually there is a simple explanation that can serve as a useful lesson for the future. A personal phone call usually works better than e-mail, because e-mails can be misinterpreted as being over-critical or even aggressive.

KHL’S POLICY: INDEPENDENT EDITORIAL

All KHL magazines have a strictly independent editorial policy. We do not write about companies because they are advertising. Editors chose which information they include on its merit alone. Information from advertisers and non-advertisers alike is given equal consideration.

It is KHL’s firm belief that magazines must be interesting to their readers to have value as a communication tool. This is why editorial content is selected by experienced industry editors.
NEW MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

Many companies that were once purely in print media now also have a significant on-line presence. On offer are a range of digital products including e-mail newsletters, digital issues, tablet editions and tablet/smartphone apps, as well as audio podcasts and videos. This opens up new ways for companies to gain editorial coverage about their products and services, such as:
- Videos on new product launches
- Video interviews
- Product demonstration videos
- Recorded audio interviews for use in podcasts

Occasions for recording this type of media could include exhibitions, during press conferences, during an editor’s visit to your premises, during a press event, roadshow or other marketing event.

VIDEO PRESS RELEASES?
This type of coverage is relatively new in the B2B market, so it is difficult to give firm advice. However, there may be opportunities for companies to provide raw footage for editing and dissemination by media companies. This could be considered a ‘video press release’, analogous to a written press release and stock images that journalists re-work, edit and expand upon before publishing.

PREPARATION
A company embarking on a rich-media marketing strategy should ensure that any spokesperson is trained to speak in front of a camera and is comfortable doing so. If providing your own footage, many of the basics that would apply to a printed press release and images are still valid. The material should be professionally presented, appropriate safety equipment should be used, the material should cover the 5Ws etc.

Similarly, the principles of editorial independence will apply in the same way to video reporting as they do for print media.

EDITORIAL CONTACT DETAILS

MAGAZINE
Access International
American Cranes & Transport
Access, Lift & Handlers
Concrete Latin America
Construction Europe
Construction Latin America
Cranes and Project Transport Turkey
Demolition & Recycling International
International Construction
International Construction Turkey
International Cranes and Specialized Transport
International Rental News

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