Hot Off the Press Release

Creating Content that Catches the Attention of the Community
Who I am

• Been in libraries for 6 years
  – 2 at Springdale Public Library
  – 4 at Bentonville Public Library

• BPL’s resident wordsmith 😊
  – Write/edit over 100 press releases a year
  – Copy editor for *Arkansas Libraries Journal*
  – Create monthly eNewsletters
  – Edit BPL’s website
Why We Market

• To get people interested in our events
• To let the community know what’s going on
• To celebrate our accomplishments

• But most importantly...
We Let the Community Know We’re Here!
Look at us!

• In this digital age, it takes a lot to be at the forefront of people’s minds

• The more they see us, the more the community will think fondly of us!
  – The Mere Exposure Effect
    • AKA The Familiarity Principle, the mere exposure effect is a psychological phenomenon by which people tend to develop a preference for things merely because they are familiar with them.
Be Consistent!

• Presentation is important
  – Create a basic template for all press releases across organization that follows AP Style
  – Your signature is important too, be professional!

• Consider a single sender
  – Creates consistency for the receiver
Be Consistent!

Contact: Name
Phone: Number

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date:

Title

BENTONVILLE, Ark. –

For more information about this event or Bentonville Public Library, please visit www.bentonvillelibrary.org or call 479-271-3192.

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Be Consistent!

- Keep to one formatting style (AP)

They may take our commas,

but they can never take...ACADEMIC FREEDOM!!!
Be Consistent!

• Extra eyes help to edit
  – It’s not fun to send out corrected releases!

• Be professional!
  – No Comic Sans!
  – No background wallpaper!
  – No crazy colors!
Who, What, When, Where, Why

• Never send out a press release if you can’t easily identify who, what, when, where, and why

• Identify the main points within the first couple of sentences

• If something is confusing, rewrite!

• Media often uses info straight from release, make it easy for them!
Make it Easy for the Press

• Don’t be afraid to send releases out more than once. The press is busy!

• Be easy to contact
  – When they do contact, be easy to work with!
  – Establish a great rapport with the media
    • Send a thank you email if you have their direct contact
    • Let them know you appreciate them!
    • When you would really like a photographer at an event, go ahead and ask and follow up with a thank you!
How many press releases to send

• Consider sending monthly releases of all your events
  – Weekly during the summer!

• For really big events, consider sending out multiple releases
  – Announcement release
  – Full detailed release on all activities
  – Break-out releases focusing on individual activities
  – Reminder release

• Be sure to change the releases so receiver won’t get déjà vu!
I'VE ALREADY SEEN THAT!!!
When you send it out...

- Be aware of deadlines
When you send it out...

• Be aware of deadlines
  – Send press releases at least 5-7 days prior to event
  – Some may need it much sooner, so make sure you know the print dates for your contacts

• Make sure you are sending it out to all appropriate contacts!
  – Don’t forget to send it to your City and State Officials!
Creating Great Copy

• Don’t be afraid to have fun!
  – Don’t make your readers yawn! You need to get their attention!
Creating Great Copy

• Experiment with different types of copy. You are a salesperson!
  – Conversational, storytelling, imaginative... play with different styles to see if you come up with something new!

• Be your own cheerleader
  – Emphasize how great you are, not your weaknesses
  – Don’t waste time apologizing
Creating Great Copy

• Know who your reader is
  – Don’t bog your readers down with library jargon
Creating Great Copy

• Start with a great headline
  – It doesn’t take much to change a plain headline into an engaging one!
  – “Free Comic Book Day at BPL” Vs. “Action-Packed Free Comic Book Day at Bentonville Public Library May 6!”

• Your headline is your subject line- so make it count!

• Hook ‘em and then get to the point
  – Don’t focus on being so creative that people don’t even know what’s going on
Creating Great Copy

- Throw in some great facts and stats

"The facts, Ma'am.
Just the facts."
Creating Great Copy

• Quote me on it!
  – Quotes are a great way to bring a personal and/or authoritative voice to the marketing

"I NEVER SAID HALF THE THINGS I SAID."
DIDN'T SAY THAT, EITHER.
What’s next...

• Edit your great copy to fit different avenues
  – Web, Facebook, Twitter, enewsletters, etc.
Go be awesome!

ARISE, GO FORTH,
AND CONQUER!

Any questions?