

## **The Power of Publicity**

by Rich Rodgers, District 16 Public Relations Officer

Reporters are looking for good stories. Mr. Cooke has a great article in a past edition of the Toastmasters magazine on what to say in a press release. Click [The Power of Publicity](#) to read it.

Now that you understand why to write a press release, you need to have your press release in a certain format. You should have contact information and, at the bottom of the press release, Toastmasters International would like you to have a disclosure “About Toastmasters”. You can see sample press release and download a blank news release template by clicking on the link [Sample News Releases](#).

If your press release is more than one page, put in bold **–MORE–** at the bottom of the first page in the center. That way they will not stop at the first page. At the end of the final page be sure to put in bold **###** or **–END–**.

### **Very Important!!!**

1. When the reporter runs your article in the paper, chances are they may reword the article or just redo it. Do not email or call them unless something is terribly wrong. I had an article about our Speaker’s Bureau. There were only 2 things they put in the paper from the original press release, the District’s website and the name Speaker’s Bureau. I was still glad they put the article in the paper.
2. After the press release gets in the paper, email your contact a thank you and send a hand written “Thank You” card. The reporter may get several press releases; however, they published yours. Be sure to thank them formally and they may publish another of your press releases. You are acknowledging them for taking the time to share YOUR information with the community.

How can I find the reporters and contact information? In a small paper, you can go to the paper’s website or on the paper there is contact information such as reporters, editors etc.

### **Newspaper Contacts:**

Click [Tulsa World Contacts](#)

Click [The Oklahoman](#)

Send them a press release after 11 AM. Then in 20 minutes call the person and ask if they received the email with your press release. Are you uncomfortable calling strangers? You are a Toastmaster now! You have developed skills to make the call.

Another thought is to invite a reporter to a Toastmasters meeting so they can write about a meeting or open house.

# Top Reasons for Rejection

## Top Reasons For Us Rejecting A Press Release- According to Mass Media Distribution

We accept about 95% of the press releases that come to us. However, there are some situations where we need customers to make a change before we distribute their press release.

1. **They are written in ALL CAPS.** They need to be written in regular sentence case and NOT ALL CAPS!
2. **The press release is too short.** You need at least 200 words, and 400 is best.
3. **No contact info.** You need to list a “media contact” at the top or bottom of the press release. This includes a name and email or phone for the media to contact. This is essential.
4. **Written as a sales pitch.** Your press release needs to announce news, not pitch your product / service to the public.