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The MAAC Group Offers Specialized Services
 For Boutique Destinations and Hotels

Writing your Own Press Release The Basic Elements of a Press Release

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At my first job in a marketing department of a travel company, I noticed that it was possible, as the "client", to actually do a better job at writing the press releases than our PR firm. I knew our product and service so much better, provided the outline of information to get started, and did lots of editing and proofing.

Depending on the nature of your media needs and the volume of outreach, it's possible the "do-it-yourself" approach can be better for you. However be warned, there are several pitfalls (some I will warn you about here), so it's not always the best path to take. What a good agency can do for you includes getting your news to all the right editors *personally*. If you are tempted to go it alone, here are some guidelines with examples to follow.

This press release is being used, because The MAAC Group picked up a new project within days of releasing this.

1. At the top: Logo, contact information, release information, headline & subhead.

Your logo and contact information should be at the top of the release. It should not be buried within the release or at the end, because it should be as easy as possible for an editor or writer to contact you. Then you need to follow with release information. Decide if your news is immediate, such as a sale that lasts only three days or for a few room categories, or is it generic news that doesn't necessarily have a time factor? If the nature of your news is immediate, then say, IMMEDIATE RELEASE and make the immediacy the focus of your message. I sometimes use the subhead to continue my thoughts from the headline, that couldn't be condensed, but it's best to use the subhead to include a second point or message. As for how to come up with the headline and subhead, some people find it easier to do after the whole article has been written. Here's how it should look:

LOGO

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NEWS RELEASE

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2. Dateline and First Paragraph: This usually goes in a format as follows: City (Month, Date, Year). It's very important to follow this format because should you decide to send this through an internet media release tool, some of them will not accept it without this format. To write the first paragraph, draw on your high school

English. Remember the "who, what, where, when, how and why." This applies to journalism writing and is true of writing a press release. This helps the editors/reporters have a sense if they want to read the entire piece or not.

Here's how it should look:

Boston (March 3, 2006) - The MAAC Group, a marketing & sales consulting firm specializing in travel, tourism and hospitality, announced a program called **Select Solutions**, designed specifically to help smaller, personalized destinations and hotels through the complex process of change and growth.

3. Quotes, Testimonials and Experts: Anything you want to communicate to the public can, and should, be validated further by a third party. So if you are talking about your great service, quote the guest that has stayed at your property most often. Or, if you just renovated following a hurricane, quote the director of tourism regarding the island efforts to rebuild. For this particular press release, we used a quote from me to provide more information about the program.

"The program is perfect for destinations and properties that can benefit from one organization integrating their marketing strategy," says Melanie Alexander, president of The MAAC Group. She adds, "Far too often companies have multiple agencies, handling a variety of different elements, which leads to poor integration of message and strategy."

4. Formatting: Whenever possible, try to use topic headlines or bullet a series of concepts to make it easier for an editor or writer to scan. It will also ultimately make it easier for a reader to absorb the content, should it get published.

Services include:

- Strategic Travel Industry Sales & Marketing
- Hotel Contracting & Rate Management
- Public Relations & Event Management
- Internet Marketing including website development
- Reservations and technology solutions
- Photography & Creative Services
- Media Buying including print, electronic, indoor/outdoor, etc.
- Employment Referral Services

5. Statistics: Depending on the nature of what you are writing about, use facts and statistics to support your claims. Let's say you are announcing a discount for low season, so you might want to provide statistics on how effective that was in the past (or quote one of your guests that stayed in low season and saved money.) Perhaps you spent money renovating following a hurricane, then it helps to say how much.

Previous programs have been highly effective, including a 100% increase in bookings for a destination in three years and developing an unknown property to a recognized industry

name. Up through June 1, The MAAC Group is offering a \$500 savings on their services.

6. Boiler Plate and End Signal: This is a closing paragraph that you will work and rework several times. Its purpose is to serve as a quick summary of who you are - so summarize your property, company, destination or service in a few sentences. At the end of the press release, use a series of three end signals to indicate to the reader they have read all the content. It looks like this:

The MAAC Group is based in Boston, with an office in New York City and consulting partners in Fort Lauderdale, Colorado, and New Hampshire. Please visit www.maacg.com

It's a start. You are on your way to do-it-yourself PR, but don't forget the earlier caution. The best press releases are useless if they don't end up in the right hands. In the meantime, if you have questions, please send an email to melanie@maacg.com