

How to Put Together a Press Kit

A press kit is a package of information about the company and its products put together by an exhibitor for distribution to the news media. The kit may be prepared a number of ways; there is no right or wrong way, but certain things are helpful to know.

Note: For press kits sent to the International Home + Housewares Show News Center, make sure your company name and booth number are easily found inside the kit. Do not prominently feature your public relations agency's name. Before being displayed in the News Center, kits are verified as being from a Show exhibitor, and if we can't determine who the exhibitor is, the kit will not be displayed.

How it Looks

The cover of your press kit can be a printed folder, a plain folder, a large envelope with a label or a clear vinyl sheet over a cover sheet. Folders are available with or without pockets. Company logos can be printed, typed, stamped or rendered by an artist.

Make sure your company name is prominently displayed on the front of the kit. One way to catch the attention of the editors or reporters gathering kits is to use color. (The kits are displayed alphabetically by company in the News Center in clear Plexiglas holders on a slat wall.) A colorful folder, label or artwork will call attention to your press kit and increase the likelihood of it being picked up and looked at. Boxes are available in the News Center for editors to pack up kits and either carry them home or have them sent back to their offices courtesy of the Show.

If you are putting your press kit on a CD or jump drive, be sure to have a label or tag with the company name so the kit is easily identifiable.

Content

An editor may become interested in your company because of the presentation of your press kit. The information must be interesting and timely. If you have current company news—such as an acquisition, expansion, promotion of key personnel or a new application for existing product lines—testimonials or reprints of other media coverage of your products, then include these items in the kit.

Along with news releases about your company and products (the rule of thumb is one news release per product or product line), include catalog sheets or spec sheets, a brochure or perhaps a one-page “backgrounder” about your company.

Maybe you've been in business for 75 years and you don't think you have an exciting story, but an editor may. Almost everyone can get a bit of drama out of a company startup—old or new.

News Releases

All news releases should be typed and double-spaced. The first sheet should be on your letterhead. At the top of the first page, type “NEWS RELEASE” or “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE” and include a company contact and phone number. Date the release; you can use the city of the show (i.e. Chicago, IL) as your dateline location or you can use the location of your company (i.e. Rosemont, IL). Remember to use a type size that is easily read (at least 10 points) and be sure to include your booth number. *See the Same News Release for format.*

Number your pages at the top of the sheet. At the bottom of each page, except the last one, type – MORE – to let the reader know the release continues. Mark the last page of the release with an end symbol such as ### or –30–.

If you need help writing your release, see the sample news release in the Exhibitor Marketing Kit or consider using the Virtual Press Release Writer service offered this year.

Headlines

Headlines are important because they draw the reader to your news. If the headline is long and complicated or if the message is fuzzy and unclear, you may lose the editor's interest. Tell your story in a two-line head, if possible, in caps and indicate action by using verbs. Tell your story briefly in the lead paragraph of the news release and then reiterate important points throughout the release. Good news releases tell who, what, where, when, why and how about the subject.

Write a news release for each topic or product, but don't write more than two pages on any one topic. Avoid expressions such as “best” (each company regards its own products fondly) and “ideal” – editors will wipe out those words before they print your news.

Photos

Color photographs or line-art illustrations should be included in your press kit. Editors are always looking for photos to accompany product stories. However, if the photo is unclear, too small, too busy or too murky, don't even use it. Take the time to include high-resolution digital images (300 dpi or higher) in your kit. Include images on a CD.

Or, include the complete URL address if the images can be downloaded from your website or FTP site.

Always caption your photos. If you are clipping the photo to the release, put the caption on the back of the photo using a self-stick label. If you are putting the photo on a separate sheet, type the caption underneath the photo; if including digital images, make sure the caption is on the. In the caption be sure to include your company name, product name and model number and any pertinent information. Keep the caption to three lines or less.

For further information about news releases or press kits, contact Debbie Teschke at 847-692-0110, dteschke@housewares.org