

## **Promoting through press releases.**

A useful and effective method of promoting your club is issuing press releases to the local press.

A well written and managed press release will gain many hundred or even thousands of pounds worth of exposure. A poorly written and managed press release will simply end up being unread and a waste of time. This guide takes you through how to prepare a press release and shows you the pitfalls to avoid.

### **Before you start:**

Before you start to put pen to paper, or more appropriately fingers to keys, consider carefully what you want to promote. The key to getting your message across is to have a clear message. Plan your strategy well in advance and consult other club members and interested parties so you know exactly *what* it is you are promoting, and *how* exactly you are going to promote it.

Consider the size and scope of your club. There's no point trying to get your club's recruitment stall at the local featured on the News at Ten as the lead story as unless you are very lucky and gifted, you'll fail and your hard work will be in vain.

Target your strategy to the market you want to attract. If you want to attract teenagers to your club then make sure you are promoting an aspect of marshalling which will appeal to an eighteen year old rather than to a sixty year old.

Is your press release to be a stand-alone means of promotion or is it part of an entire campaign? The local press is far more receptive to running your releases if it is allied to an advert you are taking out at the same time. Are you launching or updating your website? Try to tie this in to your campaign as it gives your audience somewhere to go to if they read and are excited by your release.

### **What are you promoting?**

A press release can be to promote a club event, promote marshalling itself to stimulate interest in your club, promote motorsport in general or promoting anything newsworthy and you want people to know about.

A press release should always be about something that is newsworthy, but coming to your topic from a different or unusual angle can make even the most common of activities newsworthy.

## **Essentials:**

- Make sure the information you are imparting is newsworthy - provide a good story.
- Aim the information directly at your audience and grasp their attention.
- Start with the news, then go into details.
- Make the job as easy as possible for the press, try to answer any questions they might have within the press release.
- Do not assume any knowledge of the topic or subject area.
- Write in the third person. Do not use 'you', 'we',
- Personal opinions should only be in quotations.
- Have a punchy headline.
- Try to keep your press release to one page.
- Only include essential details.
- Give good contact information, but try to have one point of contact.
- Include any additional information in an appendix at the end of the press release, or direct the press to where they can find the info.
- Check your spelling and grammar.

## **Remember:**

What message do you want to get across?

Who do you want to read your news?

Is a press release the best method of getting your message across?

Are you assuming knowledge on the behalf of the reader?

## **Making contact**

- Make contact with your local press before you send out any release to ensure they know what to expect.
- Find out when their deadlines are and how they like to receive press releases.
- Ask if there is anyone at the newspaper / magazine / radio station who has an interest in motorsport and try to speak to them.
- Invite the reporter / editor / etc to your club or event and find out if it is something they would like to report about.
- Sell your club and event to the press, but do not be too intrusive on their time as it is a busy occupation and they will receive numerous similar requests.
- If the news in your release isn't used, ask if there's space the following week, or if there's anything you can do to ensure that it is used.

## **Sending out your release**

- Use email.
- Seek the advice of the most computer literate member of your club, someone who regularly checks their email and can answer any email questions.
- Do not send out large email attachments such as pictures unless requested.
- Make sure the text is in the email body and not in an attachment.
- The press are concerned with using the text you send them quickly and efficiently so try not to put your release into a document requiring certain software to open or that only looks good on certain computers.
- If you are sending your release to numerous recipients, use the blind copy function.
- Make sure your computer has the latest virus software on it and it has been updated recently.