



On Press Kits

Today, media exposure is instantaneous and can originate from tens of thousands of outlets. Being prepared to respond to or to speak with the media in a strategic, programmatic manner is vital. And though the media has changed, the vehicles for information are still called "press kits." Here are some essentials to consider when creating a press kit for your organization.

Press kits are strategic public relations packages of essential elements used for events of all types. They are largely (but not only) used to reach editors, writers, producers and other members of the media but, in fact, can be directed at any audience. They are modular kits and are configured or stuffed on an as-needed basis. They can contain many elements. Press kits are essential when dealing with publicity events, public forums, demonstrations, seminars and all functions where media may attend or where it is vital to render a strategically accurate organizational impression. It is also exceedingly important to recognize that press kits are likely to be reviewed by others not present at their distribution and referred to in the future.

Modular Pocket Folder

The 9" X 12" single or double pocket folder is the norm, which allows numerous pages of documents, photos or materials to be inserted. Folder design and stock are important for corporate image. Organizations desiring to maximize impact with the press should invest in a high design folder on quality stock with interior slots as needed (for business cards, CDs, DVDs, etc.), as budget allows. Some information can be printed on the folder itself, but only if it is not subject to change through the life of the press kit.



Prioritization

The modular kit, though a de facto propaganda device, is intended for external groups. It is hardly a random assemblage of information and needs to be approached from the audiences' standpoint. Therefore, the information inside the modular pocket folder should be arranged in a logical priority order based on subject matter. What should the audience see first? What will be the best way to reveal the information to them? Keep in mind that press kits are a means to an end for the press, so prioritization of materials according to purpose and audience is important.



Content

Content is king! Each event may require different press kit inserts for different reasons, e.g., new product launches, seminars, upcoming press events; but some of the variables that should be considered are:

1. **Personalized cover letter.** This must be on official organization stationery. (Letterheads should be 8.5" X 11.0" unless they are intended for non-USA markets.) This states the purpose of each particular press kit and explains what is inside. This will change with every different event and each new venue. The cover letter should be made available in the languages of the press expected to attend, and requisite languages if it is an international venue or a United Nations event.



2. **Organizational background.** This sheet should include a brief overview description of the organization, including mission, background and history. It should be limited to one page if possible. The press will often quote from this sheet.

3. **Company capabilities brochure or fact sheet.** Preferably offset printed and preferably four colors, a capabilities brochure promotes image by its presence, look and feel as well as its words. Much is dependent on the amount of information that needs to be conveyed and how succinctly it is written. Essentially this is a convincing in-depth look at products, services, structure, support, etc. If facilities are particularly important, a capabilities brochure could incorporate photos and descriptions rather than creating another sheet.



4. **Product or services sheets.** Each individual product or service should be described in pertinent detail on a separate sheet. This further enables customization of the press kit for the specific audience being addressed. Photos of products or products being deployed should be included. This is often used to describe new technologies and new products.

5. **Key personnel bios.** An 8.5" X 11.0" sheet (typically on quality organizational letterhead) with short, edited descriptions of all key personnel and portrait photos is often included. Photos are regularly included in the body of the sheet and really should be professionally shot, as these will get a lot of mileage.



6. **Article reprints.** Any article written by any publication, excerpted from any blog, website, TV or broadcast media can be included with appropriate credit.

7. **CD/DVD/video clips and/or multimedia presentations.** Multimedia elements can be included and will add great value. They cannot take the place of the previously described sheets but will be used to enhance their value and add dynamism.



8. **News releases and press clippings.** Copies of pertinent

news releases (outbound from the organization) or reprints of news releases (on the media masthead after they have run) can be included as references. Actual clippings or reproductions of the same must identify the sources to have credibility.



9. **Case studies.** These are items the press finds very attractive and may quote liberally. Therefore, only those ones that are not top secret or restricted should be used. Every case study must be pre-approved in writing by the subject of the study if names or revealing details are used. Case studies typically follow a problem/solution format. Offset printing aids credibility with case studies.

10. **Business cards.** Typically a press kit will include either the key authorized contact at the organization or the key authorized contact at the organization's Public Relations agency or Strategic Marketing Organization (SMO). Multiple voices speaking to the media create havoc and problems, so generally only one business card is included.



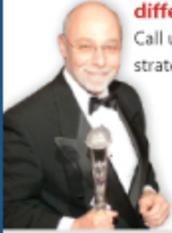
11. **Organizational newsletter.** If a desired purpose of the press kit is to shed light on corporate culture, then an actual copy of a printed newsletter or a print out of an eNewsletter makes sense.

12. **Addenda.** Magnets, personalized paper clips, pens and the like may seem inconsequential at first. However, editors, reporters and writers enjoy this type of promotional effort, keep them and use them. As long as these items do not compromise their integrity, function or reason to be at the press event, these promo items are a great investment for inclusion in a modular press kit.



13. **Photographic enlargements, drawings and blueprints.** These items are generally used in press kits only when necessary to prove a point or to educate editors, reporters and writers. Each one should be control coded and identified with the source, owner or producer of the information. A statement of usage limitation is frequently included.
14. **Personalized notes.** Though they run the risk of appearing unofficial, personalized notes have great impact. They are generally written on printed organizational note paper (usually smaller than letterhead) and must always be legible and signed, leaving no ambiguity as to who has created this document.

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