

ZoZo Memorandum

A press release is not an opening argument

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Preparing a press release remains one of the most effective ways to communicate with the press about a recent victory or new news within your firm. It is what they will use to base the foundation of their story upon. The format is somewhat unique. It makes the journalists' job much easier if you were to put your story in the format they are accustomed to reading. You can start with these 10 tips for your press release.

1. Make sure your news is **newsworthy** – Ask yourself, will your announcement matter to your audience?
2. Always include your **contact information** at the top of the release, including your email address and firm website.
3. Write a **headline** that makes the audience want to continue reading. We sometimes refer to this as the SLUG. Here you should briefly summarize the topic of the release and, if at all possible, utilize action verbs to sound as interesting and as newsworthy as possible.
4. Lead the first paragraph with your **location and date** for example: DENVER, Colorado. (January 1, 2007).
5. Use the first paragraphs to **announce your news** identifying the five W's who, what, when, where and why; then use the next two paragraphs to back up and support that announcement with quotes from key players or statistics that help analyze the significance of the news.
6. Your releases should not contain information about a complaint only about an actual case with a **case number and court house** that is accessible to be viewed by the public. Be extremely careful not to mention any facts that are not already proven in court to be facts.
7. Keep paragraphs **short and to the point**. Two or three sentences per paragraph should be your target.
8. Double space between paragraphs - **don't indent**.
9. Keep printed press releases to **one page**; keep e-releases "above the fold" or less than **500 words**.
10. At the bottom of your release, be sure to **include a general statement** about your firm and its area of focus.

Proof read it, and read it again, then send it to some of your favorite journalist. You are now on your way to building the brand of your law firm.

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