

# Getting Free Publicity for Your Wedding Business

Handout for June 25, 2008 Teleseminar

## BASIC PRESS KIT INGREDIENTS

1. Folder
2. Pitch Letter
3. Press Release
4. Photo

### 1. Folder:

- Keep it tasteful and professional
- Use a simple folder preprinted with your logo; or use laser-printed label. (Use Avery)
- Insert business card in folder slits or paper-clip to front.
- **Don't use school supply folders!!**
- Use both pockets (left and right side)

### 2. Pitch Letter/ Cover Letter

- Tells reader (reporter or producer) why his/her audience needs to hear about your wedding business.
- Remember your goal is to pique reader's curiosity and sell your story or news.
- Don't lead up to it—say what your angle or solution is right up front.
- Key supporting information follows.
- Print pitch letter on your company letterhead or include your company address and contact information at the top of the first page.
- Keep it short—no more than one page.
- Be professional—but not stiff or formal.
- Read it out loud—would you speak like this if you were speaking to someone?
- Attach pitch letter with paper clip to the front of the folder

### 3. Press Release

- One or two page document in a specific format, written in third person, that demonstrates to the media why you or your business deserve media coverage.
- If not printed on company letterhead, make sure to include company contact information
- Media loves "inverted pyramid" style
  - Conclusion or summary comes first, followed by second most important, third most important and so on.
  - To get an idea—read any news article; trim story from bottom up and you lose least essential facts

- Before you write a word, remember this:  
The reporter isn't interested in helping you make money or driving visitors to your wedding planning site. S/He's looking for a story that will be interesting to her/his readers or listeners and pleasing to his editor.

**TIP:** Call 3-4 days after sending your press release to follow-up. Perhaps try something like:

*"Hello. This is \_\_\_\_\_. I sent you a press release a few days ago about \_\_\_\_\_. I just wanted to make sure you received it. I think a story/article about \_\_\_\_\_ would be a good fit for your audience. I'll be happy to chat with you about it."*

#### 4. Photo

- Work with one of your photographers from your vendor list
- Use photo of you working a wedding or a professional headshot
- Ask for signed letter from photographer giving you permission to print multiple copies
- 5"X 7" or 8"X10" – standard size
- Don't send snapshots or snapshot-quality prints
- Include captions
  - Use laser printer and print caption on sticker/label
  - Use waterproof fine-tip felt pen
  - Do NOT use ballpoint pen
- Don't expect to get your photos back!

**TIP:** If your press release is about an event, don't put your energy into taking a photo of the event and submitting it after the fact. Instead, work to get a news photographer to cover the event.

#### (Optional) Bio

- Do NOT include a resume. You are not applying for a job!
- Your bio should highlight your most important accomplishments, especially recent ones.
- For your press kit, use one-page bio about you or your company.
- Make yourself/your company sound interesting!
- Begin with a catchy summary first sentence.  
For example:

*"Tiers of Joy, a wedding planning firm specializing in small, intimate weddings, is the creation of local socialite, Wendy Planner."*

Then add supporting details in the following sentences.

## SAMPLE PITCH LETTER

[ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD]

[Date]

Amy Wilson, Producer  
WWWW-TV  
25 Broadcast Circle  
Big City, ST 12345

Dear Ms. Wilson:

For many brides, planning a wedding is unbelievably stressful. An uninvolved groom, uncooperative bridesmaids, first-dance anxiety: all very real concerns for a bride-to-be leading up to her big event. Now there's a resource where she can turn to for support.

On Wednesday, August 27, at 6 p.m., Tiers of Joy Planning Agency will host its Bridal Rx Event, at the Green Acres Marriott--the first in a series of fun, free, monthly, informal get-togethers where area brides can share questions and advice about the wedding planning process.

The event promises to draw a diverse crowd eager to share the fun and misery of planning a wedding. The agenda is completely open, the admission is free, and the refreshments promise to be . . . well . . . refreshing!

The attached release provides more details about the event. Please let me know if this exciting event is of interest to you and your listeners and accept this as an open invitation for you and your camera crew to attend.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

*Wendy Planner*

Wendy Planner  
Owner, Tiers of Joy Planning Agency

# PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

[ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD]

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

"FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" signals that editors can use the story immediately. If you don't want it released until September 15, for example, you'd write instead, "For Release September 15,"

**CONTACT:** Contact Person, Voice Phone Number

## **XYZ, Inc, Provides Support for Miserable Brides**

The headline is one of the most important components of the press release as it needs to "grab the attention" of the editor/producer. Do agonize over it. Show it to others and get their reactions. It should be in bold type and a font that is larger than the body text. Preferred type fonts are Arial, Times New Roman, or Verdana. The headline can take up more than one line, so go on as long as necessary to complete the idea. Capitalize every word with the exception of "a", "the", "an" or any word that is three characters or less.

**<City>, <State>, <Date>** - Your first paragraph of the release should be written in a clear and concise manner. The opening sentence contains the most important information; keep it to 25 words or less. Never take for granted that the reader has read your headline. It needs to contain information that is "enticing". Remember, your story must be newsworthy and factual; don't make it a sales pitch or it will end up in the trash.

Answer the questions "who", "what", "when", "where", "why" and "how" (*for the angle of your headline*, not the basic facts about your company or you). Your text should include pertinent information about your product, service or event mentioned in the headline. If you're writing about a product, make sure to include details on when the product is available, where it can be purchased and the cost. If you're writing about an event, include the date, location of the event and any other pertinent information. You should include a quote from someone that is a credible source of information (more than likely, you!). After you write the quote read it out loud to make certain it sounds natural, not stiff. Include your title or position, and why you are considered a credible source. Always include information on any awards you may have won, articles you've published or interviews you have given.

Indent each paragraph five spaces. Keep your sentences and paragraphs short; a paragraph should be no more than 3-4 sentences. While there is a trend towards typing press releases in single-space format, the "old" double-spaced format is preferred because it leaves room for editing and it's just easier to read. Your release should be between 500 to 800 words, and spell checked for errors. Don't forget to proofread for grammatical errors. The mood of the release should be factual, not hyped; don't use a sales pitch as it will ruin your credibility with the reader.

Conclude your release with a paragraph, 2 – 3 sentences, that describes your company in broad terms without hype or exaggeration. Avoid the temptation to share your company's goals or mission statement—it isn't relevant or appropriate.

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At the end of the release, you need to indicate that the release is ended. Type "###" (without the quotation marks) this lets the reader know they have received the entire release. If your release goes over one page, type "MORE" at the bottom of the first page, and your business name and ""(continued) at the top of page two. (You can save a tree by printing a two-page release on both sides of one sheet of paper.

# **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

[COMPANY LETTERHEAD]

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Marie Masters, (714) 555-1111

### **Wedding Consultant Makes Matrimony into an Art Form**

LOS ANGELES, CA--April 13, 2007—Marie Masters is weeping copiously into a soggy tissue for the second time this week. But weddings always have that effect on her, so this certified wedding consultant good-naturedly sees the tears as part of her job.

"I always get a little misty-eyed when one of 'my' brides walks down the aisle," Masters says. "We work together so closely to plan her special day that I can't help being just as happy and proud as she is."

Masters is the owner and founder of *A Vision in White*, a wedding consultant business based in Chino Hills. Her task is to coordinate the seemingly insurmountable mountain of details that go into planning the perfect wedding, from securing the banquet hall to picking the menu, ordering the flowers, coordinating the newlyweds' hotel reservations, and handling everything else in between.

"And of course, the real trick is to get everything to come together correctly and on time," she says with a laugh. "Brides love turning over all those details to me."

Bridal industry statistics show that more and more women are relying on wedding consultants to coordinate the wedding of their dreams. And no wonder. Masters earns each client's trust by consulting with her every step of the way to ensure her satisfaction. She charges a flat fee for services based on the number of tasks she's asked to coordinate.

For more information about *A Vision in White*, call (714) 555-1111.

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Source: Adapted from *Start Your Own Wedding Consultant Business*