

## News Release Template

If you are responsible for promoting your local volunteer organization or small business you may use several ways to share information. When you want to make an announcement requiring more content than a typical Twitter feed or Facebook post, a news release is an effective way to encourage reporters to tell your story.

A news release contains all the facts, background, colourful tidbits and stats to make it easy for reporters and editors to get all the details they need for their story or post. This template describes what to include in each section of a news release and create interest in an example of a fictional annual event.\*

The following sample shows how to craft a news release that can grab and hold a reporter's attention, capture their interest and entice them into sharing your story. Each section of the news release is numbered, with corresponding information below.

### *Sooke Region Fine Cats Show*

*Aug. 8-16, 2014*

For immediate release

#### **1 World premiere of award-winning cat videos at region's biggest show**

**2** SOOKE – Anyone attending the Sooke Region Fine Cats Show opening will be the first in the world to view new award-winning cat videos. The winning entries of the cat video contest, new this year to the annual show, will be screened on Friday, August 8th beginning at 2 p.m. at the Sooke Community Hall.

**3** "Cat videos are enormously popular and more and more people are sharing their favorites on places like Facebook and YouTube," said Kitty Meow, president of the Sooke Fine Feline Fanciers, organizers of the annual show. "The superior production values and creativity of these latest videos are amazing and truly showcase our area's local talent – both human and feline."

**4** There are 20 finalists in the video contest and each is two minutes in length. After the screening of the finalists the panel of judges will be introduced. Until now, organizers have not revealed the identities of the judges who include a famed retired Hollywood director, a local film critic and a local veterinarian who specializes in cats. After the judges speak and announce the winners, guests are able to tour the show and view the cats during a wine and cheese reception.

The Sooke Region Fine Cats Show draws thousands of visitors to the area each year. It began in 1989 and is now Vancouver Island's largest cat show attracting the region's best and most unique cats. One of the most popular features is the domestic section where local pets display their unique talents alongside the best examples of fine purebred breeds.

This year's show runs from Friday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 to Sunday August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014. For more information see [www.sookefinecats.ca](http://www.sookefinecats.ca).

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For more information:

**5** Kitty Meow, president  
250-642-5555; Email: [kitty@sookefinecats.ca](mailto:kitty@sookefinecats.ca)

## 1 **Headline: grab their attention in a few words**

The headline is the first thing a reporter or producer will see and it needs to capture their attention. Reporters receive a lot of news releases, Twitter feeds and emails every day so if you want your announcement read and covered, make it stand out.

You have one line to get their attention so choose words that captivate, sound more important or more urgent.

A less effective example might read “Come to the annual Sooke Region Fine Cats Show”.

Small differences in wording can create a more interesting headline. Using “world premier” infers more action and gets more attention than “first time”. The words “award-winning” and “biggest” help describe how this event is more important and exciting than other events competing for coverage that day.

Choose these few words carefully.

## 2 **Opening paragraph: tell them why they should care**

The first paragraph of a news release should include who, what, why, where and how of your announcement. Reporters are busy and they receive a lot of information every day. Your announcement is competing with all the other information they receive. They don't have the time to sort through clever introductions or historical background when deciding if they are going to share your story. Just include the key facts.

## 3 **Quote: bring your announcement to life**

As you fill in the details of your announcement, include a quote that shows how your announcement makes an impact.

Most organizations have a main spokesperson (president, CEO, executive director, or board chair) who gives the words authority. Their quote should show how your announcement makes a difference. Consider how it affects the community, environment, customers or industry. Who benefits? Why is it necessary?

If there is a positive effect on others you may also include a quote from a key stakeholder who validates your announcement and emphasizes its importance.

## 4 **Background: add helpful context and valuable details**

All the most important details of your announcement are already in the first paragraph. Filling in the background should provide enough additional information to enhance the story without too much fluff and filler.

Remember how reporters are busy people who receive a lot of competing information? Keep those details concise and relevant. Consider a few details that strengthen the story such as some historical context, stats and numbers, future implications or colourful details that create interest.

## 5 Contact: for more information, be easy to reach

Include the name and contact details (phone, email and/or social media accounts) of your spokesperson. Ensure the spokesperson is available to accept calls, texts or emails and prepared to provide more information if needed.

If a different person (other than your main spokesperson) is heading up your communications efforts include their name and contact details too, so reporters have easy access to someone who can fill in background.

You can also add a few lines that summarize what your organization or business is about.

Don't forget to include a link to your website and social media accounts so reporters don't have to track them down.

## Sending your news release

If you are in a small community with weekly newspapers, send the news release by email to the editor(s) of the local news media in your community. If your area has daily newspapers, radio and television include those that reach your target audience in your distribution.

Post your news release on your organization's website and share the link through your social media accounts and by email to your contacts and members.

\*there is no such organization as the Sooke Region Fine Feline Fanciers and no annual Sooke Region Fine Cats Show. This fictional event was inspired during the summer of 2014 on World Cat Day (August 8th). While this may be seen as a fun and somewhat frivolous example, Saseenos Communications remains a great lover and admirer of all things feline.