

How to Write Good Press Releases

By Mindy Horst, Public Relations, Image Tours, Inc.

Press releases are an effective and inexpensive way to gain promotion for your travel agency. Most newspapers that have travel sections or pages are always looking for content to fill them. A press release allows you to communicate to the newspaper, and in turn the public, what your agency is doing and what products and/or specials you have to offer them.

A press release contains “newsworthy” information; it is not an advertising piece. This is important to realize and by keeping this in mind when writing a press release, you will have a better chance of having the release printed.

Image Tours, Inc. sends out two to four press releases a month and you can use these as a guide to create your own release or simply replace our contact information with your agency’s. An example of how to customize a press release appears at the end of this article.

If you’d like to create your own press release, here are some tips to help you.

1. Press releases should focus on the who, what, when, where, and why of an event or item you would like to promote. Tour presentations, consumer travel shows, and group departures are all excellent events to promote to a newspaper. Not only are they newsworthy, but they are relevant to the local community who reads the newspaper.
2. Be sure to include the name and telephone number of a contact person who is knowledgeable of the event or promotion and available to take calls. This is important so a reporter can contact you for more information and for the public to be able to contact you.
3. Put the most important information at the beginning of the press release. This will increase the chances of your press release

actually being read and printed by a reporter whose deadline was 10 minutes ago.

4. Double check all your information for accuracy, especially dates and times.
5. After you’ve written the press release, take some time to review it. Run it through spell check at least once and then have someone else proofread a hard copy. If grammar and spelling are not your strengths, have someone blessed with these abilities read through it. I always read my press releases out loud. This helps me see if I’ve left out any important information that would help the reader understand what the press release is about. Try and take a step back and approach the press release as if you are not a travel expert and have never been to a tour presentation, on a group tour, etc.
6. With that said, the industry standard is to keep a press release to one typewritten page. Try to use a common font, such as Times New Roman (which this article is written in) and a readable size, at least 10 point, but no larger than 14 point.

Press release writing is just like any other type of writing, the more you do it, the easier it will become. This isn’t meant to be a comprehensive article on how to write a press release step by step. If you are interested in that, I’d suggest checking out www.press-release-writing.com. They have a lot of information on writing press releases and many sample press releases for you to use as templates.

If you have any questions about writing or customizing press releases, please contact me at mindy@imagetours.com and I’d be happy to answer them. Below are instructions for customizing press releases.

Customizing Press Releases

Image Tours sends out several press releases a month. Some are sent directly to travel editors at newspapers across the country and some are sent to trade publications such as The Travel Agent magazine.

Below is one of our recent press releases about our World War II Specials. Highlighted in red are the areas that an agency can change to customize the press release along with some directions in parentheses about how to change the information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Specially Priced Departures of World War II Memorial Tour

GRAND RAPIDS, MI (your town) – January 27, 2003 (correct date) – Image Tours, Inc. (your agency) is offering special, low-priced departures of their popular 15-day World War II Memorial tour of Europe. Departures of this fully escorted tour start at \$2440 (price from your departure city) from Chicago (your departure city) and low add-on fares from over 80 other cities are available.

Image Tours (your agency), whose motto is “superior value with a personal touch”, (your agency’s motto, or delete this section) is partnering with Singapore Airlines to offer these special departures at such low prices. Singapore Airlines is known for its superior customer service that has won them public recognition year after year.

The tour journeys Holland, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. Special stops include American cemeteries, museums, monuments and historical centers. Also included is Nuremberg, Germany, where the Nazi movement gained momentum with Hitler’s propaganda parades. There is a solemn visit to Dachau concentration camp and a full day is set aside for the Landing Beaches in Normandy.

The tour combines the incredible history of World War II with the fun and entertaining sights of Western Europe. Experience lively Amsterdam with its canals, bridges and bikes. Take a relaxing cruise on the romantic Rhine River. Soak up the Bavarian culture in Munich and tour Paris, exploring the City of Lights.

Image Tours was founded in 1939 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. It began U.S. operations in 1960 on the belief that everyone, at least once in their lifetime, should experience the rich beauty, culture, and history of Europe. The company designs, markets, and operates escorted tours of Europe. (Use this paragraph to provide basic information about your agency. Include how long you’ve been in business, where you’re located, etc. This is spot to add some “advertising”.)

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