

A MEMBER'S GUIDE TO GETTING NEWS COVERAGE.

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**

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PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2012



Improving the world through engineering

A MEMBER'S GUIDE TO GETTING NEWS COVERAGE.



We believe in working with our members to help get media coverage for the events and activities you make happen.

The voice of engineers should be heard, and this document provides guidance on how to maximise your chances of getting journalists to listen.

This guide should be used in conjunction with the press release template and the press invitation template.

FINDING A GOOD NEWS STORY AND GETTING IN TOUCH WITH HQ PRESS OFFICE

- Do you have a good news story? Try asking yourself: would this event be of interest to your (non-engineering) friends? If the answer is yes, then get in touch with Press Office HQ at media@imeche.org **before** the event (preferably a month so we have time to work on the event together).
- If you think you might have a good story, but aren't sure, then get in touch as well. Press Office HQ can advise, as well as help draft press releases, get media to attend the event and monitor any resulting coverage.

- If you want journalists to attend your event, send them an invitation explaining **what** the event is, **where** it is taking place, and **when** about a **week before** the event.
- If there is something worth photographing or filming make sure you explain this in the invitation also.
- Make sure you include contact details – including an email and phone number.
- Follow this up with a phonecall the **day before** the event where you can remind them that it's taking place and confirm their attendance.
- The invitation should be no more than a page long. For further guidance see the press invitation template.

GETTING JOURNALISTS TO ATTEND YOUR EVENT

Here are five key rules to writing a good press release. For further guidance please look at the press release template.

GET A GOOD NEWS ANGLE

If you are writing a press release, the fact that a conference, speech, lecture, meeting or award ceremony is taking place/took place is **not** a news story.

What was said, **who** won and **why** is the sort of material you should focus on in your press release. Also remember it is often worth adding location – as a local angle will help get coverage in local media.

For example:
Bad press release headline: “Engineering award ceremony takes place”

Good press release headline: “Liverpool student Joe Bloggs wins award for design of zero-carbon hairdryer”

WRITING A GOOD PRESS RELEASE: —ANGLE —NAME —TIMING —SHORT —STYLE

Journalists get hundreds of press releases every day, and will delete anything that doesn't interest them by the first paragraph. **Put the most interesting part of the story in the headline and first paragraph.** Journalists won't sift to the last paragraph of a press release to find a nugget of news.

You need to give journalists a story, not get them to search for one.

NAME THE INSTITUTION OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERS

There is no point getting great news coverage if the Institution isn't associated with it. Make sure you mention the full name: **Institution of Mechanical Engineers** in the first paragraph of a press release.

Use the press release template with the Institution logo.

See section 5 **NAME THE INSTITUTION** for further guidance.

TIMING

News isn't news if it's a week old. Make sure **press releases are sent out as soon as possible**, and that radio and TV interviews happen promptly – ideally on the same day of the event or the day after.

Journalists work to an array of different deadlines – some hourly, some daily, and some weekly. The best time to issue a press release is in the morning – ideally 9am or 10am. Avoid sending anything out on Friday afternoon or at weekends.

However, **don't send press releases before the event.** Press releases announce news, and are not invitation to events. If you want journalists to attend an event see section 2 of this document.

KEEP IT SHORT

Keep the press release to one page or at the very most two pages.

STYLE

Never use a long word when a short word will do, and if it's possible to cut a word take it out.

Don't use jargon or acronyms. Any terms which might not be known to the average (non-engineering) individual should be avoided.

Press releases should be written in the active rather than passive tense – so “many Institution members attended the event” rather than “the event was attended by many members”.

PHOTOS AND FILM FOOTAGE

- A good photo or backdrop can often make the difference on whether an event makes it into newspapers or broadcast news. Is there something worth photographing or filming? An unusual backdrop, old or impressive machinery, people doing something exciting? Make sure you tell journalists about anything which might have potential when you invite them.
- If you want to take photographs yourself: make sure you take them with a digital camera, and that the photographs are ideally high resolution or at least 300dpi.
- Send the photographs with the press release, attached to the email as a jpeg file.

- This is already covered in part in the rules for writing a press release, but it's such an important rule, it is worth repeating. **There is no point getting great news coverage if the Institution isn't associated with it.**
- Make sure you mention the full name: **Institution of Mechanical Engineers** at least once in any radio or TV interview you may do, in all press releases and in any email you send out to journalists.
- In any press release or email make sure you **spell the Institution's name correctly**, and make sure you **don't refer to it as IMechE**. People outside of the industry don't know what IMechE stands for.
- Always use the press release template and the press invitation template, which feature the Institution's logo.

NAME THE INSTITUTION

CONTACT THE INSTITUTION'S PRESS OFFICE

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