WRITING MATERIAL FOR INDUSTRIAL PR

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I have generally found writing for industrial PR to be very similar in principle to writing for many other purposes, such as journalism, story-telling, or even documentary reporting.

They all start with *the essentials of who, what, where, when, why and how*? In addition we should bear in mind *the qualities of clarity and brevity* - while seeking always to *ensure our writing has valuable content which is easy to read.* Otherwise we may find our lovingly and painstakingly crafted prose being consigned to the editors waste bin. Even if it does make the cut and get published, it is still important that our readers should find it interesting enough to attract their attention and to sustain that interest to the point where they would like to learn more by visiting your website or picking up the phone to make an enquiry – or even to place an order!

So it is important to consider *who are we/you writing for?* A press release or other article may need to state this upfront e.g. "design engineers are likely to find the xyz widget especially interesting for ………..insert purpose or application………" – or "engineers in the widget industry have found ….then state the problem you will address ……." This will help your target audience to find the piece and to recognize immediately that it may be useful to them.

There is so much of this sort of material in our media channels that we must recognise *our audience has limited time* – so spend some thought on your title – *a clear perhaps catchy title, nonetheless businesslike and to the point,* will help both attract and identify that this is really of interest to your intended reader at first glance. Ask yourself - "how much time do I spend reviewing a search result before I click on it or commit to reading an article?" It is a telling question and I bet the answer is in the order of a couple of seconds.

Early on it is important to *answer the question - what is your product/service*? Describe this in industry known terms so it fits recognizably into the reader's known universe. *Use common industry jargon and tech terms but do not over use* since your audience may span quite a range of tech-ability or may simply not wish to engage high gear to slog through your text line by line.

Now we can define what the features are - with the main ones and the unique ones first, then other important ones. Remember it is still a feature even if all the competitors have it too.

Which leads us to - *why should they buy* in terms of what will your product/service do for its purchaser?

Also *when would they use it*? *Where would they use it? How would they use it?*

Now that your reader knows it really is of interest you can get into more detail to *describe how it works*. This is your chance to get "techie" with advantage, since it speaks to *expertise, credibility and authority* - and is important since engineers need to understand *so that they can incorporate your product/solution into their design or process.*

It is important throughout to *be clear, don't waffle, and don't mention your company name too often*. Read it through, be honest – we want people to think of this as moderately independent or at least objective – and not "sales BS".

In the cause of brevity - *do be brief*, especially if you don't have much to say - but use as much space as you need – learn to be sensitive to information density in your writing as well as the length of piece which suits your intended medium and is likely to hold the attention of your reader – will it be published if it is 1000 words long or would 200 be more acceptable? Equally if you are dealing with a complex subject in an authoritative way then perhaps 1000 words is required and 200 would not be taken seriously. *As a general rule 200 words will suffice for a press release* although the internet is much less constrained by space that the printed media – but it is still preferable to have most of your article above the fold so that it can all be seen without scrolling down.

At some point it will be worth asking yourself: "what is content?" In other words – *does this piece contain anything of value*? And to respond by *ensuring that your article contains "meat and two veg" – something to chew on* – if you fluff out a piece ensure the fluff is also interesting, relevant, witty or in some other way at least engaging – something especially important when engaged in industrial social media.

The industrial marketplace is driven by technology so do write about yours, this adds credibility and is interesting to designers and engineers – it also aids in raising you up above the competition – you gain authority by publishing whitepapers and feature articles as well as application stories - where you may sometimes also "borrow" something of the technology status of your customer – for example by showing a low tech component being incorporated into a much higher technology end product.

Throughout learn to write with your keyword list in mind – ensure that you include relevant ones and consider what new ones may be important – this will aid SEO – which is simply a way of encouraging search engines to find your material and to put it in front of potential customers.