

Bianchi PR Tipsheet #4

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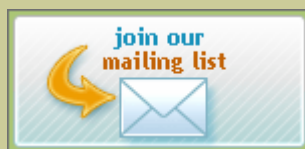
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→ How to Write a Great News Headline

Writing headlines has always been a tough job. It's especially tough these days, since you have to craft them so your story is attractive to both traditional, hard copy media outlets and online publications.

Headlines need to be built with important keywords, while clearly summarizing the news being announced. They have to be concise. They have to end world hunger and bring peace!

OK, maybe they don't have to do all of that. But when you have to write them, it can feel that difficult. So, if you're staring at a blank page and you're about two seconds away from banging your head on the desk, consider these tips:

Short-n-sweet -- The days when people opened everything that was sent to their email are long gone. People are bombarded with information these days and quickly scanning seems to be the norm. So make your headline easy to absorb. Think of headlines that get your attention and tell you what you need to know, such as "Automaker reports momentous sales increase."

Keywords up front -- If your headlines do run longer, be sure to place your most important keywords near the front of the headline, since some readers only glance at the first few words, such as "ABC Co. introduces new IP and patent handbook for small businesses and entrepreneurs." Note the company name and product are listed first.

Make it a must-read -- Try to give your headline a sense of urgency. People don't like to be out of the loop and are more likely to keep reading if they feel the news is something they NEED to know about. Think how your local news channel does this every day - "Could something in your dinner be poisoning you? Tonight at 11!" While scare tactics aren't the answer, something along the lines of "Safety tips owners of electric vehicles need to know" might be.

Don't be shifty or secretive -- Say exactly what the news is in the headline so readers know whether they're interested in the rest of the article before they click on the link or continue reading.

Say what?! -- Make sure your headline would be understood out of context. Oftentimes, headlines appear on their own, as in search

engine results, so they need to make sense without the rest of the article visible.

Bonus thought -- What makes you click on an article? What headlines grab your attention? Keep track of your article clicking and reading habits for a week. Then look back and see if you can find a pattern.

Stuck in a rut and need some news writing assistance? Give us a call at 248-269-1122 or email us at bianchipr@bianchipr.com.

