

PR-style writing

Specialties · By Simon Townsend · 1 min read

Journalism is not PR. In public relations the PR person writes a media release extolling the virtues of the product or service she represents. The media release is written in a journalistic style, with quotes from relevant people, statements of facts and a name and phone number at the end for further information or to contact someone to interview. The difference between an article and a media release is that the media release makes only positive statements about the client. After all, the client is paying. But an article (usually) tries to be balanced. A media release might say that Mr Smith has developed a new type of watermelon that guarantees an extra 40 years of human life if eaten every day. A good journalist will report Mr Smith's claims but will also get comments from say the head of the watermelon growers group, a dietician, an expert on the aging process and a lawyer. They are likely to criticise the claims. This is called "balance" in journalism. A media release is not required to have balance and it's perfectly moral for a media release to ignore negative aspects and to push the one positive line. However, a reader wants to be informed, not "sold" something. A reader wants to make up his or her mind on the facts that a journalist gathers. Nothing in life is "perfect". Controversy is everywhere. Few people agree with few other people. Yet many new writers are so in love with some idea or some product or service, they don't want to investigate any negative or opposing views. They create articles that seem like extended media releases in which everything is 100% perfect. Opposite viewpoints can be interesting and makes your article **BALANCED**. The reader has the intelligence to make up his own mind. You're a journalist, not a PR person. I'd ask you to re-examine your article in light of my above comments.

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