

PRESS GUIDE

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www.littlewordstudio.com

OVERVIEW

now is the time to share your story

One of the best marketing mechanisms at the disposal of every real estate agent (and it's free!) is the press. In this guide, we'll outline the specific steps you should take (broadly applicable to a range of agents at all levels of experience and production) when crafting the story you'll share with the press, conducting media outreach and finally, publishing the story on your own "press" outlets. The old adage "control the narrative, don't let the narrative control you" is absolutely correct. The good news is, nobody but you can tell the most accurate story of your business because you're on the inside, you are boots on the ground every day, (and late at night) and you understand better than anyone else the intricacies of the real estate industry. That's the good news. You have all the tools you need for obtaining media coverage right now. The (slightly) bad news is that the methodology we're about to go over takes a lot of work. You have to properly package your industry-specific knowledge so it's attractive and newsworthy for the media outlets your target clients are reading. This exercise might sound simple but it'll take some thought and planning to execute properly. (if you have a team or marketing coordinator, it might be something for them to execute.) Still, the payoff will make it all worth your time and effort. Free Press. Ready to get yourself and your business out there? Let's get started.



YOUR STORY

In real estate, the difference between a house and a home is often a great story.

- *Melissa Kandel* for Forbes

Your story can be anything. If, for instance you are listing the most expensive home in Los Angeles, the press will probably be reaching out to you, in which case you won't even need to go through this process because your story is already compelling and newsworthy. If you're not listing mega-mansions on the daily, your "story" is going to take a bit more work.

When you think about your central story, think about ways you can uniquely benefit the community, clients or homeowners. "Benefit" is a pretty loose term. It can mean an actual additive measure that will improve the happiness and financial stature of a given individual. It can also mean an emotional benefit, an intellectual benefit or a tangible benefit. Here are two types of stories that will resonate right now:

Free services. You are by no means a discount sales professional but there are certain free services you can uniquely offer. If you're an expert for first-time homebuyers, maybe you provide a 30-minute free consultation about ways to navigate a tricky market and buy your first home (or host a Zoom session for free and promote that to outlets). Maybe you host a "Lunch and learn" at a local outdoor cafe where you break down the market for buyers and sellers. (Partner with the cafe and offer items discounted for bringing in X number of people on that day.)

Social responsibility. If you can't do free, carve out a percentage of sales to donate. Find a reputable charity (food banks or animal shelters are always a good start) and create an execution plan to donate X% of all sales from now until DATE. Incentivize clients with the authentic allure of altruism. Note: the more local the charity, the more interesting it becomes to local press. To get you started, here are some national charities (many with local chapters) to consider:



Tip for agents:

Buyers and sellers are always wondering: "How's the market?" But just pitching your point of view to reporters won't get you coverage. Use Canva, PhotoShop, Maxa or Google Slides to create a custom infographic showing a current market snapshot or providing valuable information. If you have MLS data, use that (with credit) to create a graph then add commentary below. If you're more of a right-brain thinker, put together a pointed infographic with advice, e.g. "5 Financial Benefits of Homeownership," or, "7 Tips for Navigating a Strong Seller's Market" "10 Ways Sellers Can Get the Highest Price for Their Home Right Now." (Notice the number. Five, seven, 10 ... quantifying your advice gives it that "infographic" feel and makes it more snackable for readers to digest.



PLAN

Now that you've got your story, the next step is to create a plan to share this story with as many people as possible, especially if they can potentially convert to clients (and sales). Here's a sample communications strategy you can adapt to your own business. Be sure you have all pieces in place BEFORE you execute.

STEP 1 - BREAK THE NEWS

The first step is to decide where you're going to "break" the news. You could start with a press release (see more information on the next page) or, you could start with a blog post or even a long Instagram caption. (If you're breaking it on your own social platform, use the platform with the highest engagement.) Long-form content is in. Over-communication is in. Don't worry about going long on your story; people will pay attention as long as you have a compelling story to tell. If you decide on the formal route of a press release, we've got a template on the next page. If you publish with a blog post, make sure you start with the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and WHY in your very first paragraph. This means whatever benefit you're providing to the community, to your clients or to homeowners, it'll need to be placed upfront in your story. Add insights from key team members if you work on a team and before you publish anything, make sure everyone on your team has seen the draft and knows exactly when it's going "live."

STEP 2 - PITCH THE STORY

Next comes media outreach. If you're organizing a virtual learning event, you should definitely include the details in your pitch and make sure you've given yourself at least one week between the start date of the event and the release of your news to generate press. Create 2-3 pitch email templates (we'll have a sample on the Pitch page) for different types of media you can target (e.g. Business 2 Business [B2B] industry media, local media, national media, etc. (National media is the hardest to acquire, so tread lightly or make sure your story is REALLY newsworthy to pitch national press.) Next, reach out to any media contacts you know. If you don't know any, visit the media outlet, search for the reporter whose beat is as close to your story as possible (e.g. a real estate reporter, small business reporter, finance/economics reporter or community reporter) and send a personalized email using your pitch template. Another approach to pitching the media is using a simple internet search to find reporters covering stories similar to yours. For example, if you are releasing an infographic about luxury home sales in your market, look up reporters covering luxury real estate market trends in your city and when you pitch them, reference the story they wrote with a link. (E.g., "I recently read your story about [INSERT HEADLINE OR RECAP] and thought you might be interested in covering [INSERT OVERVIEW OF YOUR STORY] ..."

STEP 3 - ENGAGE YOUR TRIBE

Send a dedicated e-Blast to your contacts, provide any team members with sample text to share the news on their social pages and leverage all internal platforms you have to create your own buzz separate from traditional media exposure. (E.g. send it to your managing broker, brokerage leadership and even, if it's big enough, to your brand leadership for potential coverage, if you are not with an independent firm.) Every business is its own media company, so now is the time to double down on that long-accepted dictum. This of course also means sharing on all *your* social media platforms, (business and personal, if applicable) perhaps with a dedicated hashtag so you can tract re-shares and posts. (E.g. #Melissas10StepsforBuyers.) It's also a way for followers to find YOUR content if you plan to release something similar again.

STEP 4 - CREATE SHAREABLE CONTENT

If you have a graphic designer, create a simple graphic (your "story" logo) you can send with your eBlast that's representative of your initiative. You should also create story-sized images (1080x1920 px) and LinkedIn sized images (1200x628 px). Post the story-sized images to (where else?) your Instagram story and tag any relevant accounts that might re-share. Make sure the image has your handle and hashtag on it! If you've created an infographic, make sure it's available in several formats (and easily downloadable), so others can share.

PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

[LOGO IN HEADER]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[COMPANY/AGENT NAME] to [ACTION YOU ARE TAKING E.G. DONATE 10% OF Every Sale TO ABC CHARITY] for [TIME FRAME E.G. Remainder of 2021/Next 60 Days/Q4]

[SUBHEAD EXPLAINING MORE ABOUT THE INITIATIVE E.G. Award-winning agent aims to help feed the community in partnership with No Kid Hungry]

[CITY, STATE] (MONTH DAY, YEAR) - [NAME OF COMPANY/Agent], [DESCRIPTION OF COMPANY/Agent e.g. "Top-producing agent in Newport Beach, California] has announced [he/she/they] will [INITIATIVE YOU ARE ANNOUNCING, e.g. "donate 10% of all home sales to Feeding America" for [timeframe e.g. "the month of September/the entire second quarter/the remainder of this year."]] The initiative is aimed directly at [THING IT WILL DO e.g. "providing food and resources to the community while giving much-needed hope to those in need."].

[QUOTE FROM YOU/TEAM LEADER ABOUT INITIATIVE, e.g. "Even though the real estate market is experiencing unprecedented growth, other sectors of the country have not been as lucky," said [NAME OF TEAM LEADER/AGENT], [POSITION AT COMPANY]. "[I/we] want to do our part to help those who need extra support and let them know we are here for them and want to give back in any way we can."

[1-2 MORE SENTENCES DESCRIBING THE INITIATIVE, THE INFOGRAPHIC, THE SERVICE YOU'RE OFFERING, YOUR PAST INVOLVEMENT, WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT ETC. THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO ADD EDITORIAL COLOR TO THE STORY AND CREATE A DEEPER NARRATIVE THAT RESONATES WITH REPORTERS AND ULTIMATELY, READERS. YOU CAN ALSO USE THIS SPACE TO ADD ANY RELEVANT STATISTICS OR CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION.]

[QUOTE FROM CHARITY LEADER/OTHER EXPERT IF YOU CAN GET IT OR WRAP-UP QUOTE FROM SAME TEAM LEADER/AGENT OR ANOTHER MEMBER OF LEADERSHIP TEAM. E.g. "We are thrilled to partner with [YOUR COMPANY/TEAM NAME/DBA] to benefit the recipients of our meal delivery service," said [FIRST AND LAST NAME OF PERSON YOU ARE QUOTING, [TITLE OF PERSON YOU ARE QUOTING] of [COMPANY THEY REPRESENT]. [FINAL, WRAP-UP QUOTE GOES HERE: E.g., "This initiative will help bring comfort to so many people in so many important ways."]]

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[COMPANY NAME]

[COMPANY BOILERPLATE INCLUDING CONTACT INFORMATION, WEBSITE, PHONE, ETC.]

Media Contact

[NAME OF MEDIA CONTACT], [TITLE OF MEDIA CONTACT], [EMAIL], [PHONE NUMBER]

services to consider for distribution (prices subject to change)



Approx. \$1,100 for 1 national release



Approx. annual fee of \$195 + \$350+ per release



Approx. \$460 per release (400 word limit)

OUTREACH

Don't pitch the media a fastball; pitch them a nice, slow ball they can hit out of the park.

Best Practices

CREATE SEVERAL PITCH TEMPLATES

Identify the 2-3 (no more) types of media you'd like to pitch. For instance, if you created an infographic about new home construction this quarter, you can pitch: real estate industry publications, new home construction blogs and local publications in the city/town where you are based. Think like a reporter at that outlet: How can you re-frame and re-structure the story to make it enticing for the writer to cover? (Media outlets are businesses just like yours; reporters work for editors who approve and edit the quality and editorial value of their work. Here's a sample pitch:

Hi [NAME OF REPORTER],

I want to bring to your attention to [THE PRESS RELEASE/INITIATIVE] [NAME OF COMPANY] [just distributed across the wires/just announced]. [NOTE ABOUT IMPACT, e.g. "With supply chain shortages and layoffs, [NAME OF YOUR BUSINESS/YOUR DBA WITH LINK TO YOUR WEBSITE] based in [CITY] is taking a proactive approach to help our [community/homeowners/whoever is the recipient of the newsworthy thing you're doing]. We are [BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE]. This will [BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF POSITIVE IMPACT OF INITIATIVE ON INDUSTRY/COMMUNITY, ETC. - BASE THIS ON THE TYPE OF REPORTER YOU ARE PITCHING E.G. IF IT IS A COMMUNITY PUBLICATION STRESS THE BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY.]

To learn more, please see the attached document [EITHER ATTACH A PDF OF YOUR RELEASE OR A PDF VERSION OF YOUR BLOG POST] or visit [WWW.WEBSITE.COM/URLofINITIATIVE]. Our [TITLE AND NAME OF PERSON AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT E.G. CEO ANNE SMITH] is available for comment, and we're happy to share more details about our new initiative.

Thank you,

[NAME OF PERSON WHO SENT PITCH]

DO YOUR RESEARCH

You might have an entire list of media contacts, you might even be friends with Anna Wintour, in which case this section is irrelevant. If you don't (and that's OK), you'll just have some work to do. The first step is to google stories related to the real estate industry or initiative and find contact information for reporters covering similar topics. (See Pitch the Story section of Page 3.) Next, create a spreadsheet with the following columns at the top: REPORTER NAME / WEBSITE (could also be URL of related story you found via google search) / PITCH TYPE (e.g. Industry, B2B, etc. so you know what template to use) / DATE PITCHED / RESPONSE DATE / FOLLOW UP / NOTES

TRACK SUCCESS AND FOLLOW

Now it's time to track your progress. On the spreadsheet, note the date you reach out to reporter (DATE PITCHED) and if/when you get a response, note that date too (it's important to keep track of when they responded so you can follow up if you don't hear back from them or don't see a published story in the next few days). If you hear crickets (and for many outlets you will), you can send a brief follow-up email 1-2 days later and note the date of that outreach, too. Use the notes section for any additional information you gather or, for instance, if the reporter requests high-res image and you need to send those or schedule the interview.

SELF-PUBLISH

As a reminder, you should also post your news story on your own platforms to "self-publish" the release ...



BLOG

Post the release text on your blog or use your blog to release the story

FACEBOOK

Link to release/blog post, follow up with branded graphic (square) with link in caption

LINKEDIN

Link to release/blog post with 3-4 sentence commentary and hashtags

INSTAGRAM

Consider a 2-slide post; one with your initiative graphic, one with text about your initiative

INSTAGRAM STORY

Post your branded graphic, tagging accounts & share all posts that tag you

TWITTER

Tweet a link to your release/blog post - the next day, tweet your graphic with a link in the tweet (use your hashtag)

PINTEREST

Pin whatever image you used in your blog post to your Pinterest page with a description of the initiative

E-BLAST

Send an e-Blast to your contacts with a link to the story and shareable graphics they can download

A top-down view of a workspace. In the upper left, a hand holds a blue pen, writing in a notebook. The notebook has handwritten text in blue ink. To the right of the notebook is a square glass filled with an amber-colored liquid. Further right is a laptop keyboard. A green plant leaf extends from the top right. In the bottom left, there is a lit candle in a glass holder. The background is a light-colored, speckled surface.

SHARE THE LOVE

If you liked this guide, post about it on social and tag us, @littlewordstudio! We love to connect and help others grow. You can also visit our website for more information about what LWS is all about.

Questions? Get in touch:

hello@littlewordstudio.com
www.littlewordstudio.com