



PRESS RELEASES & PRESS KITS

A press release is typically the first step of a publicity campaign and an important way to introduce your project to the media and your community. Ultimately, the goal of a press release is to let the media know something of interest is happening, and provide basic information aimed at hooking the interest of a writer or assignment editor. Press kits are an extension of Press releases. They serve to further inform the media about your show and give much more detail than a standard Press release - It provides materials to enhance a story.

Press releases and packages must be uploaded to the Fringe's FTP site (check your Artist Info Emails for details) before we pass on a media contact list to you. PDFs work best, and don't forget to include three to five high resolution images in jpg format.

How to Make a Press Release

A strong and simple press release is essential to every show's marketing campaign. The Press Release is your key to communicating to the media about your show. You give them talking points; catch their attention with a few exciting details, as well as providing them with all of the important, basic information for your show.

Too often, artists neglect to send out press releases because they think theirs will just get lost in the jumble. The truth is that the press wants to hear from each and every Fringe Artist. Often media outlets are surprised at how few press releases they received. That being said, don't be disheartened if they do not reply. Many media outlets go straight to the Fringe's publicist for information, rather than following up with artists.

When you are sending out your release, we recommend writing a friendly 3-4 sentence introductory email letting the recipient know why the attached release is worth reading. The body of your email should interest them enough to read the press release and should not repeat what is already stated in the release. You can cut and paste the release into the text of the email and/or add it as an attachment. If you have a promotional image or photo ready at the time of your first release, we recommend sending no more than one small image as an attachment and let them know that you have a print quality image available, as well as additional images. If the media wants an image to print, they will request a high-resolution, large-version of the file.

We recommend keeping the length of your release to one page. Most media outlets receive hundreds of press releases each day and you should appear "news-worthy" right off the bat, without them having to read on and on. If the editor wants more details, they will contact you for an interview or further information.

In order for your press release to get noticed, you want to make sure it doesn't get lost in the shuffle of a busy inbox. Come up with a creative, snappy, succinct subject line relevant to your Fringe show. Keep it clean; you don't want it suffering the unfortunate fate of a spam filter. Your "catch phrase" could be a really clever line from your play, or a brief but heart-wrenching description of your show, or a headline that lets your audience know the famous actors you've hired for your show, or a funny tagline that lets your audience know what your show is all about. Whatever you choose, keep it brief.

What to Include in Your Press Release

Make sure your press release includes the following, and keep it to one page only:

- CLEAR HEADLINE** that explains what is happening eg. "My-Show Cast Announcement"
- CATCH PHRASE** could be a really clever line from your play, or a brief but heart-wrenching description of your show, etc
- THE TITLE** of your show
- BRIEF DESCRIPTION** of the show including key "talent" involved, and an explanation that It's part of the Vancouver Fringe Festival.
- BRIEF OVERVIEW** of what's interesting about the project
- FRINGE BOX OFFICE INFORMATION** including website and ticket cost
- COMPANY'S MEDIA** contact information
- FRINGE LOGO**

Press Kits Should Include

- Company and Fringe contact information
- Your press release
- Synopsis of the play
- Brief bios of key Participants (cast, director, playwright, etc)
- Backgrounder with historical information on the company or individual
- 1 - 3 high resolution photos (Minimum Print Size 4x6 inches. Maximum File Size 10MB. Maximum of 4 photos per company).
- Video clips of your show (not promos, but raw footage of your show, often referred to as b-roll)
- A photo and video credit list (Notepad, Microsoft Word or PDF) that lists the file name of the photos/video, names of the people in the photos/videos and the photographer's and/or videographer's name. Please do not put credits on the photo.
- Past press, if any (star ratings, news stories, quotes, etc)
- Your program, if available
- Advertising Materials (postcard, flier, newspaper ads, etc)

Photos

These should be high-resolution images (with a minimum of 300 DPI in JPEG); anything less loses quality when printed, making your photos useless to a newspaper or magazine. Make sure your photos are not too dark, have good contrast, and are in focus. See above for photo guidelines.

NOTE ON BOOKING INTERVIEWS

If you book your own interviews, it is absolutely necessary that you send an email outlining the date and time of your interview to Fringe's publicist at communications@vancouverfringe.com . This is so we can promote the interview, and also ensure that no interviews are double-booked..

Publicity Workshop

The Fringe offers a publicity workshop to help you with putting a press release together and tips on contacting the media. Again, read your Artist Info Emails to find out the details of this and other promotional opportunities.

Community Paper & Niche Media

When contacting media that focus on specific themes or content (example: Xtra, which focuses on queer issues and events), make sure you demonstrate why your show is relevant to the community they're reaching out to. Be upfront from the start and tell them how your show will resonate with their readership. It's a great approach that will help editors and reporters recognize your story is meant for their niche audience. Also, don't send releases to specialty media outlets that have no connection to the content of your show/story. It saves your time and theirs.

CONTACTING MEDIA

We know you're eager to get answers and follow-up with the media; just remember that they rarely have time to return phone calls unless they're interested or have been assigned to do so. One follow-up email is a nice way to check in, but one is probably enough. If you receive editorial coverage it doesn't hurt to send a note of acknowledgement to the reporter after the story has gone public. It is always important to respect the media's time and maintain good relationships for future stories such as show remounts, or your next Fringe hit!

PRESS & THE FRINGE

Some media will contact the Fringe Festival directly to recommend stories—even if you already sent them a Press Release. If our publicist can only submit a few recommendations, she's likely to choose productions that have submitted materials on time, appear to be reliable, and are equipped to deal with tight timelines, as well as those companies with good, printable photos.

WHERE ELSE TO SEND PRESS RELEASES

Get to work on thinking of what kind of contacts and connections everyone in your company has. If any of you are a part of a neighbourhood, housing co-op, local business association, religious association, or any kind of social or business network that produces a newsletter or hosts a community forum, send them a Press Release about your show and ask if they will help spread the word about it. One past Fringe show contacted their childhood church group who ended up bussing in 35 people!

Think about the themes covered in your show and reach out to who your show will speak to. For example, *Da Kink in My Hair* is a great success story that used this approach. When it was playing at the Toronto Fringe in 2001, the show's producer's promoted to Toronto-area hair stylists and their customers, encouraging them to come out to the show early in the run. The word of mouth that resulted led to the show's successful run and demands for a remount.

Ask if you can put up a poster at your workplace. If you are taking any classes or have acquaintances at the gym be sure to let those around you know about what you're doing. Talk about the good things happening in rehearsal, rather than complaining about difficulties with the production. Audiences can get turned off when they hear complaining.

There are also a lot of cultural and community Festivals that take place in Vancouver in the time leading up to the Fringe. Keep an eye on what's out there and find out if you can distribute flyers at any upcoming events and street fairs.

Encourage friends to buy their tickets in advance, and early on in the run. Reviewers at The Fringe usually come to your first or second performance, and it helps to have extra support in the house.

Feeling overwhelmed and need some help? Here are some Vancouver-based publicists for hire:

Amy Lynn Strilchuk

astrilchuk@artsclub.com

Damon Jang

damon.jang85@gmail.com

Davey Calderon

davey.s.calderon@outlook.com

Teresa Trovato

teresatrovatopr@gmail.com

Kenton Klassen

kbklassen@gmail.com

For more tips on Fringe Marketing, check out marketing and publicity guru Rebecca Coleman's blog here:

<http://www.rebeccacoleman.ca/2010/07/23/arts-marketing/fringe-marketing-for-dummies/>

<http://www.rebeccacoleman.ca/2010/07/26/arts-marketing/fringe-marketing-for-dummies-pt-2/>

<http://www.rebeccacoleman.ca/2009/01/19/arts-marketing/the-importance-of-a-good-publicity-photo/>