



Episode 46

When do you need a Press Release



**Jason: [00:00]**

Welcome to Designer Discussions with Jason, Mirjam and Maria. Today we're going to talk about how to know when you need a Press release.

Intro: [00:05]

Welcome to the Designer Discussion Sessions podcast. Tune in each week where we discuss marketing, branding, PR and business advice for design professionals.

Maria: (00:38)

This episode is brought to you by GetInk DIY. Interior designers that want to break into that luxury design market are going to need those press placements and publications that really set them apart. GetInk DIY is a do it yourself PR course for interior designers with a monthly membership that holds you accountable and helps you to get all that amazing press that you want. Check out, Get Ink DIY and get an opportunity to work with our PR best friend, Mirjam Lippuner.

Mirjam: (00:56)

Thank you, Jason. And actually, I could answer that question, the very short answer, and I could say probably never if you're an interior designer. But that would be too simplistic. So let's dive into it a little bit deeper. So we're talking about press releases. And some people call them press releases. Some people call them news releases, media releases, media announcements, media alerts is a kind of press release, too. So there's different names for it out there, I think, which can be a little bit confusing. And from my experience in talking with interior designers, I know that a lot of them have the wrong idea of what a Press release is. So let's see what is released. So I dug up a definition which says a Press release is an official statement delivered to members of the news media for the purpose of providing information, an official statement, or making an announcement. And that's not super helpful. Right. But that's really what it is. So the main idea that I want to convey is that if you just write an email to a journalist, that's not a Press release, okay. A Press release really is an official document that has a specific format, that follows a certain structure that we'll talk about a little bit and that you send out to more than one media news outlet.



Mirjam: (02:36)

Typically, if you just were going to go to one or two or three media outlets or journalists, you definitely don't need a Press release. And normally, if you have just if you want to make a pitch that's different from a Press release. Okay. A Press release is only for formal announcement, for instance, when you use it. And this is why typically bigger companies use it and smaller companies use them less, and entrepreneurs and small businesses use them very little. But some of the reasons why you would want to issue a Press release. And trust me, I've written hundreds of press releases in my life. I still write a lot of them, actually. So I'm very familiar with this topic. But when you launch your company, it's a good idea to issue a Press release because that's a big event, right. When you launch a new product or service, when you hire an executive for your firm, when you win an award, when you have a new big client partnership to announce, when you have significant company growth or other economic news, that's a good idea. When you're exhibiting or speaking at an event is also one of the times when I frequently issue press release for my clients, when you have a new office location, or when you start partnering with a charitable organization or do something really fun on an official scale. So those are the different. There's some other ones, and I always treat it as a case by case basis. But not everything deserves a Press release. And my favorite example for this is when I worked for Kohler Company. We wrote a lot of press releases because the company obviously launches a boatload of new products every year and has other news to announce, too. But we work a lot with the product marketing teams. And somehow getting a Press release for your product is like a badge of honor, especially if you can get yourself quoted in there. So they would push us to write press releases about their products. And one time somebody from the kitchen team came to me and they wanted a Press release on a new duo strainer. Right. Duo stranger. The thing that plugs the hole in the sink. And I said, well, the question you have to ask yourself when you issue a Press release is who cares? If the answer to that question is only you care, then it's not worth issuing a Press release, you know? And you can use this question pretty much in all cases, right. If you're the only one who cares, then don't issue a Press release.



Mirjam: (05:36)

The media are not going to want to know about it. Right. You should see my two co host of The Crack, and it was that funny. Okay, true story. It's a true story. So like I had said, really mostly larger companies issue the press releases and the structure that you want to employ when you write a Press release. It's very simple. It's a journalistic approach. It's basically the who, what, when, where, why approach and press releases are super factual. Okay. It's not a sales announcement. It's not marketing speak. Another one of my pet peeves when I'm writing press releases for larger companies is they will send me their advertising copy and they will say, okay, you can use this. I'm like, no, I can't because the journalist is going to just delete my email when he sees the sales, he or she sees the sales language in the press release. I'm like, we're not trying to sell. Right? We're trying to inform, we're sharing information. We're educating our audience about why whatever we have to tell them is important. And hopefully then they will understand why it's important for their audience, too, and they will cover it. It's like when you issue a Press release, there's very few media outlets out there. Some on the trade side will pick up your press release as it is, which is why it's so important that you write it in a way that the media can easily use it without having to edit out all your unique and best in the world and all those claims that you can never substantiate anyway. That's why you want to write it. It's if you were the journalist, right? If you were the journalist and you'd write it for your media outlet, they can just take it and plug it in and it's fine because it's not like the company is touting themselves and their achievement a little bit. You just have to be subtle about it. So there's a background at the end that's like basically a little. We call it boilerplate too. It's like a little paragraph about who you are as a company. This sounds fairly simple, but I would advise you, if you want to issue a Press release, don't write it yourself, but hire a professional. Hire a PR person. I am a big proponent of, especially in the interior design world.



Mirjam: (08:36)

You doing your own PR. You're perfectly capable. But writing a Press release is a special skill that you can't just pick up in an afternoon. I actually choose to put it in perspective. I had an old colleague of mine who is a copywriter, so he writes advertising copy and he was applying for a new job that also involved writing press releases. And he had to for the application process, he had to write a Press release as a test and he came to me for advice. So this is a guy who has like 30 years of copywriting experience, but he knows that he's not a PR person. He doesn't. It's a different style of writing, right? You need to have a specialist who helps you with that so you can get the maximum results out of it. So hire a professional if you need a Press release. And that being said, so when should you like, is there ever an opportunity or a reason for an interior design business to issue a Press release? And I would say yes. So like I said, if you open a showroom, for instance, if you launch a book or a podcast or a licensing deal, really any of the reasons that I listed before, if that's happening for your business, it can make sense to issue a Press release. And when you go talk to that professional, you can also ask them their opinion. Do you think this is a good idea for me to issue a Press release? And if they are worth their money, they will tell you yes or no and not just tell you yes to write the press release. Right. So when you have this press release written and maybe in the show notes, we can link to an example so you can see what it actually looks like in real life. I'll link to one of the press releases that I wrote. So then what do you do with it? There's a few different things that you typically do. If you have a news or a Press area on your website, you could include it in there. Preferably you'd include press coverage that you generate from the press release, but you can also just include the press release itself. Like larger companies, often times they will have press rooms and it's just press releases, right. It has press releases and images and information about the company. But typically you won't need that. But you want to post it somewhere. You can put it on your social media, definitely on LinkedIn, you see a lot of press releases.



Mirjam: (11:36)

It's just people like information. Right? Then if you have a media list, if you're a little further along in your PR journey, you may have a media list of a dozen. Several dozen, however many people are on there. But you can send the press release out to your media list in sort of a mass mailing. It's not the preferred way. The preferred way would be that you send individual emails to your media contacts and you attach the press release as information. Right. So in your email, you customize and you tell them why this news is important for them specifically. And then you have all the information in the press release. There is also the possibility to put it on a news wire, which is a great idea because it helps with SEO. So you pay a little bit of money. You work with a Newswire that distributes your press release to a wider audience. And what's nice is you have guaranteed pick up, right. So you can get your press leads on Yahoo, on Market Watch, on a bunch of different websites out there. And it always gets picked up. But it's not the most valuable coverage. But it gives you some breadth. Right. And it will help with the back links to your website. So I used to sort of veer away a little bit from posting it on wires because it's like cheating a little bit for a PR person. But it's legitimate because times have changed and SEO is very important. And it's a good idea for you to have your information out there on the web in as many reputable places as possible. And newspaper distribution is a good idea to do that. So the bottom line is, like I said, I think most of you will never have to issue a Press release, but I hope that this gives you a little bit better understanding of what it is and what, if ever, you're going to want to think about hiring somebody to write that press release and get it out into the media sphere for you.

Maria: (13:49)

Mirjam, I have a question about press releases. As an interior designer, would it be that you have a project that's coming up that it will benefit other people, like a large group of people, then it would be a good opportunity to talk about it in a Press release. Like if you're working on a new restaurant or a new doctor's office or something like that, where it was going to be servicing a community, is that more of an ideal time to talk about having a Press release about something like that?



Mirjam: (14:36)

In a case like that, I'd probably not issue a Press release. If you did, I would do it when the project is completed. Like if you're a really big company and you land a new client, sometimes you will issue a Press release. But for an interior design project, I would use the news on other of your own channels. I mean, I put it on social media. You know, you could even have a mention on your website. The media, I don't think are going to care at that point. So I wouldn't do it and I wouldn't write a Press release just to put it on a wire. I would really only write a Press release if the news is legitimate and you think you can get some real media coverage earned media coverage with it. But once the project is finished, if you're collaborating on a project that a lot of people are involved in, you always want to coordinate with these other key stakeholders in the project. That's another thing. But to me, because it is a project, I would turn that into a pitch because the coverage is going to be exclusive. Right. So if you have a really nice project, you're going to want to pitch it as an exclusive to your top choice of media outlet. Right? Because if you issue a Press release, it's not exclusive. So you would only do that if you're approaching several a number of media outlets at the same time. So for projects, I'm not going to say never, or maybe you pitch the exclusive first and then you turn it into a Press release and then you put it on a wire. Actually, if you have a very high profile project, there's a specific wire that's for architect and design projects that we can offer. It's called V Two.com, and that can be a good idea. But I would not do it before the project, and I probably just would keep it to a pitch unless it's a really big deal.

Maria: (16:47)

Awesome. Thanks for clearing that up.

Mirjam: (16:49)

And like I said, we'd have to look at that. It's like you want to look at each piece of news at each project and then you think through it and then you make a decision. So sometimes it's a little difficult to make these generic decisions. But that would be my guideline.

**Jason: (17:36)**

This is amazing information, Miriam. So for anyone in the audience that wants to know more, how do they do?

Mirjam: (17:19)

So that's an excellent question. You can always send me an email at Mirjam@getinkdiy. You can go to my website you can find me on social media and I'm happy to answer questions you have. There's a lot of articles out there on the internet. I am honestly not sure how helpful some of them are and I do think that as an interior design business you're in a very special situation and not all the rules apply to all the businesses but if you ever have questions, yes, by all means reach out to me. I'm happy to help.

Jason: (17:53)

We are happy to have Miriam here as the co host and she loves to help all designers so feel free to reach out to her when you have a question of any kind. And if you have enjoyed this episode make sure to hit the like button subscribe and share this with all of your designer friends and we hope to see you all here next week on Designer Discussions.

Maria: (18:14)

This episode is brought to you by Git Ink DIY interior designers that want to break into that luxury design market are going to need those press placements and publications that really set them apart. Get Ink DIY is a do it yourself PR course for interior designers with a monthly membership that holds you accountable and helps you to get all that amazing press that you want. Check out Getting DIY and get an opportunity to work with our PR best friend Mirjam Lippuner.

Outro: (18:48)

We hope you enjoyed this episode of Designer discussions. What was your takeaway care to share your thoughts and Tag, Jason, Maria and Mirjam on social media. You can find them on all platforms@designeriscussions.com. Don't forget to like subscribe and leave a review you or comments for this episode from wherever you are listening.



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