

# The one-quote press release

 By [Marion Scher](#)

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Every time I teach a course that involves writing releases, whether traditional or through electronic media, I meet communications people who all have the same problem. Their CEO, CFO, COO, assorted clients and Uncle Tom Cobbly and all - want their quotes included in the press release about the latest whatsit, whosit or thingamajig...

I explain to the now 'nodding in total agreement' group, that they will be lucky if the media even get to the first quote, let alone the others. "BUT", they say in unison - my boss says they HAVE to be included - meaning at least a two, if not three-page release. What a joke to think this will be read.

From time to time, I do have clients tell me that the media do in fact print their release in its entirety. This I have to assure you is a rarity, even with the generally lazy media we have today. Often local papers will do this - if it's written particularly well - but rarely in major newspapers.

## Try saying 'No'

So how do you get around this problem? Well if standing up to your boss is out of the question why not get a respected journalist/editor/producer to back you up on this. If you work for a large organisation then maybe you could persuade such a person to come along for an early morning breakfast to explain how things media related work. Or, failing this, perhaps ask them to put something in writing with regard to quotes that you could show the offending colleagues.

Another way of getting through to people, in particular on current reading trends, is to sit with them whilst they open their open 'in-box' and ask them to take note of the way they go through their maybe 50-70 emails in that sitting. They will undoubtedly do a lot of deleting followed by a lot of skimming. The big question is: will they actually read any of them from beginning to end? The answer - maybe one or two, if that.

## It might not be fair, but it's reality

If you take an average newsroom where around 300-400 emails arrive over an hour or two every day, then imagine how many of these actually get read? Two to three on a good day perhaps. And those from people or organisations who are vital to news - rather than some random announcement.

This, some of you may say isn't fair. The media need your input - and you'd possibly be correct. But that's a topic for a whole other column. This is about getting the media, if they even open your email, to at least be able to take in the essence of your release in the first paragraph with a glance at the quote if they need to.

Bottom line - be tough with your bosses/clients. Make them understand the realities of understaffed, overworked newsrooms. The simpler and shorter the release the more chance you have of getting something noticed or even published.

## ABOUT MARION SCHER

Marion Scher ([www.mediamentors.co.za](http://www.mediamentors.co.za)) is an award-winning journalist, lecturer, media trainer and consultant with 25 years' experience in the industry. For more of her writing, go to her Bizcommunity profile or to Twitter @marionscher.

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