



The Definitive Guide to *eLearning Press Releases*

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What is an eLearning Press Release?

Press releases offer eLearning freelancers, firms, and companies the opportunity to reach out to their target audience and spread the word about new products, services, and newsworthy events. Instead of focusing on personal opinions or sales gimmicks, a news release centers on factual information that is supported by statistics, quotes, and other concrete data. A well written release has the potential to be published by news outlets across the globe, which can significantly enhance your brand image and increase your sales.

However, there are a number of rules that you must bear in mind when writing a press release. The length, subject matter, tone, and layout all play a pivotal role in its success. There are also a number of elements that must be presented in order for news organizations to even consider your release, such as suitable contact information and a catchy headline.

To ensure that your eLearning press release gets maximum exposure, it's essential to follow the standard formatting

guidelines and determine if your story passes the publication "litmus" test. Is your press release going to intrigue, inspire, or enlighten your readers? Are you offering them insights that they won't find elsewhere? To write a successful release these questions must be answered.

In this guide you'll find a variety of tips and techniques that will help you craft the perfect press release. This includes how to properly format and submit it to eLearning Industry, where it can be viewed by more than 400,000 readers. Due to the fact that it is the largest community of eLearning professionals in the world, you are more likely to reach those who already have an interest in your product or service.

Just in case you are still undecided about whether it's the right marketing tool for your eLearning organization, this eBook will also explore the many benefits of distributing an eLearning release and offer advice on how to ensure that it gets noticed.



Press Release Dos and Don'ts

Before we explore the basics and benefits of writing an eLearning release, let's take a closer look at the essential ingredients that every press release should (or should NOT) have. We'll delve deeper into the formatting basics and must-have content in later sections, but here is a quick cheat sheet that covers the dos and don'ts of writing an effective news release:

Do

- ✓ Be concise and clear. Ideally, the release should be between 500-800 words in length.
- ✓ Follow the format (which will be covered in a later section of this guide).
- ✓ Include research findings, survey results, and any other verifiable data that support your story.
- ✓ Stick to the facts. Do not exaggerate any statistics or ideas to make your story more attention-grabbing.
- ✓ Provide contact information that allows both journalists and readers to learn more about your organization.
- ✓ Write a clear and catchy headline and concise summary.
- ✓ Include links that redirect readers to your website or product page.
- ✓ Accurately cite your sources, especially when using quotes (and it's always wise to use quotes).
- ✓ Proofread and edit your release before submission.
- ✓ Include at least one image that can be published with your release. Ensure it's high quality and relevant to the story.

Don't

- ✗ Submit the press release to multiple sites or submit a number of different releases that all pertain to the same story.
- ✗ Write a lengthy, multi-page release. Ideally, the entire release should fit on one printed page, with the first paragraph containing all of the need-to-know info.
- ✗ Include irrelevant background information, such as company history or an explanation of the story.
- ✗ Include out-of-date contact info; even contact info for individuals not in the office when the release is distributed. Journalists may want to get in touch for more information.
- ✗ Focus on an event, product, or service that is out-of-date, such as a piece of software that was released last year.
- ✗ Use a lot of industry-specific jargon, adjectives, or sales language. This will limit your press release's audience reach.
- ✗ Submit a press release that is riddled with grammar and spelling errors. Triple check your content!
- ✗ Use a variety of analogies or metaphors that take up valuable space. Instead, opt for real world examples and statistics that can easily be verified.

Benefits of an eLearning Press Release

Writing a press release offers a myriad of benefits. Despite the fact that crafting a successful new release does require a significant amount of time and effort, it may be an integral part of your marketing strategy. Here are just some of the perks associated with eLearning press releases:



Cost effective marketing

Instead of spending your marketing budget on expensive ads, an eLearning press release gives you the power to reach your potential customers or clients for a fraction of the cost. This is primarily due to the fact that a well-written release can be picked up by news organizations all over the world, such as newspapers, magazines, online media sources, and blogs. If the journalist or reviewer chooses to share your story or, better yet, give it their stamp of approval, this can significantly increase your sales and exposure.

Generates buzz among your target audience

This is actually a benefit that is multiplied when we publish your release with eLearning Industry, as you are reaching out directly to your target audience. Aside from the hundreds of thousands of eLearning professionals who have access to your press release, there are countless other online readers who will be exposed to your story. Your press release will build the buzz for an upcoming product launch, noteworthy news story, or exciting event, and you don't have to spend a small fortune for the publicity.



Boosts visibility

A press release has the ability to establish your brand and make readers aware of your site, product, or service. This is ideal for smaller businesses that may not have the budget for mass-marketing efforts, such as freelancers or start-up firms. Even charitable eLearning organizations who support a cause can spread their message and increase their online visibility.



Increases website traffic

Modern press releases feature a number of different backlinks, keywords, and other SEO marketing efforts that ultimately drive traffic to your eLearning site. Readers are able to simply click on the hyperlink to be automatically redirected to your sales page or website, instead of having to search for you on the web.

You can also include your site information in the contact section of the press release to offer readers the chance to learn more about your organization. A word of warning: don't oversaturate your press release with too many backlinks or keywords, as this may prevent it from being published by news outlets.



Builds credibility

One of the most noteworthy benefits of writing an eLearning press release is the boost in credibility it can provide. In some cases, it can even establish you as an authority in your niche. This is particularly true if you include tips, advice, or valuable information in your news release. Readers are assured of the fact that you and/or your organization are a trusted resource, and that you can offer them insight into the topic that they won't find elsewhere. When they are looking for more info on the subject, they are more likely to turn to your site to get what they need.

Enhances your brand image

ANY eLearning firm, freelancing professional or company, can improve their brand image with the help of a press release. However, organizations who may be dealing with negative publicity, such as unfavorable online reviews or bad press, can drastically alter the public's perception with a news release. In fact, it is a highly effective resource for managing your reputation and putting your company into the spotlight (for all the right reasons).

For example, if you discover that a handful of clients are unsatisfied with your software for one reason or another, you can counteract the negative publicity by publishing a press release once you've fixed any bugs and addressed the concerns. This shows that you care about your brand image and builds customer loyalty.



How to Format a Press Release

In order to reap the rewards that were mentioned in the last section, you must start by properly structuring your news release. Though there is no ironclad format to follow, there is a basic layout that will help you create succinct and well-organized eLearning press releases that never miss the mark. Below you'll find a step-by-step walkthrough for formatting your release, as well as some additional tips.

STEP 1

When to date your press release

There are two routes that you can take when dating your press release. The first is "IMMEDIATE RELEASE", which indicates that you would like your release published as soon as it is officially approved. The second is "EMBARGOED UNTIL (desired distribution date)". This means that you would like to postpone the publication of your release until the specified date. If you do not put either option at the top of your release, most distribution sites will automatically assume that it is for immediate release. In addition, you must include the date that you are submitting the release.

STEP 2

What the headline should be

This is the time to make a great first impression. Choose a headline that jumps off the page and reflects the overall message and tone of the release. You can also include a subhead just below the headline in italics if you wish. The subhead should elaborate upon the main headline.

STEP 3

The first paragraph

This is considered to be the first section of the press release body. The opening paragraph should get straight to the point instead of dancing around the topic just to increase the reader's interest. Every "key takeaway" should be included in the first paragraph, such as the 5 Ws (who, what, where, why, and when) of the story. Keep in mind that news outlets and readers don't have a lot of time to peruse your press release. The opener has to grab their attention and hold it.

STEP 4

Proceeding paragraphs

There should be another two to three paragraphs that follow the first. These sections must include facts, quotes, statistics, and other evidence that supports your opening paragraph.

STEP 5

Boilerplate

A brief line or two at the bottom of your press release that talks about the author of the release and/or your company. This might include your core brand messaging, your accomplishments (what qualifies you to speak on the topic), and what you stand for.

STEP 6

Contact information

No press release is complete without current contact information to cap it off. Include your phone number, email address, website URL, and any other contact info that a reader might find helpful. You can also include your social media links. Also, be sure to indicate the name of the individual or organization who is submitting the release, as well as the person who will be in charge of media requests/questions.

Additional Formatting Tips

Double space it

All press releases should be double spaced for legibility reasons. The font should be no larger than 12 pt., and preferably Times New Roman, Arial, or another commonly used font type.

Limit it to one page, if possible, but definitely no longer than two printed pages. If you do opt for a two-page release, make sure to write "more" at the bottom of the first page to indicate that there is more content. You must also include the topic of the release or your name at the top of the proceeding page.

Keep it one page

Close it correctly

Include "end" or "30" at the conclusion of your eLearning news release to inform the reader that it has come to a close.

Tips for a Polished Press Release

Writing an effective eLearning press release is no small feat, especially if you have never penned a release in the past. Fortunately, there are some tips & tricks that can help you make a polished press release that achieves your marketing goals.

Make it clear and concise



Successful press releases condense all of the need-to-know information into a one page summary. Most importantly, it must be easy to read and to remember. There is no room for tangents or wandering thoughts, as your readers simply don't have the time to meander through a lengthy story. So, you need to make it clear, concise, and packed with just enough information to keep them informed. This does not mean, however, that you should include so many facts, stats, and research data that will overwhelm your readers.

Create an attention-grabbing headline

Crafting the perfect headline can be one of the most challenging aspects of writing a press release. This is because it must sum up your entire story in a single, short sentence, while still grabbing the attention of your target audience. However, you cannot exaggerate or mislead them, as this will diminish your credibility and make them lose trust in your brand. Come up with a few headlines and read them aloud to see which one captures your interest or draws you in. Then ask yourself if it really sums up your message or story. The trick is to create a headline that makes them want to spend their precious time reading your release instead of someone else's.



Include hyperlinks



Hyperlinks achieve two primary purposes. Firstly, they drive traffic to your site by providing backlinks, which improves your SEO. Secondly, they give your readers the chance to access additional information with ease, rather than having to search for it on the web. For example, they can simply click on the link to learn more about your product instead of having to look it up online. Just make sure that you don't go overboard when integrating hyperlinks, as this may prevent your release from getting published in the first place.

Stick to the facts

Filling your press release with flowery language, vivid imagery, and emotionally-compelling content may be tempting. However, you should try to stick to the facts as much as possible and give your readers the information they're looking for. If you are making a point in your press release, then be sure to back it up with hard facts or stats, and give credit where credit is due by properly attributing the supporting evidence.



Integrate relevant quotes

Whenever possible, you should always include at least one quote in your press release from a reliable, relevant source. An important caveat to this is that the individual you are quoting should have a connection to the story, or else it can actually hinder the value and credibility of your press release. For example, a great quote from a senior executive or political official may carry clout, but only if it ties into your story.

You must also ensure that the quote does not simply restate what has already been said, such as repeating an idea that you've included elsewhere in the release. Last, but not least, be very clear about who said the quote. Include their name and title in the organization, as well as any information that links them to the topic (for instance, mentioning that they are a noted psychologist in the field of human cognition).



Always use up-to-date contact information

One of the most common mistakes that press release writers make is not including up-to-date contact information. This is especially true if you are working with a press release template that already includes contact details. Be sure to triple check your phone number, email address, and all other contact information to ensure that it's all correct and current. Otherwise, you may miss out on valuable media exposure if a journalist attempts to reach you, only to discover that your email address is no longer active.





Point readers in the right direction

You should always include at least one link that directs readers to your website or another informative resource. Chances are, they will want to learn more about your organization, message, or what you have to offer, and a link will point them in the right direction. This also makes it easier for journalists to cover your news story, as they won't have to search for the supporting information on their own.

Get the right collaborators on board

You don't have to go it alone. Writing a press release can be challenging. So, why not get some collaborators on board and make the process easier and more productive. Hold a brainstorming session with members of your eLearning team or a group of colleagues. You can even conduct a focus group to gain insight from your target audience. Use their ideas as a springboard to find the right news angle.

If you aren't particularly adept with a pen, then enlist the aid of a writer to help you craft your press release. Ask a professional photographer to take photos that you can include. All of these people are valuable resources you can rely on to produce an effective eLearning news release.



Proofread and edit before submission

Every element of your press release should be proofread, revised, and thoroughly edited before you submit it for publication... at least twice. In fact, you may even want to ask a colleague to double check it, just to make sure that you didn't skim over any errors. The goal is to deliver a press release that is free of any major mistakes that can detract from its overall value.

How to Submit a Press Release

Rather than submitting your new release to other online distribution services, why not publish your release through eLearning Industry and gain immediate access to your target audience?

The eLearning Industry press release distribution service gives you the opportunity to get in front of more than 400,000 readers. It will also be highlighted in our weekly email newsletter, which reaches more than 65,000 eLearning Professionals. To submit your release, simply click on this link and follow the instructions:

<http://elearningindustry.com/submit-press-release>

Before you provide us with your release, here are some tips to help you ensure that your press release gets published:



Keep spam out of the equation

Be clear and direct when creating your subject headline. This goes for both email and form submissions. In fact, it's wise to simply use the headline of your article as the subject line. Avoid spam or marketing gimmicks, such as a call to attention or anything misleading. Otherwise, you run the risk of your press release ending up in the spam box after you've put so much thought and time into the process.

Ensure that it's newsworthy

News outlets are not going to publish a press release that lacks an interesting, newsworthy angle. A news release that is packed with promotional gimmicks, marketing jargon, and sales pitches will usually end up in the rejection pile. This is primarily due to the fact that it doesn't offer the reader any real value. Sure, they may find out about a great sale, but you haven't offered them advice, tips, or facts that can help them in their everyday lives. If you are promoting a product or service, figure out how you can put a newsworthy spin on the topic.



Take care of major rewrites beforehand

Journalists and editors simply don't have the time to tackle major rewrites, even if they know that the story is going to shock, amaze, or excite their readership. Thus, you will have to take care of this all-important step on your own. Better yet, check your press release as you go along and make any necessary changes, so that you won't have to go through an extensive rewrite at the end.



Step into the shoes of your target readers

To leave a lasting impression and reach as many people as possible, it's imperative to step into the role of your readers and find out what matters most to them. Every news organization has a different readership, which means that you must have a clear idea of the audience you are catering to and what information they need.

Keep fluff to a minimum

Metaphors, industry-specific jargon, clichés, and other fluff should be kept to a minimum. This is particularly the case with language that is not common, such as sayings that are used in a certain niche group. Ideally, your readers should be able to understand every word in the press release, instead of having to look everything up online in order to get the gist of your story.



Obtain authorizations when necessary

In some cases you may need to get authorization for quotes, facts, and other research elements that you use in your release. Make sure that you have signed permissions on file, in the event that news organizations need them for verification purposes.

Press Release FAQs

Here are the answers to some of the most pressing news release questions you might have. Also, keep in mind that eLearning Industry has a variety of resources that can help you craft the perfect press release for your organization:



When is the best time to publish a press release?

The ideal release date and time greatly depends on the nature of your press release. For example, if you are announcing a product launch or eLearning event you should publish your release at least a week or two before the big day. If you distribute it too late your readers won't have enough time to plan, but they might forget all about it if you distribute it too early. Here are some golden rules that you may want to follow when it comes to choosing press release publishing date:

Avoid weekends

News release services tend to be slower on Saturdays and Sundays. In fact, many companies who are obligated to publish a release for legal reasons opt for a weekend release, since the release will get minimal exposure. If possible, wait until Monday and publish your press release or place an embargo date at the top to delay distribution until after the weekend.

Opt for morning distributions

It's usually best to publish your press release between 8 and 9 a.m., especially if your story pertains to financial matters that may impact the stock market (such as publicly traded stocks). On the other hand, if you want to limit your competition you can distribute it after 9:30 a.m. EST. Just make sure that you get it in by 3 or 4 p.m. so that the news outlets can meet their publishing deadlines.

Wait until you come back from vacation

Try not to publish your eLearning press release just before you go on vacation. Keep in mind that journalists and readers may want to learn more about your product, service, or event, which means that they'll need to contact you. They won't be able to do this if you are on vacation or out of the office for a few days. So, wait until you get back to work or include an alternate contact in your press release.



What contact information should I include?

You should include any and all pertinent contact information, such as your phone number, email address, and website URL. You must also include the name of the contact, their position within the company, and an address, if applicable. News organizations typically won't publish a press release if it does not have the essential contact details. It will also diminish the credibility of your press release, which defeats the purpose of sending a news release.

Should I write different press releases for different audiences?

The simple answer is: Yes. If you are catering to more than one target audience, you should write a separate release for each group. This may involve changing the tone, the story angle, and/or the language that you incorporate. Again, put yourself in the place of your readers to decide whether you need multiple versions of your press release in order to attract the most attention. For example, you may want to create one release to target a niche group, and then another geared toward your general audience.



How can I appeal to certain news outlets?

In addition to general news outlets, there is a variety of niche news organizations that you may want to consider when writing your release. For example, local press is ideal for events that are being held at a specific location, while specialty news magazines are a perfect fit for products geared toward a particular market or group. If you are trying to appeal to certain news outlets, do your research to find out what they typically look for in a news story and choose a suitable angle.

This makes it more likely that your desired news organization will pick it up once you've submitted it to eLearning Industry's distribution service. Also, make sure that you choose your publication dates wisely, paying close attention to the deadlines of the specific paper, news program, or site in question.





What info should NOT be included in a press release?

One of the best things about press releases is that you can typically find an angle for any story, even if it's been covered in the past or does not appear to be newsworthy at first glance. However, there are some topics that should never be covered in a news release. Here are some of the most notable "off-limits" topics to avoid:

Offensive language or ideas

Slander, racism, sexism, and discrimination do not have a place in press releases. Bear in mind that a press release is, above all else, unbiased. It should be free of profanity or any other offensive language that makes your readers feel uncomfortable or alienated.

Political opinions or propaganda

Political viewpoints should be excluded from your press release altogether. The only exception this rule is if you are running for office or are part of a political organization. Even then, it's best to keep political commentary to an absolute minimum in order to reach the most readers.

Gossip or hearsay

Insignificant news about your organization or office gossip does not belong in a press release. Remember that a news release centers on a newsworthy topic. For example, announcing that one of your employees has been promoted to a manager may not be of interest to your target audience.

Confidential information

Any information that is strictly confidential, such as facts that were conveyed in a private email or recorded secretly, should never be included in a press release. This also pertains to information that may violate a contract, court decree, or any other legally binding agreement.



Should I include photos in my press release?

Yes, but only if the images tie into your story and truly capture the message you are trying to convey. For instance, a headshot of the CEO may not be the ideal choice for a news story about your new add-on service. The secret is to make it attention-grabbing, but still relevant. This typically involves using a bit of creativity and innovation to find the perfect image. Most news organizations and journalists prefer that you make photos available upon request.

To do this, simply include a "Note to Editors" at the bottom of your release and mention that you do have photos if they're interested. In addition, make sure that you have captions for all of your photos. For example, a photo that includes three key members of your staff in the workplace should come with a caption that features all of their names and the date and/or location of the photo.

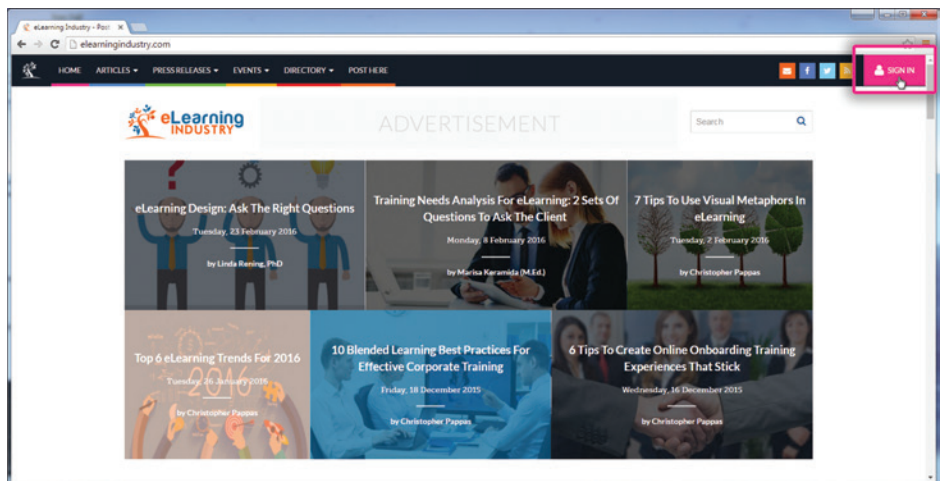
Submit your eLearning press release today to get in front of the largest community of eLearning professionals in the world. You also have the opportunity to track your release and measure its effectiveness after distribution, so that you can make the most of your marketing efforts:

<http://elearningindustry.com/submit-press-release>

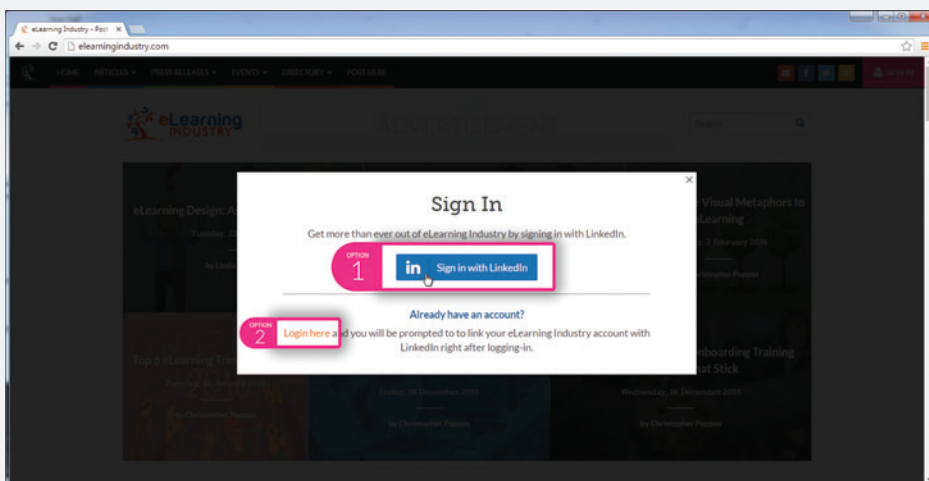
How to Post a Press Release

Now that you are educated on proper press release etiquette, you are ready to post your first release. In this section we will walk you through the complete process. After you have purchased your eLearning Industry Press Release Package (if you have not, please visit <http://elearningindustry.com/submit-press-release> to purchase it now), please follow the proceeding instructions below.

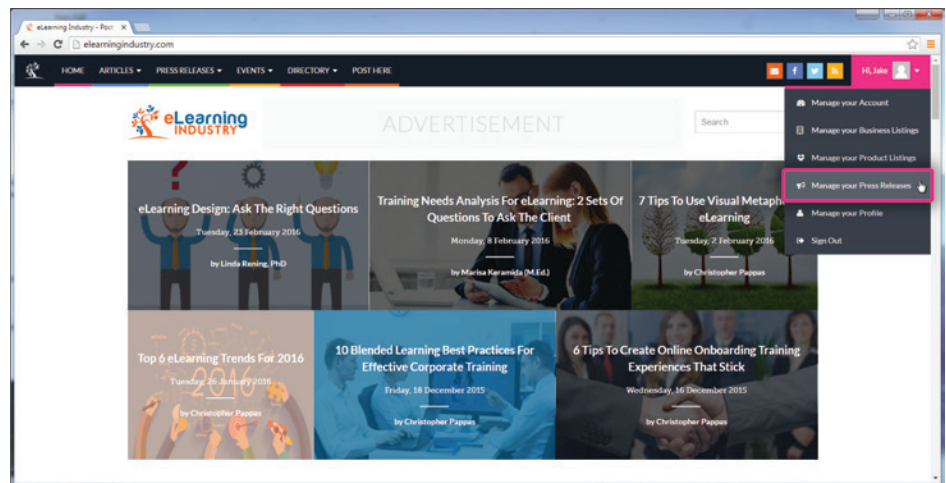
Sign in to your account by clicking the “SIGN IN” link found in the upper right-hand corner.



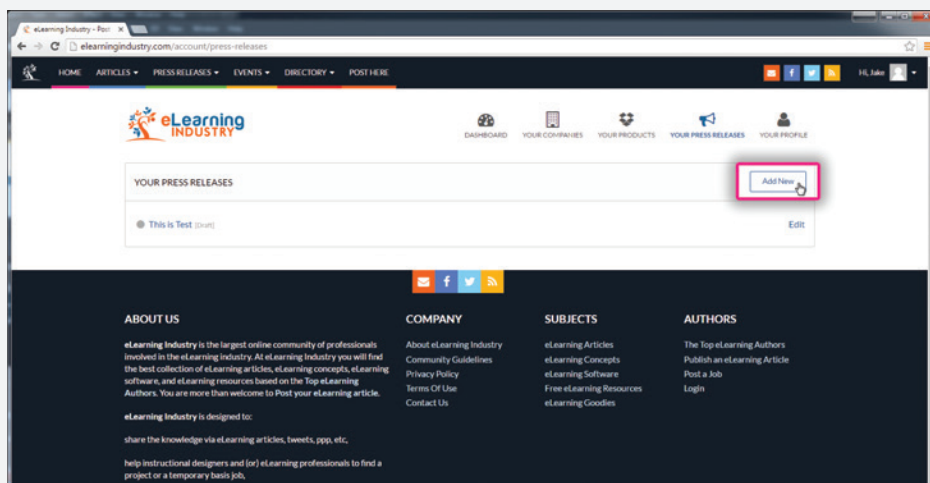
Login using either your LinkedIn account, or eLearning account; depending on which you used to purchase your press release package.



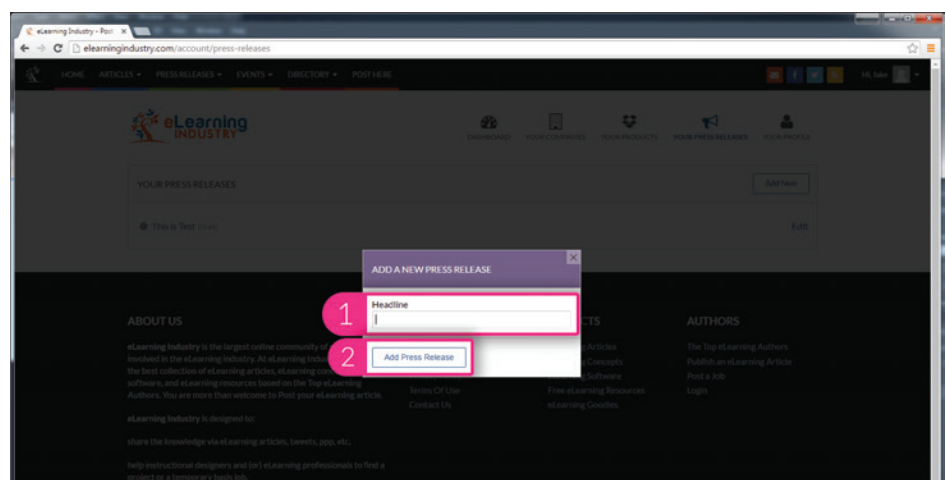
Move your cursor over the profile link in the top-right corner of the site. Under the drop-down that appears, click on “Manage your Press Release”.



Locate and click the “Add New” button found on the right-hand side of the screen.



In the dialog box that appears, fill in the press release headline, then click “Add Press Release”.



The screenshot shows the 'eLearning Industry' website's 'PRESS RELEASES' section. The form is titled 'PRESS RELEASES' and has a search bar. The form fields are numbered 1 through 9:

- 1. Press Release Title Here** (with a pencil icon)
- 2. Video** (with a video camera icon and text 'Add your video (optional)')
- 3. Add a brief summary.** (with a pencil icon)
- 4. Contact Details** (with fields for name, company, phone number, email, website, and social profiles)
- 5. Visit on Website** (with a field for 'Add release website')
- 6. Add content.** (with a pencil icon)
- 7. Image** (with a camera icon and a '+ Add Image' button)
- 8. Add quote.** (with a pencil icon)
- 9. Completion Progress** (with a circular progress indicator showing 10% and text 'Your release must be complete before it can be submitted for review. What is missing?')

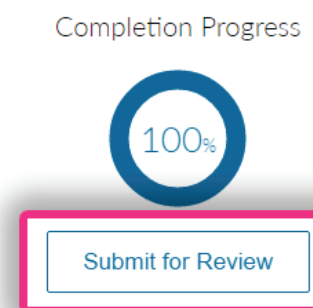
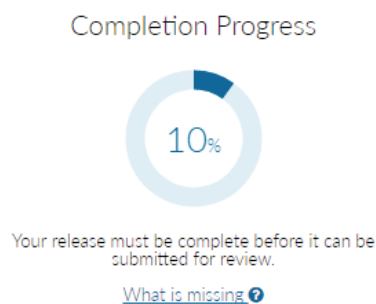
Now it's time to create the press release. To do so, simply click on each designated area and type or paste in the appropriate content.

Although not required, displayed on the left is the recommended order to fill out your release.

- 1. Title** (75 char. max)
- 2. Video** (optional)
- 3. Summary** (250 char. max)
- 4. Contact Details**
- 5. Website URL** (required)
- 6. Main Content** (300 - 800 char.)
- 7. Image** (required)
- 8. Quote** (optional)

As you complete the release, your progress is shown in **section 9**.

When you have finished, and the Completion Progress area displays 100%, simply click on "Submit for Review". Once approved, your release will be posted.





Congratulations!

Your release is now available to the largest community of eLearning professionals in the world. Be sure to come back & post regularly.