New "Rules," New Tools

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- Based on best principles, best practices, writing coaches, writing blogs, writing books, 40 years in the trenches.

- Reporter, corporate manager, not-for-profit VP, agency owner, writing teacher, PR writing consultant – OLD!

- Workshops for PRSA National Capital Chapter, corporations, government, military.

- Don't blame the messenger but be critical.

- Use what you can use to show your stuff. Be the best.

- Become a writing junkie. Read, study, blog, share, make a presentation next year.

Create One-Line Headlines

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- Guidelines apply in print and email.

- Forget multi-level approach. Leave to Wall Street Journal. It and other newspapers have different purpose. They're helping their readers in a rush get quick fix. You're aiming for story based on what you wrote.

- Grab editor/reporter attention quickly. Connect with natural professional curiosity.

- Work with larger message.

More on Headlines

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- NOT "IBM hires robotics expert as vice president of new technologies," BUT "New IBM VP envisions robots in all homes by 2025."

- NOT "NYC Administration of Child Services launches program to fight teen sex trafficking," BUT "NYC seeks end to child sex-trafficking scourge." Same release, larger story.

- Use active, not passive, voice and few words as possible. Active verbs lend immediacy. NOT, "XYZ has announced launch of $50 million in scholarships to be used this fall for underprivileged students in New York City high schools." BUT, "XYZ announces $50 million in scholarships for poor NYC high school students."

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- Don't use articles "a, an, the." Also, avoid "to be" verb forms. Adhering to these guidelines, here are options for "The New York Times says the presidential election is too close to call at this point":
  - New York Times says presidential election too close to call
  - New York Times says election too close to call
  - Times says election too close to call
  - Election too close to call (if published in NYT)
- Don't be overly witty or clever.
- Don't misrepresent the story with a headline that doesn't cover the main subject.

Take Advantage of S.E.O.

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- Focus on writing good content, unadorned with jargon and hyperbole.
- What worked a few years ago doesn't now. Google and other search engines know all about manipulation and have made it clear with their algorithms and policies.
- Write naturally
- Don't force the issue, don't fake.
- Social media are community, engagement, relationships.
- To write in SM context, learn copywriting basics.
  GET FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO COPYBLOGGER.COM

Fantasy and Reality

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- Is the press release dead?

- Understandable question in culture that proclaims death at so many levels. God, freedom, America, planet Earth.

- Are books dead? Is advertising? Is PR? Is marriage?

- Releases? Of course not. Needed, useful. What would replace them?

- But changing format, content, writing style.

- Inverted pyramid still useful as format, in fact still dominant, but it's becoming, to borrow from Tom Friedman's view of the world, "flat."

Work with "New" NR

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Newer Elements of News Value

- 1. Visual Impact: Images, video, infographics have increased news value.

- 2. Clicks: Editors and reporters often grade success of given piece by number of views, clicks, opens, likes.

- 3. Shares: The more a story is shared across social media channels, the more news value it has.

- 4. Mobility/Brevity: The shorter and easier to read/ consume, more news value it has.

- 5. Comments: Content with lots of comments has more news value and credibility.

- 6. Curated: Many in media now attribute greater value to aggregated, curated, user-generated content.

Inverted Pyramid Is/Isn't

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- Why IP doesn't always apply in digital space:
  - **Space:** Room for story is not premium as with print.
  - **Search:** Readers seek stories via search.
  - **Visibility:** Each story enjoys its own page/space.
  - **Hyperlinks:** Links allow readers to dig/read deeper.
- Digital media changes inverted pyramid idea:
  - Traditionally, "Why" of 5Ws came later.
  - First question now is "Why should I care?"
  - Consequently, news online often opens w/hook/grab/visuals.
    - Photo: Answers question "Who?"
    - Headline: Answers question "What?"
    - Caption: Answers questions "When" and "Where."
    - Text: Beginning of story or text answers "Why?" and "How?"

"Flat" News Release Example

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"FLAT" RELEASE EXAMPLE (abbriated)

> **Headline: Oracle Invests in Proteus Digital Health and its FDA-Approved Ingestible Sensor Platform**

> **Subhead: Digital Health Feedback System Will Allow Oracle's Clinical Trial Applications Customers Exclusive Access to Real-time Data on Therapeutic Use to Dramatically Improve Clinical Trial Efficiency**

> Redwood Shores, Calif. – May 1, 2013

News Facts

- Oracle and Proteus Digital Health announced today that Oracle has made a strategic minority investment in Proteus, a leading digital health company.
- Proteus has developed ingestible and wearable sensors that have FDA approval and are marketed as medical devices in the United States and Europe. Proteus has over 500 patents and patent applications on digital health technologies and their uses pending or issued in the U.S. and other countries.
- The two companies are expected to integrate Proteus' ingestible sensor with Oracle's leading clinical trial products, such as Oracle Health Sciences InForm, Oracle Life Sciences Data Hub and Oracle's Siebel Clinical Trial Management System, using the secure, reliable and scalable Oracle Health Sciences Cloud.
- Financial details of the investment and the strategic partnership were not disclosed.
- To optimize the clinical development of personalizedA, isnsniosvtatinvte aCnldinsiacfealthPeraopfiess, scolinri,cNal ew York University trial sponsors, clinical trial service providers, investigators and patients worldwide require
- The two companies are expected to integrate Proteus' ingestible sensor with Oracle's leading clinical trial products, such as Oracle Health Sciences InForm, Oracle Life Sciences Data Hub and Oracle's Siebel Clinical Trial Management System, using the secure, reliable and scalable Oracle Health Sciences Cloud.
- Financial details of the investment and the strategic partnership were not disclosed.
  "FLAT" RELEASE EXAMPLE (cont.)

Supporting Quotes

- To optimize the clinical development of personalized, innovative and safe therapies, clinical trial sponsors, clinical trial service providers, investigators and patients worldwide require continuous, precise and near real-time information on what medicines are taken and the patient's physiological response when inside and outside of a clinical setting," said Neil de Crescenzo, Senior Vice President and General Manager, Oracle Health Sciences Global Business Unit. "We are looking forward to integrating Proteus' technology into Oracle's cloud-based clinical trial platform to provide these unique benefits to the industry."
- **About Oracle**
- ●Oracle engineers hardware and software to work together in the cloud and in your data center. For more information about Oracle (NASDAQ:ORCL), visit www.oracle.com.

Stop Being Hyperbolic

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- See my article in PRSA Tactics. **http://tinyurl.com/ bpv3afw**

- Examples: breakthrough, groundbreaking, leading-edge, one-stop, revolutionary, state-of-the-art, unique, world-class.

- They convey clichéd, imprecise meanings.

- They exaggerate rather than enlighten, mask rather than reveal.

Curbing/Containg Hype

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Two ways to minimize their impact.

- 1) Don't use at all. Instead of describing something as "cutting edge" or "revolutionary" or another inflated term, write something more exacting and concrete. "Show, don't tell."

  E.G., "X is faster and less expensive than the three best-selling computers in the world," or "Y is the first North American border security system to use drone technology." Rather than sketch fuzzy image with exaggerated language, paint clear, credible picture with words that portray subject as truly distinctive.

Curbing/Containing Hype

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- 2) If you must use hyperbolic adjectives (e.g., because your boss or client requires them), substantiate your intent with twist on first suggestion.

  E.G., right after describing scholastic-aptitude-testing software as "groundbreaking" or "next-generation," follow with clarifying statement such as, "The software allows students to finish SATs in half the time it takes with No. 2 pencils and fill-in forms." In these instances, more words are better than fewer.

Increase Sharing

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- Market, merchandise, promote, go viral.
- Give your news legs. Spotlight PR. Spotlight your work.
- Send to other audiences, as appropriate, at same time as media. E.g., employees, shareholders, staff, board of directors, major donors, vendors, interns, et al.
- Use text for your newsletters, reports, speeches, etc.
- Mention on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn with links to original text.
- Post on bulletin boards.
- Use for daily blog.
- Send it to people it references.

Miscellaneous Q&A

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- Most effective format for pitches. SEE TEMPLATE
- Generating good stories from client. AUDIT, EDUCATE, INVOLVE, STRINGERS
- How to write "catchy" titles? WRITE WHAT COUNTS, WHAT'S REAL, WHAT ENGAGES
- How much to write? AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. DON'T CRAM. SEND ANOTHER RELEASE.
- How to "enliven" copy? LEADS, INSIGHTS, QUOTES, CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION
- Writing for public policy purposes. ADD EXPLANATORY NOTE, INTRODUCTION, ASSUMPTIONS, RECENT PUBLIC QUOTES OF NOTE, STRESS IMPLICATIONS, PUT IN LARGER CONTEXT.

Miscellaneous Q&A

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- Interesting email approaches. Not a release, not a pitch. Personalizing news release text. Sharing other news with media.

- What to do about jargon. Edit it out. Find other words. But use it if it fits; e.g., industry media and events.

- How to make brand compelling with one channel (e.g., blog). Can't. Especially with "flat" release, new formats, styles, purposes.

Next Steps

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- Think newsworthy, know your subject.

- Write simply, clearly, to the point.

- Use one-line, "meaningful" headlines.

- Understand, apply S.E.O.

- Share, merchandise, promote.

- Show how good you are.

- Be professional, managerial.

- Make a difference.

- Reap the rewards.