

4 Tips for Writing a Solid Boilerplate for Your Company's Press Release

The traditional press release remains an effective tool for announcing news, particularly lateral hires, awards and rankings, mergers, and new offices or practice areas. Press releases are a great way to share content via social media and your website's newsroom.

The key to [writing a successful press release](#) is to follow its standard structure and recommended tone, which includes the language at the bottom of the release: the boilerplate. Admittedly, many companies forget to update their boilerplates, and some don't even include one. Others struggle with how to write them in the first place. As publicists for professional services firms, we at Jaffe think it is worth taking a look at the boilerplate to understand its purpose and value, and to recommend best practices in crafting this important section.

The bottom line, no pun intended, is that the boilerplate content should be a brief and concise description of your business. Here are four tips you can use right now to write a solid boilerplate.

Tip #1: Know the Purpose and Value of the Boilerplate

The boilerplate copy has been described as something between the "About Us" content on a website and an [elevator pitch](#). All are valuable marketing tools. The "About Us" page is an inbound marketing tool with an authentic and welcoming tone, since the content is meant to be a call to action, inviting a prospect to peruse your site and make a connection. The elevator pitch, on the other hand, is meant to give someone a very fast message about what you do and how you can solve that person's particular business problem. The purpose of boilerplate, which can be used at the end of a press release or a [pitch to a journalist](#), is to briefly describe the firm in a professional tone, highlighting the firm's key information so a reader can quickly grasp what the firm is and does, and where to get more details. Its value lies in how this single sentence or paragraph defines your firm.

Tip #2: Start with the Tone and Point of View

The [format of a press release](#) is very structured to share factual information with media and other stakeholders. The familiar blocks of headlines, paragraphs and quotes allow you to control your messaging, positioning your firm and its people with internally approved language. Firms may have a style guide of words and phrases to use, along with the recommended tone, which can range from casual to very formal. Our recommendation is to lean toward being formal and to use the third person.

Take a look at these sample descriptions and see if you can identify the tone and point of



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view for each.

1. At Gold, Silver & Bronze, LLP, we have been providing legal counsel for over a decade. Our lawyers practice in offices in five states. We represent businesses of all sizes, and our clients turn to us for their most-complex business problems. We are nationally recognized for our litigation department, and we also provide legal services in areas including construction, intellectual property, financial services, healthcare and more. More information about our mission, and our commitment to our clients, can be found at our website at goldsilverbronze.com.
2. Gold, Silver & Bronze, LLP, founded in 2009, has five offices along the East Coast. The firm's lawyers provide counsel to established companies as well as start-ups, offering clients solutions to their most complex-business issues. With a nationally recognized litigation group, the firm handles high-stakes matters in areas including construction, intellectual property, financial services, health care and more. For more information, visit goldsilverbronze.com.
3. You are always an important client at Gold, Silver & Bronze, LLP, where you will be provided with legal counsel for your most-complex business issues. For your convenience, you can visit any of our five offices. You can learn more about our practice at goldsilverbronze.com.

Answers:

1. First person – the “we/our” perspective
2. Third person – the “it/they/its/their” perspective
3. Second person – the “you” perspective

The third-person point of view matches the purpose of the boilerplate: to present factual statements in a credible, professional tone. First person can come across as overly opinionated, and second person can seem like advertising copy.

If your current boilerplate is not in the third person, try to change it by replacing we/our/you with it/they/its/their/the firm. The result will be a factual, straightforward paragraph that you can use in every press release. And, please, don't toggle between points of view. Stick to just one.

Tip #3: Stick to the Facts

The press release is not a vehicle for expressions of being “the best,” “the greatest” or “the only.” Rather, the text has to be factual. Reporters know boastful, flowery fluff when they see it, and if you include such language in your release, you may lose credibility with the media. If you truly think you are “the first,” “the largest” or “one of a kind,” you have to be prepared to quantify the accuracy of those claims. For example, if you want to say that your firm is the largest in the state, give the number to justify that claim, and realize that you may have to update that to reflect future data. Our advice is to stick to the facts without using buzzwords, jargon or superlatives.

Tip #4: Keep It Brief

We recommend keeping a boilerplate to one paragraph of approximately five sentences. It's not that easy to distill information down to one paragraph, particularly if you are using the "About Us" section as a starting point. As an English major, I vividly remember professors recommending that a second draft of any piece of writing would benefit by cutting 50% of the words in the first draft. They were right! In a single paragraph, you can actually say a lot. The goal for the boilerplate is to succinctly highlight some combination of the firm's history, locations, competencies, practice areas, awards and values.

Boilerplate example:

Founded in 2009, Gold, Silver & Bronze LLP is a full-service law firm with offices in New York City, Boston, Hartford, Wilmington and Washington, DC. The firm's 125 lawyers provide sophisticated counsel across disciplines, including construction law, intellectual property, corporate law, financial services and health care, among others. The firm's nationally recognized litigation group routinely handles high-stakes, bet-the-company matters for established and growing companies, both regionally and nationally. For more information about the firm and its commitment to client service, please visit goldsilverbronze.com.

If your boilerplate is several paragraphs long, we recommend that you try cutting out half of the words and assessing the new version's impact. If it is still lengthy, try once more to cut down the content.

I've read thousands of boilerplates in various industries, so if you are wondering if yours could benefit from a professional look, please reach out to me at llindley@jaffepr.com.