

Appendix 7 - Writing a press release

/ Before you start

- Have a legitimate news angle_(announcing something new and/or timely)
- Know your numbers. Is what you've done relevant?
- Is there a date in particular that is needed e.g. launch of campaign? Think ahead and make sure you send it the press with sufficient time
- Know your audience – e.g. newspaper, radio, magazine

/ Date and embargo Remember to date your press release, particularly if it is not for immediate release. Include an embargo data and time clearly in red at the top of the release, and remember to indicate time zones, particularly for international press releases.

/ Catchy headline A strong headline (and email subject line when you send out the pre-release) will attract journalists seeking good stories. Your headline should be as engaging as it is accurate.

/ Summary Emphasise the key points that you want included in any news stories. Get the message of your press release out quickly. Every important point should be addressed in the first few sentences. The subsequent paragraphs should be for supporting information. Use the introductory paragraph to sum up the story in 50-100 words – it could be all that gets read! Stick to the facts. Explain **who** you are, **what** you're announcing, **where** it is taking place, **when** it's happening, plus possibly **why** and **how**. These questions communicate the gist of your story. "who, what, where, when, why"

/ Empirical evidence Leave the artistry to the journalist - your press release should be filled with hard numbers that support the significance of your research or other announcement. If you're claiming a trend, you need proof to back it up. Quantify your argument and it will become much more compelling.

/ Include a quote by a person who conducted research or is an expert in the area. This adds a human element to the press release, as well as being a source of information in its own right. Remember to make sure that the quoted person is available for further interviews if required.

/ Length: keep it short and sweet, about 1-2 sides of A4. Also include graphics for extra information which may be useful to the journalist, and will also serve to grab their attention.

/ Background information Make sure that the journalist can get in contact with you should they have any queries or require further information. It is also good to provide them with some information about your organisation or project, as well as any links to relevant information which they may find useful.



The International Association for the Study of Obesity

Press release

EMBARGO 00.01am Thursday 27th September 2012

Junk food advertising to kids: Self-regulation is failing across Europe

London, 27 September 2012:

Advertising of junk food continues to undermine children's health despite the food industry's promises that they would restrict their marketing activities, according to a new report *A Junk-Free Childhood 2012: Marketing foods and beverages to children in Europe* published today by the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO).

The review of advertising in Europe undertaken by IASO, a not-for-profit organisation, found that the industry's own figures show that children's exposure to advertisements for fatty and sugary foods had fallen by barely a quarter over the last six years.

The report's author, Dr Tim Lobstein, said "The food and beverage companies were told in 2004 by the then European Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou that they must cut their advertising to children or face regulation. The figures show that self-regulation achieved only a 29% fall in children's exposure, which is deeply disappointing. Exposure is now creeping up again in some countries."

"The problem is made worse because the companies are allowed to set their own standards for what they consider 'junk food' and they set the bar too low," said Dr Lobstein. "Our report found over 30 fatty and sugary foods which are classified as unhealthy in government-approved schemes across Europe and the USA but which are considered healthy by the manufacturers and which they allow themselves to advertise."

He said "Each company came up with its own definitions of what and how it will advertise, which it uses to its own advantage. No-one understands all the definitions and no-one can monitor them effectively. This anarchy might suit the companies, but it means that children remain exposed to advertising which encourages them to eat a junk food diet. Self-regulation simply does not work in a highly competitive marketplace," said Dr Lobstein. "Asking the companies to restrict their own marketing is like asking a burglar to fix the locks on your front door. They will say you are protected, but you are not."

Proposals being debated in Norway this month suggest that all advertising of junk food which targets anyone under age 18 should be restricted by law. "Children have a champion in Norway," said Dr Lobstein. "We want this high level of protection applied across Europe."

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Notes

1. The report: *A Junk-Free Childhood 2012: Marketing foods and beverages to children in Europe* is available at http://www.iaso.org/site_media/uploads/A_Junk-free_Childhood_2012.pdf

Children's reduced exposure to advertisements for EU Pledge non-compliant products (specified by the manufacturer)

Number of impacts (in millions) and percentage change from first quarter 2005 to first quarter 2011, for children's exposure during all programming.

Source: EU Pledge 2011 Monitoring Report. <http://www.eu-pledge.eu/content/annual-reports>

	2005 Q1	2011 Q1	Change
France	1,031	673	- 35 %
Ireland	58	32	- 45 %
Netherlands	111	153	+ 38 %
Poland	1,618	1,018	- 37 %
Portugal	264	199	- 25 %
Romania	462	434	- 6 %
Slovenia	23	29	+ 26 %
All countries reported	3,567	2,538	- 29 %

2. The report is part of the StanMark Project which aims to promote responsible standards for marketing food and beverages to children. Further details of the StanMark project is available at <http://www.iaso.org/policy/euprojects/stanmarkproject/>
3. The European Commission's approach to marketing to children encourages self-regulation, as stated in their White Paper: *A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues* COM(2007) 279 final, Brussels, 30.5.2007 (Page 6). The White Paper is available at http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition_wp_en.pdf
4. The food and beverage companies' European pledges are at <http://www.eu-pledge.eu/>.
5. The Norwegian government's proposals for restricting marketing of foods and beverages to children are at www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/hod/dok/hoeringer/hoeringsdok/2012/horing--forslag-tilny-regulering-av-ma.html. An unofficial English summary is at www.iaso.org/resources/library/721/
6. The World Health Organization's 2010 *Recommendations on marketing foods and beverages to children* can be found at www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/marketing-food-to-children/en/index.html
7. The International Association for the Study of Obesity is a not-for-profit organisation with over 10,000 professional members in 54 national and regional associations, based in London UK. See www.iaso.org.