



**Interreg  
Europe**



European Union | European Regional Development Fund

Seminar on communication 23 January 2020

# How to get in the media

Workshop on press releases  
do's, don't's and golden rules

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ahoj – alo – bok – bonjour –  
ciao – dia duit – geia sas –  
guten tag – hallo – hello –  
helló – hej – hei – hi – hola –  
olá – sveicināti – sveiki – zdraveíte

# Agenda for the next 75 mins

- Background – who are we?
- Setting the scene – today's media landscape
- The building blocks of a good press release
- Make a selling press release out of a concrete project
- Presentation and discussion of results
- Take aways and golden rules

# Fast facts about us

## **Marie-Louise Arnfast**

- MA Rhetoric, Communication & History, MBA
- Former Head of communications at IBM Denmark

## **Michael Kirkeby**

- MA Literature
- Former Country Manager at Text 100

Now partners in Kontekst Kommunikation and the sub-brand  
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# Setting the scene

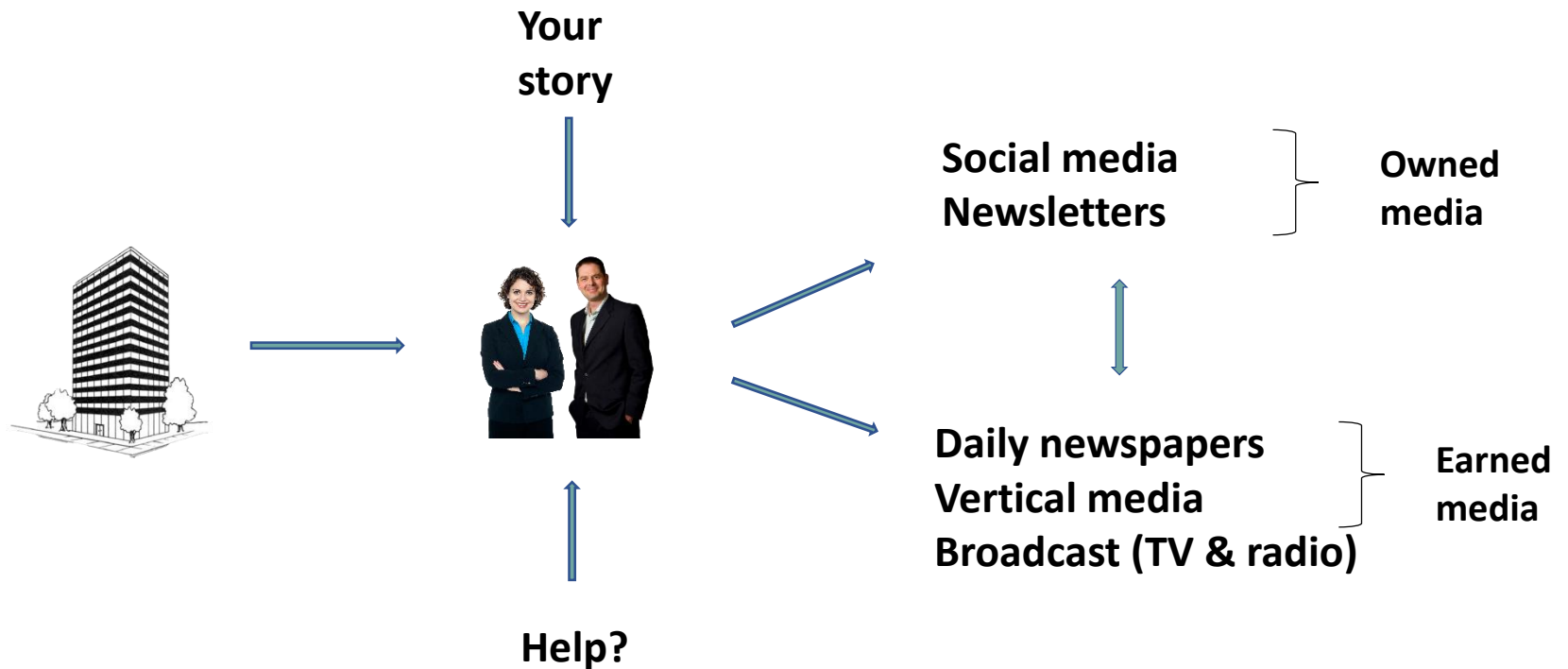
## Your role and how the media works

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# Managing expectations



# Best type of coverage?

## Earned coverage (aka old media):

- Appearance through editorial selection
- In papers, verticals, tv, radio
- Formats: interviews, feature articles, commentary, by-lines
- Pros: Credibility, audience already in place
- Cons: Hard to get

## Owned coverage (aka new media):

- Appearance through ownership
- News-letter, website & SoMe-sites
- Pros: Easy coverage, no editorial bottleneck
- Cons: Less credibility, hard to build audience

# The changing media landscape

– the ultra short version of changes during the past 10 years

The two major influences on the media:

- Who took the money? GAFA!
- The smartphone



# The journalistic workload

## Understanding who we are talking to

**OBS – In VERY general terms!**

- **Typical workday for a news story journalist in the old days**
  - Receives 20 press releases
  - 1 story every day,
  - One deadline a day
- **Typical workday for a journalist today**
  - Receives 50 press releases
  - 3 stories every day
  - 24/7 deadline
  - Different versions for print and online, publishing on SoMe, photos, video, podcast
- **What this means!**
  - Having to choose between more potential stories
  - Less time to write each article
  - Inclination to go for the 'safe' story
  - Less time to take a chance

# Get in touch and get attention – how? (1/2)

**Remember: you are just one of many ‘sales persons’ in a crowded market**

## ALWAYS DO YOUR RESEARCH

- Put your story into a larger perspective and context
- It’s all about the timing - a non story today can be a great story tomorrow

## SOLO STORY, PRESS RELEASE – OR BOTH?

- Pros and cons of solo stories versus releases
- Offending someone? Relations building, securing coverage
- How to do both

## A PRESS RELEASE IS NOT A PITCH

- A pitch is targeted and tailor made communications
- A bit similar to a job application process

# Get in touch and get attention – how? (2/2)

## FIND THE RIGHT MEDIA – AND THE RIGHT JOURNALIST

- Who has written similar stories before?
- Find good arguments for more stories on the same storyline

## CALL OR MAIL – OR BOTH?

- The eternal question – different journalists have different preferences
- Let the journalist know you have read his/her former articles on the subject
- Be service minded and a good colleague to the journalist
- Don't brag - be honest!

## FOLLOW UP

- Send an e-mail confirming your agreement with the journalist
- If no coverage, then consider writing a by-line (thought leadership)

# The human attention span is dwindling

*Study from Nielsen Media Research:*

Attention span, 2018



Goldfish

**9**  
seconds



Humans

**8**  
seconds

**Attention dropped from 12 seconds in 2000 to just 8 seconds in 2018 — beating out the ever-distracted goldfish, which clocks in at 9 seconds.**

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## In short

- ***Stay positive – work with the opportunities***
- ***Be realistic – never guarantee coverage***
- ***Get to the point – you only have seconds to make an impression***

# Making a good press release

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# Looking at your own releases (1/2)

**Overall conclusion: They are very different!**

Some general issues:

- Using only project title as headline – a press release is not a report
- Use of cryptic project titles – with no explaining
- Use of implied professional terms and abbreviations – which journalists might not know
- Focus on launch date of a project – not why the project is important
- Very long sentences – difficult to understand
- Abstract language in general – difficult to read in a hurry

# Looking at your own releases (2/2)

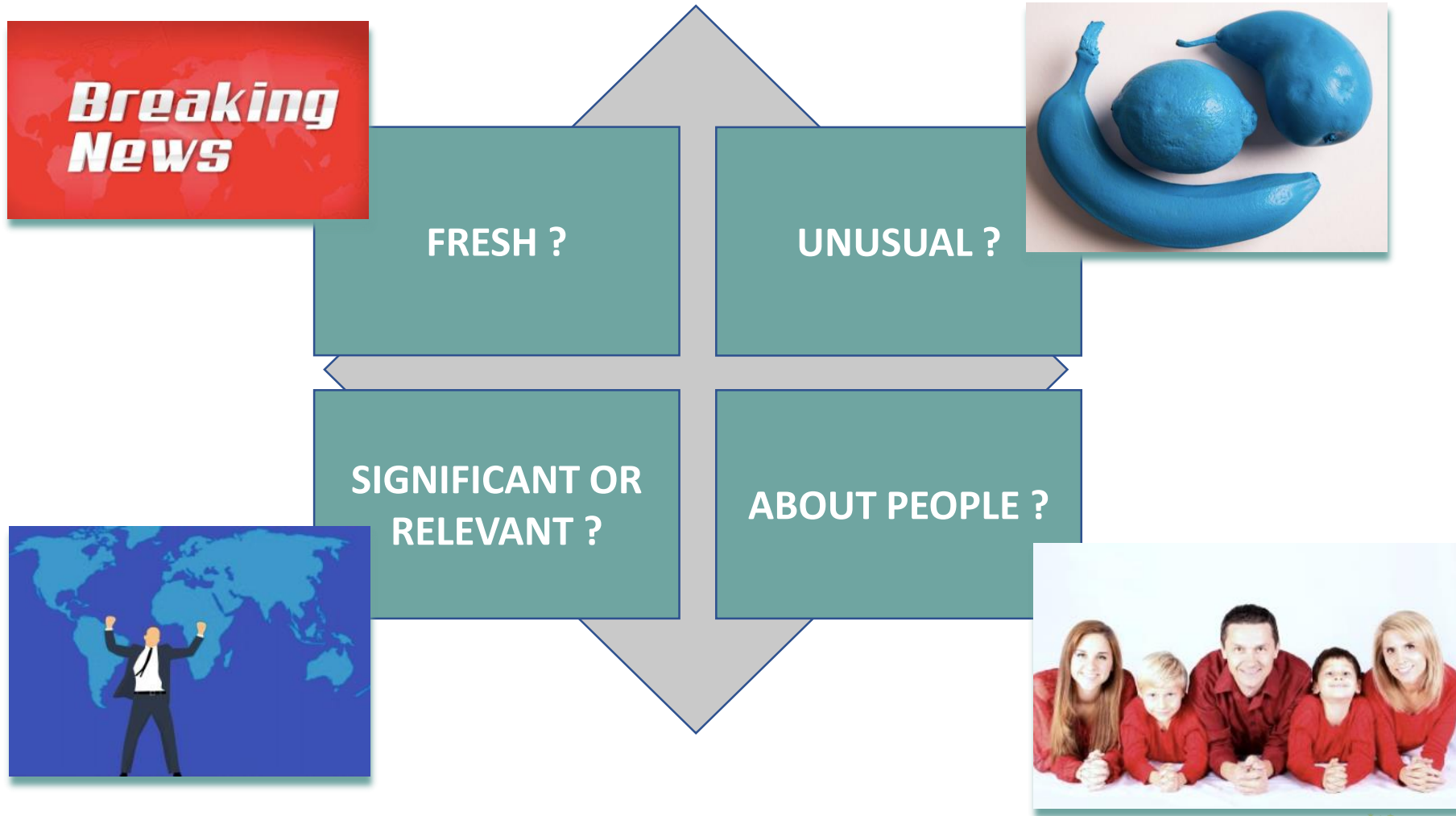
**Overall conclusion: They are very different!**

Some headlines work fine, but can still be better:

- *"Northern Netherlands is leading a European project on innovation development"* (what type of innovation?)
- *"Renewables Making their Way in Industry"* (what kind?)
- *"Is a circular economy always sustainable? - EU project examines business activities based on circular economy"* (hint of conclusion?)
- *"Major industrial nations in the EU convene to meet energy targets"*



# What you need to look for in your story



# Select your target group



- Citizens in general ?
- Professionals ?

# And then select your media



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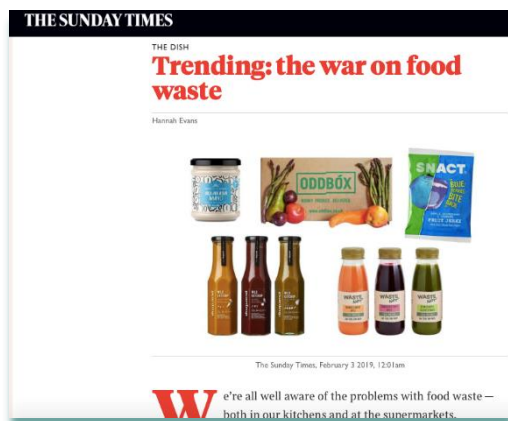


# Select your angle



- Which key messages do you want to deliver?
- What is relevant and interesting for your target group?

# News jacking: Golden opportunities



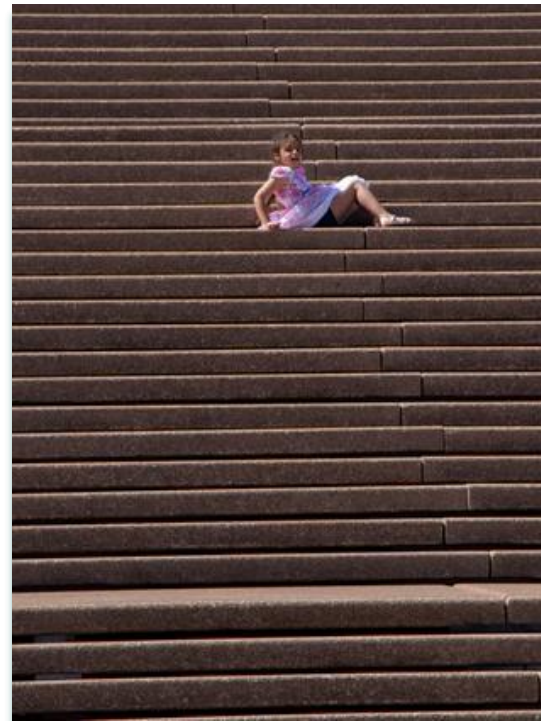
## More than £1bn of food wasted before reaching supermarkets - study

Wrap report finds 3.6m tonnes of food is thrown away or fed to animals each year in the UK



# Keep your focus – 1 story

- Stick to your angle
- Don't try to tell a lot of stories
- Max 3 key messages
- Kill your darlings!



# Use the inverted pyramid



# Keep it simple



- Short sentences
- Use subheads
- No abbreviations
- No jargon
- Be concrete – not abstract
- No repetitions
- Answer What, Who, Why, When & How



# Example

Press release

Copenhagen (date)

## Liquid electricity ready within a few months

**This summer, the first drops of methanol will appear from a plant that is soon to be established in North Jutland. The fuel, which is produced on the basis of hydrogen and CO<sub>2</sub>, can be Denmark's next business adventure, because it can be based on renewable energy and help make the heavy transport green. Customers are ready to purchase the product, which is expected to deliver a positive business case in the short term.**

### Turnkey plants

With the establishment of the plant, which is the first of its kind in Denmark, the parties behind the project expect to have created the basis for a complete, standardized and modular methanol plant, which can be installed locally in connection with companies that emit CO<sub>2</sub>. It may be biogas plants that can achieve better business results by utilizing CO<sub>2</sub> to produce methanol instead of discharging it into the atmosphere.

### Exploitation of renewable energy from wind and solar

In addition to CO<sub>2</sub>, hydrogen is included in the production of methanol. The methanol plant therefore includes an electrolysis unit supplied by the project partner GreenHydrogen. The unit converts electricity into hydrogen, and when the electricity is produced at times when it is cheap, methanol

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# Example

Electrofuels such as methanol - or "liquid electricity" as it is popularly called - are expected to have a breakthrough in the coming years. By producing electrofuels, electricity from wind turbines can be utilized during periods when capacity exceeds demand, and thus they can also contribute to ensuring the necessary balance between consumption and grid demand. The "liquid electricity" from renewable energy sources can be transferred to the transport sector and used in the contexts where batteries do not strike: at long distances and in heavy traffic.

## **The methanol market is on its way**

There is already a prospect of a methanol market in the transport sector. Methanol can be used in existing internal combustion engines if it is mixed with gasoline, and it can replace other admixture fuels which often need to be imported. The trade association Drivkraft Danmark, which is a partner in the project, sees great prospects in the use of methanol in the future.

- We must replace fossil fuels with liquid electricity, among other things. We believe that electrofuels based on electricity from renewable energy sources can become absolutely crucial to the green conversion of the transport, and we are ready to offer the green methanol at the gas stations when available, says Jacob Stahl Otte, director of Drivkraft Denmark

# Example

## **Turnkey plants will be offered in the market in 2021**

The methanol production project - Power2Met - is initially established as a pilot project at Aalborg University, which is a partner in the project. The next step is to establish production in connection with a biogas plant. By 2021, the solution is expected to be offered to the market.

## **Hydrogen is the lego brick in the energy system of the future**

The Power2Met project is based, among other things, on the experience gained from the HyBalance project in Hobro. Here, Europe's largest and most advanced hydrogen production plant, based on primary wind turbine power, has been opened a few months ago with EU support.

- We see hydrogen as a lego brick in the energy system of the future. Hydrogen production can be used to store excess electricity from renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. The hydrogen can be used, as it is, in the transport sector and in the industry - or it can be refined to, for example, methanol as in the Power2Met project, says Søren Bjerregaard Pedersen, CEO of Hydrogen Valley, a partner in both the HyBalance project and the Power2Met project. .

## **Partners behind the project**

The Power2Met project has just received financial support from the EUDP for the establishment of the facility at Aalborg University. GreenHydrogen, which will supply the electrolysis plant, is behind the application together with, among other things, Re :: Integrate, which develops the reactor for the production of methanol, Aalborg University, Hydrogen Valley, E.ON, NGF Nature Energy, Drivkraft Danmark, Rockwool, Process Engineering, Holtec Automatic-Nord and Lillegaarden EL.

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# Example

## More information

The HyBalance project: [www.hybalance.eu](http://www.hybalance.eu).

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## Contact for more information

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Jacob Stahl Otte, Director, Drivkraft Danmark, [jso@drivkraftdanmark.dk](mailto:jso@drivkraftdanmark.dk), +45 3345 65

# Your best pm-version of a project

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# Draft a selling press release

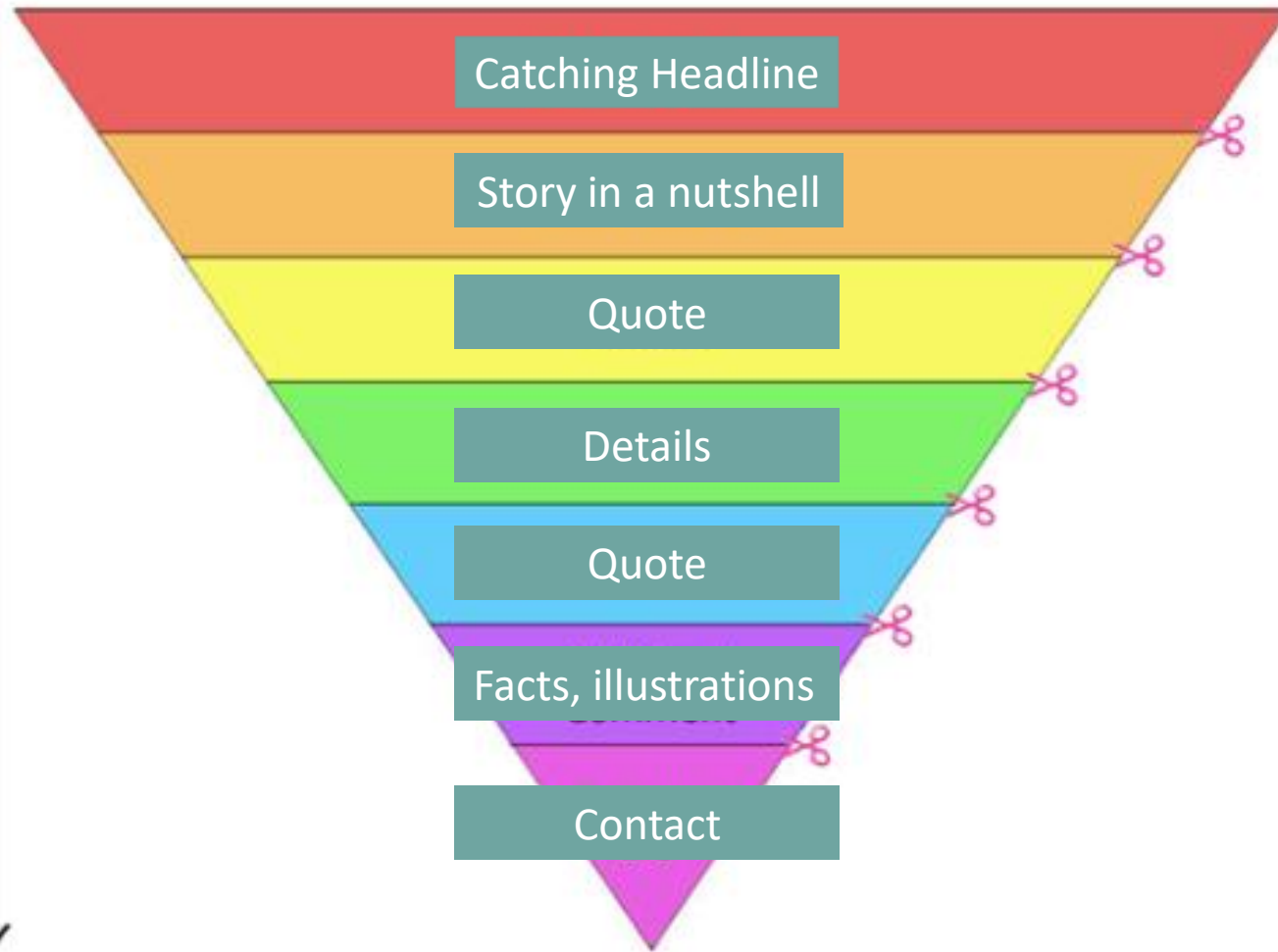
At each table: Use the next 25 mins to discuss and draft the best press release based on a real case.

***OBS: Feel free to use your imagination and add more information to make the release compelling!***

Your task:

- Decide on the story and the angle
- Decide on what type of media you aim for (dailies, TV, verticals?)
- Write a catchy headline
- Write a sharp introduction – the story in a nutshell
- What sources / spokespersons could enrich the story?
- Suggestions for illustrations?
- AND: If you could, what more info would you ask the project team about

# Use the inverted pyramid



# Presentation of draft releases

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# Present your releases

Topics to discuss:

- What works great?
- What is difficult in writing a press release?
- What is most important to work on when you go home?

# Wrap up and take aways

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# 10 golden rules: Press releases

- Is your story newsworthy? Fresh, relevant, unusual, about people
- Chose an angle that will be interesting for your target group AND the journalist
- Stick to your angle – don't mess up with many different stories
- Use the inverted pyramid: Important things first – catchy headline
- Highlight benefits for society, citizens, specific groups or people
- Answer who, what, why, when and how
- Keep it simple – make it easy to digest. No jargon, no abbreviations, short sentences etc.
- Offer sources for further information – and ensure they are available for the journalist
- Use quotes from the sources
- Offer illustrations: photos, infographic

# 10 golden rules: Pitching a story

- Identify a relevant journalist at a relevant media
- Research on what this journalist has written about beforehand – get to know him/her from the articles
- Spend time on preparing - know what you will say
- Find arguments on what's in it for the journalist
- Find arguments on why it is interesting for his/her audience
- Prepare answers to negative response or questions
- When calling: Ask if journo has 2 mins for a good story
- Respect a “no thank you” to your story
- Try another media

# 5 golden rules: Building media relationships

- Build a good reputation – offer only relevant stories – don't waste the journalist's time
- Make it easy for the journalist to make the story – help him/her!
- Respect deadlines – and be responsive to requirements
- Give information to background – when you trust the journalist
- When asking for review of an article before publishing, only do this for fact-checking – do not try to change the angle, language, headlines etc., unless these contain factual errors.

# Thank you

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