

**Writing the narrative press release:
Is it the magic potion for more usable press communications?**

Reginald F. Moody, Ph.D.

How important is writing style in a press release from a news editor's point of view? Are news editors prone to choose a press release written in a narrative style over one written in an inverted pyramid style? Does writing style sway a news editor's judgment of a press release in terms of whether the release is considered more interesting and enjoyable, more informative, clearer and more understandable and more credible? The notion that news editors are more likely to choose a press release written in a narrative style over one written in an inverted-pyramid was mixed at best when viewed from the surface of this experiment. On the other hand, writing style was seen as having an unquestionable link to editor's assessment of certain press release characteristics, such as whether a release was found to be more interesting and enjoyable, more informative, clearer and more understandable and more credible.

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper journalists compose news stories either in a straight-news approach (demonstrated by the use of the inverted pyramid writing style) or in a narrative format (by and large linked with a storytelling style). Accordingly, the inverted pyramid writing style is grounded in the formulaic structure of “*who, what, when, where, why, and how*” of a story, with facts presented in a descending order of importance. The narrative approach, on the other hand, stresses settings, characters, plots, tensions, encounters, themes, climaxes, outcomes, and scenes of a story. Preference for one style over the other has been a hub of disagreement for years by those in the newspaper industry and those in the classroom, leading this researcher to ask: How important is writing style in a press release from an editor's point of view? Are newspaper editors prone to choose a press release written in a narrative style over one written in an inverted pyramid fashion? Does one specific writing style sway a news editor's judgment as to whether the press release is considered more interesting and enjoyable, more informative, clearer and more understandable and more credible?

Understanding the merits of one writing style over the other is important to academics and public relations students if each is to gain a greater appreciation of the factors that shape press release acceptance.

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While a number of studies have tested the effects of writing style on certain types of groups, none have measured the reactions of news editors to writing style in press releases. Such a study is vital for students and public relations professionals who feel that the clearness or the importance of the press releases they write may be at peril when employing either technique.

BACKGROUND

By convention, the inverted pyramid style is typically used for breaking news stories, while the narrative writing technique is used for features and some soft news stories. There is also some leeway in choosing a style if a story is not breaking news. Sometimes stories are written borrowing elements from each style---the hybrid approach.

Many reasons have been offered for the continued use of the inverted pyramid. The inverted pyramid allows people to browse stories quickly for information. For editors, the story can be cut from the bottom if it is too long for the news slot. The systematic order of the inverted pyramid writing style has been described as a competent and timesaving way of displaying information for readers (Grabner, 1984). A story written in the inverted pyramid presents the facts of a story in descending order of importance. The first paragraph of the story---the lead---is viewed as a summary of the story. Paragraphs that follow simply expand the lead (Mott, 1950).

Although useful to readers who browse stories, the inverted pyramid has been described as a barrier to most readers. The newspaper industry's incessant reliance on the inverted pyramid style of writing makes it difficult for readers (Green, 1979). The style has also been described as an "unwieldy and confusing way of writing a news story, since it has little relationship to the way people communicate" (Boyer, 1976). What's more, the inverted-pyramid style has been faulted with triggering boredom (Lewis, 1994) and preventing readers from absorbing and comprehending what could be usable information (Thorndyke, 1979).

Journalism written in the narrative style, however, breathes life into the five W's by creating an experience for the reader (Connery, 1992). Almost any dull but crucial story can be re-energized by using a narrative treatment --- a descriptive paragraph, a single scene, a beginning, or an ending (Kramer, 2000). Narrative copy is often said to be easier to process and retain; it is central to human communication (Farell, 1985). The narrative style consistently produces greater arousal and more positive response (Donohew, 1982). Narrative treatments kindle emotion and deliver a notion of drama while personalizing the story (Beasley, 1998). Vare (2000) finds that newspaper writers are ready to break away from inverted pyramids and are responding with unusually creative uses of narrative.

The idea of writing in the narrative is not a new. Magazines and non-fiction writers have openly engaged in interpretation and explanation of stories through the use of the narrative writing approach. The narrative story is generally written to bring greater

attention to a story; to evoke emotion. Thomas Wolfe, Gay Talese, Truman Capote, Hunter "Gonzo" Thompson and others are noteworthy examples of writers who went beyond being mere observers and became the main character, bringing a sense of feeling and passion to their new role (Mak & Geert, 1998).

Challengers to the narrative style, however, say breaking news stories do not lend themselves to the style because readers do not get information quickly enough. Furthermore, the most frequently mentioned barrier of adopting a narrative structure to a story---hard or otherwise---is a "lack of time to research the subject and lack of time to write it" (Beasley, 1998). In some media circles, such a departure from straight-news objectivism has been associated with the narrative's penchant of "dumbing down" or "tabloidization" of the news (Dunn, 2003). To Ricketson (2000), the price of applying fictional techniques used in narrative writing as "keeping faith" with the audience; that is, being faithful to the truth. The problem, as he acknowledged, was that when the narrative approach is employed, the audience cannot know for sure they are being told the truth. According to Ricketson, "trust is all there is."

Despite such weaknesses, the narrative format may have a greater foothold in the way news stories are actually produced in today's competitive media environment, and demand for the format may be growing in an effort to retain current readers and reach a new generation of readers. The more forceful and invigorating the writing style of a press release, the more frequently it will be read and the more interesting, informative, understandable and more credible it will be considered by news editors. Such a scenario is a vital consideration if public relations professionals are to submit more usable press communications to the media as a whole.

Accordingly, this study sets forth the following hypotheses in support of the narrative writing style in press releases:

- H1:* News editors prefer using press releases written in the narrative style over press releases written in the inverted-pyramid style.
- H2:* News editors find press releases written in the narrative style more interesting and more enjoyable than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.
- H3:* News editors find press releases written in the narrative style more informative than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.
- H4:* News editors find press releases written in the narrative style clearer and more understandable than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.
- H5:* News editors find press releases written in the narrative style more credible than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.

METHOD

The methodology for this study was modeled in part on a study conducted by Kelly, Knight, Peck & Reel (2003), whereby college students at a mid-western university were exposed to news stories written in a straight-news approach (the inverted pyramid) and in the narrative format. Results showed some support for the use of the narrative style. This exploratory study took a step further by conducting an online experiment with over 461 newspaper editors from U.S. dailies and weeklies to determine their preference for press releases written in either the narrative style or the inverted-pyramid style. Respondents were divided into two groups. Each group read four brief fictional press releases covering a variety of stories news editors would typically receive from public relations professionals. One release announced an upcoming community event to benefit the American Red Cross called the Chili Cook-Off. A second release publicized results from the National Residency Matching Program for medical students at the local university. A third release introduced an innovative use of the iPod for police training. A fourth released announced a local energy company's purchase of a new natural gas storage operation. Two of the releases were written in a narrative format, and two were written in an inverted-pyramid format. Releases written in the narrative format for one group were written in the inverted-pyramid format for the second group. Similarly, releases written in the inverted-pyramid format for the second group were written in the narrative format for the first group. Once the releases were read, respondents were asked to give a simple "yes" or "no" to the question: "Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?" A five-point Likert-type scale measured to what extent participants found the press release interesting and enjoyable, informative, and whether the release was clear and understandable, and credible---story qualities that writing style may influence. Editors were told they were participating in an experiment to help public relations students write more usable press communications.

RESULTS

H1: News editors prefer using press releases written in the narrative style over press releases written in the inverted-pyramid style.

Support for this hypothesis was mixed. Editors who read the inverted pyramid version of the American Red Cross Chili Cook-Off release were more likely to use all or part of that release than were editors who read the narrative version. Editors who read the inverted-pyramid version of Energy South's acquisition of a natural gas storage company were similarly likely to use all or part of that release than were editors who read the narrative version. Then again, editors who read the narrative version of the National Residency Matching Program for medical students were slightly more prone to use all or part of that release than were editors who read the inverted-pyramid version. Similarly, editors who examined the narrative version of the iPod release were more likely to use all or part of that release than were editors who read the inverted-pyramid version.

H2: News editors find press releases written in the narrative style more interesting and more enjoyable than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.

This study found support for this hypothesis. Groups who read the narrative versions of press releases relating to the American Red Cross's Chili Cook-Off, the use of iPod technology in police training, and Energy South's acquisition of a natural gas storage company, found those versions to be more interesting and more enjoyable than releases written in the inverted-pyramid style. Neither group of editors found the press release about the National Residency Matching program for medical students to be interesting or enjoyable to any extent.

H3: News editors find press releases written in the narrative style more informative than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.

This study found support for this hypothesis. Groups who read the narrative versions of press releases relating to the American Red Cross's Chili Cook-Off, the use of iPod technology in police training, and Energy South's acquisition, said those release were more informative than editors who read the inverted-pyramid versions of the same releases. Editors who read the inverted-pyramid version of the National Residency Matching Program for medical students, however, found that version to be more informative.

H4: News editors find press releases written in the narrative style clearer and more understandable than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.

This study found support for this hypothesis. Groups that read the narrative versions of press releases relating to the American Red Cross's Chili Cook-Off, the use of iPod technology in police training, and Energy South's acquisition, found those releases to be clearer and more understandable than those written in the inverted-pyramid style. Neither group found the press release relating to the National Residency Matching Program for medical students as being particularly clearer and more understandable than the other.

H5: News editors find press releases written in the narrative style more credible than those written in the inverted-pyramid style.

Support for this hypothesis was mixed. Editors who read the inverted pyramid version of the National Residency Matching Program for medical students and Energy South's acquisition were more likely to find those releases more credible than editors who read the narrative versions of the releases. On the other hand, editors who read the narrative version of the iPod release were more likely to find that release more credible than editors who read the inverted-pyramid version. Neither group found the press release relating to the American Red Cross's Chili Cook-Off as being particularly more credible than the other.

DISCUSSION

The notion that news editors are more likely to choose a press release written in a narrative style over one written in an inverted-pyramid was mixed at best when viewed from the surface of this experiment. On the other hand, writing style was found to have an unquestionable link to reader assessment of certain story characteristics, such as whether a story was found to be interesting and enjoyable, informative, clear and understandable and credible. As a whole, editors who read narrative versions of the press releases in this study found those releases to be more interesting and enjoyable, more informative, and clearer and more understandable than releases written in the inverted-pyramid, suggesting that the use of narrative writing techniques may be an advantage in preparing various press communications. In contrast, releases written in the inverted-pyramid style were rated overall as more credible, suggesting that such a format is still considered to have utility.

Evidence in this study supports the notion that newspaper editors will not abandon the inverted pyramid writing approach in favor of the narrative style, especially when it comes to the deadline story; they will continue to select the writing style that best matches the story in order to better communicate that story's meaning to the reader.

A press release's subject matter---hard or soft-- will remain the yardstick by which editors establish writing style. Editors will prefer the narrative writing style, when deemed appropriate for a story, as a method of engaging readers by portraying the stories of events.

Regardless of writing style, editors will continue to judge a press release based on its news values, such as story impact, magnitude, prominence, conflict, and proximity. Editors will continue to expect PR professionals to follow time-tested conventions, such as the use of 5 W's, the lead paragraph, and adherence to the AP style guide.

Taken as a whole, this researcher cautions those who may interpret these findings too literally. This study was conducted under conditions which do not represent the true setting in which news editor might read and decide on the merits of a press release. Nor does this study allow for differences in individual preference for news stories.

A press release considered interesting and enjoyable, informative, and understandable to one editor, may be regarded as dull, boring, un-informative, and incomprehensible by another. A press release seen as plausible, trustworthy, and convincing to an editor in the northeast U.S., may be considered un-realistic, unbelievable, and less probable to an editor in the southeast. A press release seen as well-written, concise, and to the point by one editor, may be seen by another as copy written by a one-year-old.

Frequency of publication, circulation, and market size further exacerbates the problem faced by PR professionals who are trying to sell a press release to a news editor. Smaller, non-daily papers tend to promote social and economic harmony in their communities---consensus-oriented journalism. Such newspapers typically carry articles on local schools, social events, local government, property crimes and zoning issues. They overlook or downplay discord and problems. In contrast, metro dailies practice conflict-oriented journalism, by which front page news is often defined primarily as events, issues, or experiences that deviate from social norms (Campbell, Martin, & Fabos, 2007). Such market differences play havoc in the acceptance rate of a press release. For example, in this study's press release about the use of iPods at the police academy, large, daily newspapers might be more interested in the iPod first, since they favor trend stories, while smaller newspapers might be more interested in the people first. A small market newspaper might determine if its coverage area had a police academy and, if so might look to see if one of its residents attended the academy. If not, that newspaper would likely not carry the story. Another example: A weekly newspaper in a smaller market, with less circulation, may see greater news value in this study's American Red Cross Chili Cook-Off press release than a news editor at a larger market, daily newspaper with greater circulation. The weekly newspaper editor might consider it important to inform readers about community events, whereby the editor at the larger, daily paper might be indifferent, especially when newspaper space is at a premium.

An editor's attitude and disposition toward members of the public relations industry may bias his or her decision in accepting the contents of a news release. For years, editors have labeled PR professionals as flacks, spin specialists and seekers of free advertising (an attitude that is puzzling since journalists rely on PR practitioners for information). Other editors, especially those with smaller staffs, have seen PR professionals and their press releases as God sent. Writing a press release written in a narrative, feature-like, style may be considered by some editors as presumptuous, whereby others would consider the approach more interesting and enjoyable.

Whereas some editors measure credibility of a press release by its number of misspelled words or grammatical mistakes, others are more forgiving and focus instead on the press release's true news potential, since the contents of the release are going to be re-written anyway.

CONCLUSION

Unsurprisingly, a number of factors affect the acceptance or rejection of a press release. Writing style is only one. To this end, much remains to be learned about the news reading process of news editors and its implications for writing styles in a press release. Future studies could move from the lab into more realistic settings in which releases are reviewed. Perhaps studies could further measure preference for writing style beyond the city desk, to the desks of beat reporters, for instance. Additional studies could focus on the differences in story selection made by editors at daily newspapers in comparison to editors at smaller weekly papers. Perhaps a more hybrid model of writing— a style blending a stronger dose of the narrative with a lesser amount

of the inverted-pyramid news approach--- could be tested to see if that style is considered more appropriate and a more promising means of making news releases more compelling, relevant, and useful to editors.

Be that as it may, PR students and professionals must develop a greater sense of what makes news. Accordingly, practitioners must develop a sense of market differences, and other aforementioned factors that influence press release acceptance. Practitioners must continue to be precise and truthful in their communication, write ethically, and continue to create and maintain good media relations.

Mostly importantly, PR professionals must “get into the head” of the newspaper editor; weigh the releases for a particular market. PR students and their instructors must stop looking at press communications as just another writing exercise when, in fact, it is more than a structural issue. As students and instructors we must also think in terms of how to adapt to the constraints of journalistic practice. Perhaps we should examine how a release actually gets to press. In the end, news editors, PR practitioners and readers will greatly benefit.

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APPENDIX

GROUP 1-American Cancer Society announces the agency’s 19th Annual Chili Cook-Off (Inverted Pyramid Version)

The local branch of the American Cancer Society announces the agency’s 19th Annual Chili Cook Off event will be held Saturday, February 23, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. in Johnson Square. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door. Tickets can also be purchased at the local American Cancer Society office. All proceeds from the Chili Cook-Off go towards helping fund the American Cancer Society’s local support programs and services, as well as life-saving research. Last year’s 85 teams raised \$160,000 and was voted the best charity fundraiser by the (your city’s) newspaper. "We had somewhere around 13,000 people come through last year," said event coordinator, Bob Haskins. The cook-off begins at 5:30 a.m. when all teams start cooking. At 10:30 a.m., the judges narrow it down to the top 20 teams, and the public is allowed in at 11. There is a first place winner in each category (all meat, meat and beans, vegetarian and wild game), an overall winner and a people's choice winner.

Please answer the following assuming this release has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly strongly agree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree
This release was interesting and enjoyable. 5.2%	6.3%	16.2%	42.3%	29.7%
This release was informative. 19.9%	0.9%	4.1%	6.3%	68.8%
This release was clear and understandable 20.6%	1.8%	8.3%	10.6%	58.7%
This release was credible 18.4%	1.4%	2.8%	16.1%	61.3%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	95% Yes			

Group 1: National Residency Matching Program Places Medical Students (Narrative version)

Next Wednesday will be a very important day for Eric Jensen, Kaye Smitherman, and Harley Womack. On that date, they and other anxious medical students from the University in (YOUR CITY) will learn where they will begin their residency training as results from the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) are simultaneously released to all senior medical students across the United States. The minutes, hours and days leading to the moment that the envelopes are handed out have been stressful for Jensen, Smitherman, and Womack. They deal with the pressure the best they can. Womack plays racquetball in her church’s gym. Smitherman cleans her apartment for the third time in one week. Womack works on his car. On “results” day, they’ll meet at the Magnolia Ballroom on campus, where they will receive a sealed envelope containing the location of their residency. When a small bell sounds, they will tear into their envelopes to find out the news. The suspense is called “Match Day,” an annual event that is the culmination of a process that begins in the fall when senior medical students start applying to residency programs through a national computer system. Depending on a student’s chosen specialty, a residency will last from three to six years... ..

Please answer the following assuming this release has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly	disagree	neither	agree
strongly				
Disagree			agree	
agree			nor	disagree
This release was interesting and 9.7% enjoyable.	7.3%	22.8%	23.8%	36.4%
This release was informative. 6.8%	5.3%	23.2%	22.2%	42.5%
This release was clear and 7.8% understandable	5.8%	19.9	20.9	45.6%
This release was credible 7.3%	3.9%	16.5%	32.5%	39.8%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	54.8%	Yes		

**Group 1: EnergySouth announces completed acquisition of Mississippi Hub, LLC.
(Inverted-Pyramid version)**

Locally-owned EnergySouth today announced that its wholly-owned subsidiary, EnergySouth Midstream, Inc., has completed its previously announced acquisition of a 60% interest in Mississippi Hub, LLC. Mississippi Hub is developing a natural gas storage facility in Simpson County, Mississippi. EnergySouth Midstream, Inc. will be the exclusive operating entity for the development, construction, and operation of the facility, and funds managed by affiliates of Fortress Investment Group LLC will hold a 40% interest in the project. Approximately \$140 million was paid for the entire acquisition. EnergySouth, Inc. and EnergySouth Midstream, Inc. were advised by Bryant Park Capital with respect to the acquisition. The company said the Mississippi Hub facility is under construction at the Bond Salt Dome Structure near Jackson, Mississippi, a location that allows access to traditional gas supplies in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Gulf Coast as well as emerging production from east Texas and northern Louisiana. Mississippi Hub's storage operations will also be in close proximity to interstate pipelines and pipeline expansion projects accessing major natural gas markets.....

Please answer the following assuming this release has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly strongly agree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree
This release was interesting 4.0% and enjoyable.	7.5%	33.3%	30.3%	24.9%
This release was informative. 10.0%	1.5%	7.5%	16.9%	64.2%
This release was clear and 7.5% understandable	5.5%	18.5%	24.0%	44.5%
This release was credible 9.6%	1.5%	7.1%	24.2%	57.6%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	80.7 Yes			

Group 1: Police Academy to make use iPods for training (Inverted-Pyramid Version)

(Your police department) announced Friday that the department will issue recruits iPods fully loaded with police academy coursework and classroom instruction. Each iPod includes video downloads of

the courses taught at the Academy during the recruit's six months of training. Classroom instruction covers a range of complex subject matter inherent to law enforcement including criminal procedure, State Penal Law, warrants, ethics and community policing.....

Please answer the following assuming this release has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly Disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree
strongly agree				
This release was interesting 7.1% and enjoyable.	3.5%	19.2%	35.4%	34.8%
This release was informative. 8.0%	5.0%	20.6%	20.6%	45.7%
This release was clear and 10.7% understandable	5.1%	14.7%	19.8%	49.7%
This release was credible 10.1%	3.0%	12.1%	31.2%	43.7%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	59.0% Yes			

Group 2- American Cancer Society announces the agency’s 19th Annual Chili Cook-Off. (Narrative version)

Jean Simon and Bill Russell will fight cancer with chili. They’ll sprinkle their unique blend of spicy seasonings into a 15-gallon black cauldron of steaming chili Saturday, hoping their tasty concoction will help raise funds for research. They and members of the university’s cancer institute will compete with over 150 area teams in a race for the best chili in the 19th annual American Cancer Society’s Chili Off to be held Saturday, February 23 from 11 a.m. –3 pm in Johnson Square. The event, a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society’s fight against cancer, has become one of the most popular charity events in (your city). “We’ll be using a new recipe. ...a meat and bean chili with kind of a sweet-tangy taste...very hearty and just spicy enough,” said Simon, coordinator of the University team, “but, we have to cook 15 gallons of chili in order to compete.” Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

Please answer the following assuming this story has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly strongly Disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree
This release was interesting 6.0% and enjoyable.	1.8%	11.4%	21.6%	59.3%
This release was informative. 7.9%	1.8%	5.5%	9.7%	75.2%
This release was clear and 9.1% understandable	5.5%	14.0%	7.9%	63.4%
This release was credible 9.2%	5.5%	8.6%	17.8%	58.9%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	85.8% Yes			

Group 2: National Residency Matching Program Places Medical Students (Inverted pyramid version)

March 15, 2007, at 11:00 a.m. CST, anxious medical students from the University of (your city) will learn where they will begin their residency training as results from the National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) are simultaneously released to all senior medical students across the United States. Senior medical students will gather at the Magnolia Ballroom on campus, where results will be distributed in sealed envelopes. At the sound of a small bell, the members of the class of 2008 will tear into their envelopes simultaneously and then proceed to the podium, as their names are called, to announce the result. This annual event, known nationwide as "Match Day," is the culmination of a process that begins in the fall when senior medical students start applying to residency programs through a national computer system. Depending on a student's chosen specialty, a residency will last from three to six years.....

Please answer the following assuming this release has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly Disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree
strongly agree				
This release was interesting 1.9% and enjoyable.	7.0%	28.5%	33.5%	29.1%
This release was informative. 1.9%	3.2%	16.5%	20.9%	57.6%
This release was clear and 1.9% understandable.	6.9%	25.0%	19.4%	46.9%
This release was credible. 2.6%	2.6%	10.3%	31.6%	52.9%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	50.6% Yes			

Group 2: **EnergySouth announces acquisition of Mississippi Hub, LLC. (Narrative version)**

The unprecedented idea of buying natural gas at a time when it is cheap and “parking it” in an old Civil War salt dome for later use when prices are high, has created a boon for locally-based EnergySouth Midstream. Company officials “went out on a limb,” CEO Mark Thompson said, when the idea of storing natural gas in such an unlikely place was first marketed to the industry. In only six years, EnergySouth has grown from a “who’s that” to the fourth largest owner of natural gas storage facilities in the U.S. The company employs nearly 400 in the (YOUR CITY) area. Today’s news that EnergySouth has acquired 60 % of Mississippi Hub, LLC, a natural gas storage company, brought another round of applause from investors and other members of the business community. “This Mississippi Hub site allows EnergySouth access to traditional gas supplies in the Gulf of Mexico and along the Gulf Coast, as well as emerging production from east Texas and northern Louisiana,” said Thompson. “Storage operations will also be in close to interstate pipelines and pipeline expansion projects that feed major natural gas markets.” Thompson beamed with pride of the announcement and shook hands heartedly with members of both companies and the media during today’s press conference.....

Please answer the following assuming this release has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly strongly Disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree
This release was interesting 8.2% and enjoyable.	4.8%	11.0%	33.6%	42.5%
This release was informative. 10.7%	2.0%	8.1%	12.1%	67.1%
This release was clear and 5.6% understandable.	5.6%	16.0%	13.9%	59.0%
This release was credible. 9.6%	2.7%	13.7%	20.5%	53.4%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	75.2% Yes			

Group 2: **Police Academy to use iPods for training (Narrative version)**

Members of the (your city's) Police Academy have broken tradition. They've told recruits to put down their textbooks and use a "company issued" iPod to do their studying. Michael Justin, a police recruit who is slated to take his exam next week, finds the approach fresh and unique. "At first I said 'someone's lost it'. Then I realized that using a newer technology like the iPod was the only way to go," he said. To help with exam preparation, the academy has given recruits, like Justin, iPods fully loaded with police academy coursework and classroom instruction. Each iPod includes video downloads of the courses taught at the Academy during the recruit's six months of training. Justin and his buddy will study various categories of classroom instruction, which will include such topics as criminal procedure, penal law, warrants, ethics and community policing. What happens after each recruit successfully passes the exam. "Maybe they'll let us keep the iPods as a reward," said Justin. "I've got this album that... .."

Please answer the following assuming this release has direct impact on your readers:

	Strongly strongly Disagree	disagree	neither agree nor disagree	agree
This release was interesting 20.6% and enjoyable.	1.4%	6.4%	9.2%	62.4%
This release was informative. 15.7%	0.7%	6.4%	12.1%	65.0%
This release was clear and 15.5% understandable.	0.7%	5.6%	12.7%	65.5%
This story was credible. 4.4%	2.9%	6.5%	22.3%	54.0%
Assuming this release has direct impact on your readers, are you inclined to use all or part of this news release?	80.3% Yes			