

Five ways to write PR tailored for web

 By [Hansie Smit](#)

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A PR agency asked me to create buzz about a rubber-like chemical, called ADA, used by Sasko to make their flour whiter. They already had a seasoned journalist working the case and roped me in for a more, let's call it, online approach.

As someone who's still not clear on the difference between 'on the record' and 'off the record', I immediately decided to steer clear of any scenario involving a dictaphone. After that I sat down to write an online protest following five simple guidelines.

1. Don't write a headline - write a tweet

If it worked on Twitter, it would work anywhere. Food puns were in. Sugar-coating was out. I went with *Flour Foul Play: Sasko Substance Shocker*. My friend in journalism wrote *Sasko Bows To Pressure On Yoga Mat Chemical*. Each to his own.

2. Open with a smile

Since we were already in the kitchen, I opened with a mini recipe for disaster: *Be careful next time you mix flour, yeast and water. You might just pull a yoga mat from the oven*. My learned colleague opened with a summary of the situation outlining both sides of the story.

Much more serious, but something you'd expect next to an article on the *Griekwastad* murder trial. I was squeezed in between the latest Miley Cyrus meltdown and a 'Most Read' newsfeed.

3. Air an opinion

My learned colleague built his article on hard facts. I built mine on opinion with a sprinkling of facts. In my opinion adding plastic to flour is bad.

To add spice, I delivered my opinion in a slightly fed-up, sarcastic tone. Think Debora Patta reading copy written by the Entertainment Now team.

4. Write sensational sub-headers

Sub-headers can make or break a blog. Public health was at stake so, for my sub-headers, I used words like 'outcry' and 'can hurt you'. Surprisingly, my friend in journalism also used sub-headers but banked on words like 'explained' and 'should be removed'. Here's a play-by-play in order of appearance.

Me: *An International Outcry!*

My colleague: *"Flour should be removed" - activists*

Me: *What You Don't Know Can Hurt You*

My colleague: *The "yoga mat chemical" explained*

Me: *Too Little Too Late*

My colleague: *Continued improvement necessary*

Me: *A Good Outcome For Who?*

My colleague: *Fast-tracking the removal of ADA*

5. End with a sting

I ended with a critical look at two quotes lifted from my colleague's dictaphone (thanks buddy). First I questioned Sasko's "fast-tracking" of the removal of ADA when flour containing ADA was still on the shelves.

Then I lambasted Pick n Pay for saying removing ADA from their bakeries' pre-mixes was a "good outcome for everyone". Clearly it wasn't since ADA could still be found in flour on Pick n Pay's shelves. With those two flour bombs the piece was wrapped and ready for the web.

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