

PRESS RELEASE

MARKETING

FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

*How To Use Press Releases in a
Comprehensive Online Marketing strategy*



About the Author

Portland SEO was founded in 2007 by Augusto Beato, a former logistics marketing and sales executive.

We are a full-service marketing, advertising, and public relations agency specializing in one area: RESULTS. Having been in business for over 12 years, we have developed a wealth of marketing strategies and techniques that work for businesses large and small.

With expertise that includes traditional and new media, interactive, brand strategy, revenue acquisition and planning, media buying and budget expansion, direct response, creative design, promotions, and sales support, Portland SEO provides a depth of knowledge that can help you reach your goals.

Quite simply, Portland SEO partners with companies to create innovative campaigns and strategies that sell, on target, and on budget.

Augusto Beato

Founder @ Portland SEO

503-278-5599

Portlandseo.net

info@portlandseo.net

10350 SE 54TH AVE # 101

Portland OR 97222

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What Is a Press Release?

In their most general form, press releases are written communications that briefly report newsworthy events. They generally contain the who, how, why, where, and when of an event, and generally, this event is tied to a business or organization. (Although, it doesn't have to be. Public figures use press releases frequently to get the word out about what they're involved in.)

For small to medium-sized businesses, the uses of press releases are somewhat more focused. Normally, we take an event tied to the organization, issue a press release, and use that to create "buzz" about that business. This buzz naturally results in greater exposure and more business.

Press releases can impact businesses in a number of ways, and we'll talk about many of those in the next chapter. Press release marketing (the process of creating, publishing, and using press releases in a unified marketing plan for businesses) is a powerful tool. Readers, both on and offline, tend to view press releases in a different light than advertising. They're less skeptical of the claims and of the business. (We're all so jaded now that we tend to dismiss anything that's communicated to us through ads.)

Your average press release is three to four hundred words long. Rarely longer, but it can be longer if needed. A good press release focuses on one single newsworthy event. If a business has more events to talk about, then multiple press releases would be needed.

The term "newsworthy event" covers a lot of ground. Basically, this means anything of note, of importance, that's happened to or happening in the business. Topics such as new product launches, new employees, new financing for the business, new headquarters, new stores...anything that you can attach the word new to, those are the topics that are perfect for a press release.

Before the Internet, press releases were normally distributed by mail to various news organizations. Today, we don't mail press releases to reporters (although you can). We use online publishing services, such as PRWeb, to publish the press release. The publishing platform takes care of all the distribution. (Having said that, make sure you read Chapter 8: After You Publish Your Press Release. There's much more that can be done with press releases than just publishing them.)

Of course, press releases should be part and parcel of a greater marketing effort for the business. Multimedia press releases have become very important over the past few years. A multimedia press release is one that contains media other than just text. This could be images, infographics, videos, PDF reports, whitepapers, and more, or a combination of many of the above. For each of these additions to the press release, there's more than can be done.

As an example. Let's say you publish a press release about a new product and you include a video of a product demonstration. Well, that video is a very valuable marketing asset in its own right. The video can be published on YouTube, Vimeo, and across multiple platforms. The audio from the video can be stripped out and also made available on various audio sites (similar to YouTube, but strictly for audio, like SoundCloud). Any slides you might use in your presentation can be put on SlideShare. It goes on, and on, and on...and the more you disseminate the video content, the more exposure your business gets.

This is all great, and it all starts with a press release announcing a true, newsworthy event. In the next chapter, we're going to talk about the various ways that press release marketing can positively impact your business, and then we'll dive into how to find the best newsworthy events for you to announce.

As always, if you need any help with this, I'm available. My contact information is at the beginning and end of this book.

How a Steady Diet of Press Releases Can Benefit the Small to Medium-Sized Business

Press releases provide remarkable benefits for businesses. Everything from more traffic to your website, more customers coming to your place of business, and more inbound phone calls to even momentous events like strategic partnerships with related businesses, and even finding that right Venture Capital partner are possible through press releases.

Not only that, but compared to more traditional advertising, press release marketing is very cost-effective. How much are you considering spending on your next radio spot or your next round of Facebook ads? Those may or may not be working for you, but why not try a diet of monthly press releases in addition to everything else you're doing?

Because it is so important that you understand the power of press release marketing, let's talk in some detail about what you can expect out of your next press release campaign.

Instant Exposure for Your Business

One of the most important aspects of online press releases is their immediacy. When a press release is published on a platform like PRWeb, or some other reputable platform, the business gets instant exposure. With most platforms, there are several “levels” to choose from when you publish (and we’ll get into all of that later). Having said that, with any reputable platform, your press release will get distributed to thousands of news sites, news blogs, other blogs, and other types of outlets...immediately.

Press releases are not, however, ephemeral. They don’t vanish at some date in the future. Another huge benefit is they stay online essentially forever. As long as the Internet exists, your press release will be there, gathering traffic and sending traffic and interested parties to your website and to your business.

Increased Sales

With exposure, often comes increased sales. Although, this isn’t a guaranteed outcome for a given press release (just as it’s not for any given instance of advertising), if you are using press releases intelligently, and consistently in your marketing efforts, it’s going to be difficult not to see an increase in sales.

There are several ways that a press release can boost your sales.

One way is just the fact that people searching for your product or service will naturally run across your press release. The press release should contain links to your website, which interested parties can click. Also, if you have multimedia...videos, PDFs, infographics, images, things like that...this will only increase your visitor engagement. And, if you’re proactive about spreading those multimedia assets around, publishing the videos, for instance, you’ll get even more clicks as people see that particular marketing asset. This isn’t the only way your press release can boost your sales, however.

Another way people can find your press release is on blogs and news sites. Bloggers and news sites need content, and one of the best places for them to get that content is from press releases whose subject is allied with their market niche. These sites often publish the press releases outright, with a link back to your website, or they do what’s called “curating” the press release. Basically, curating means writing a short paragraph introducing a piece of content, then linking from that to the original, longer source. Considering how many blogs and news sites should pick up your press release, you’ll get even more traffic to your website from this. As long as your website actually works as a marketing funnel for your business, that traffic should naturally drip down and turn into sales.

Even better, there’s a cumulative effect that happens if you publish press releases regularly. Press releases are evergreen. They’re indexed by Google, and often show up on the first page of relevant searches. As you get more and more press releases out there, you’ll cumulatively get more traffic from those press releases to your website, calls to your business number, and important inquiries from people who want to buy to investors who want to invest.

Boosts Effectiveness of Your Other Marketing Campaigns

A press release is one of the best ways to inexpensively amp up the effectiveness of any marketing campaign. Let’s say you’re going to a trade show in August. A great strategy would be to book-end this trade show with a press release. One release announces your appearance there, and the other press release announces that you were there and, hopefully, something newsworthy that came out of that event. Just by doing this one thing, you’ve both advertised your company’s participation at the trade show, thus getting more and more interested parties both knowing about the trade show, and also knowing about your company, and you’ve used the

second press release to ride the tailwind of the press release a little longer, turning it into even more of marketing success.

What about other marketing events? Are you launching a radio spot about your new local business service? If so, you need a press release, perhaps two...one about the service itself and the other about the radio spot. Do you think it might sound goofy to write a press release about advertising? Not at all! Especially not if your advertising has a new twist on it. Announce the twist and get more people knowing about your business and its products.

Let's say you're doing in-depth videos about a new process in your business. Well, ...you're going to at least put those videos on YouTube, right? Now what you need to do is to publish a press release about your new, educational YouTube channel.

The bottom line, be creative! The more press releases you get out there, the more traffic you get, the more sales you make!

Brands You as an Industry Thought Leader and Your Company as Cutting-Edge

Years ago, a couple of advertising geniuses, Al Ries and Jack Trout wrote a seminal book called Positioning: The Battle For Your Mind. In their book, they argued that brands, like Tide, for instance, hold certain "positions" in our minds. So, when you think of clean, fresh-smelling clothes, you're more likely to think to buy Tide than another brand.

The positioning concept isn't just for big businesses and Madison Avenue. You run a business that's defined either by product type or location, or both. How would you like to start positioning your business, or yourself, as a market leader in your niche?

Press releases can do that, probably easier than any other form of advertising, much easier than, say, having a ghostwriter write a book for you.

A diet of press releases talking about your business, your innovations, your speaking gigs, your trade show appearances, etc., can, over time, build you up as one of the true thought leaders in your business niche.

Why should this appeal to you? Well, for one thing, businesses that are seen as the market leaders are trusted more by customers and clients. Trust is the first hurdle any potential buyer needs to overcome before they buy something.

In addition, should you need capital or new management to take your business to the next level, you, as a market leader, are going to attract the right investors, the right management team, much easier if you're the leader in your field.

Who, by the way, decides that you are actually the leader in your field?

Here's the "dirty little secret".

You do!

And, one of the best ways to create and announce that fact is through press releases.

Increased Traffic to Your Website

Let me ask you a quick question.

How much money did you spend on your website? How much is your hosting a month?

Now, the hard part...

How many sales per month is your website responsible for? What's the ROI (Return on Investment) of your website?

If you're like a lot of businesses, your website is used more like a glorified digital business card than a money-making asset. It can be so much more, though!

Of course, there are several steps in turning your website from being just an Internet placeholder to being a money spewing asset. And, that first step is getting more and more potential customers or clients to actually visit the site. One of the best ways to accomplish this is through press releases.

Think about it! Press releases attract only the best quality traffic online. Only someone truly interested in your newsworthy event is going to actually read your press release. So, they filter your potential traffic, filtering out the "tire kickers" before they even land on your home page.

Even better, press releases pre-sell that traffic by predisposing them to think of your business and your products or services in only the best light.

Thus, the traffic you get from press releases is, for lack of a better word, golden!

Again, as you publish more and more press releases, you'll build up more and more of that golden, highly targeted traffic.

Yet another reason to start your business on a steady diet of press releases!

Important SEO Benefits

SEO means Search Engine Optimization. Basically, this is the process of creating traffic to websites by various means, other than pay-per-click advertising.

When someone publishes a page on a website, Google crawls it. The Google "bot" figures out what the page is about (from the text on the page) and then decides where that particular page is going to rank for a variety of searches that someone might do, or that people have done on the page.

Your website is going to get more traffic "organically" if the pages on your site rank higher for the given searches that Google assigns to them. The higher the rankings, the more likely people are to find your listing and click through to go to the page.

Although you can't determine where you rank outright, you can do things to influence your rankings positively, and press releases are one of the best ways to do that!

One of the most important ranking factors that Google takes into account when deciding where to rank a given web page is the number, source, and quality of the links coming into that page from other web pages. These are called “backlinks”, because they are inbound into the page in question, pointing back to it, as it were.

A link from a press release published in a reputable site like PRWeb would be considered a very valuable backlink! So, the more press releases you publish that contain more and more links back to various pages in your website, the better those pages rank in relevant searches. Of course, those Google searches are done by people who might be potential customers, clients, investors, or partners! The more press releases you publish, the more traffic you get, the more sales you make, the faster your business grows!

Increased Exposure to Your Target Audience (because publishing platforms are industry-specific and also geo-targeted)

One of the big problems with any advertising is targeting the ad to the right potential buyers. A billboard on an expressway is a great example. So, let’s say you own a plumbing company, and you pay to have a billboard show on one of the major commuter expressways in your city. You’ll get massive exposure here! Literally, thousands upon thousands of cars will drive by every single day! Yet, how many of those drivers and passengers who actually see your billboard will actually need a plumber any time soon?

Of course, this is all worked out via the free market and the price on for the billboard. And, I’m sure businesses who understand billboard advertising do very well. But, you have to admit, on a daily basis, 99% of the people who even glance at the billboard won’t need a plumber.

Let’s use an example online. How about ads on Facebook.

So, what if you own a chain of high-end hair salons, and you want to beef up your business using Facebook ads? Although you can do some targeting with Facebook ads, many of the people seeing them either won’t need their hair done right at that moment, or they’ll live too far away to use one of your shops.

What’s the problem here? You would, after all, be getting thousands of impressions of the Facebook ad. (An impression is one instance of one person being exposed to the ad.)

The problem here is in the targeting of the ad. Again, just like the billboard example, only a very small fraction of the people actually seeing the ad will need your business’s service or product. And that can very well become an issue if you’re spending too much money on your ads than you’re bringing in in new customers or clients. (Basically, I’m saying, in this example, that those ads would have a negative ROI.)

Easy Way to Distribute Your Content Across Multiple Channels

One of the biggest “stealth” benefits of publishing press releases is that your content (your press release and the information it contains) will be distributed across multiple channels. It’s not just standard news agencies that will learn about your news. It’s bloggers, journalists, writers of all sorts, webmasters, video marketers, and basically anyone online (this is millions of people and organizations), who need pertinent content for their websites, videos, products, and more!

Just by publishing one single press release, you get all this exposure. Not only that, but your press release is evergreen! It’s not just here for a few days or a few weeks. People will find your press release via Google, Yahoo, Bing searches and other means for years...literally for years!

Publish a series of press releases, say once a month, and you'll create a massive body of content pertinent to you, your business, your mission, and your products, all with links pointed back to your website and all with your business's phone number readily available! Press releases all positioning your business and/or your cause in the best of lights, selling you, selling your products, and selling your organization...for as long as the Internet exists!

That's marketing that sticks!

Helps Build Solid Relationships with Journalists Who Cover Your Industry

Want to become a thought leader in your industry? Want to be interviewed as one of the leading experts in your industry or field? How about having journalists seeking you out and asking you about industry trends, new products, competitors and allied businesses, and even more general topics such as the local economy? You can't buy that sort of exposure for your business or organization!

As you publish more and more press releases, more and more legitimate journalists are going to learn about you, your business, or your organization. As that trend continues, you're going to find yourself on the radar of the kinds of people and organizations. It's really hard to get that kind of positioning and publicity any other way! (About the only other way is through public speaking, but that's very time intensive!)

If you want exposure, press releases are easily your best bet!

Attracts Deep-Pocket Investors

Speaking of exposure! This may or may not be important for your business. If you're interested in growing fast and perhaps selling your business off someday, you're going to need investors. It's very rare that a business can bootstrap itself to the point where it can be sold off to a major corporation. In other words, if you want to hit the ball out of the park, you need capital!

Investors are hard to find, though. It's really more effective to attract them than to try to go out and find them. A steady diet of press releases published, say one per month, is a really excellent way to get your business on the radar of the types of people and businesses who invest in other businesses.

They're out there right now looking for investments. More exposure for your business means that they're going to find you easier, which in turn makes securing the kind of financing you need along with terms that will make you money that much easier.

If you're looking for capital, you need press releases!

Inexpensive, Compared with Other Modes of PR and Advertising

Unless your business is in its infancy, you have an advertising budget. How much is in that budget? How much are you spending on advertising? How well is it all working?

Adding a monthly press release won't strain your budget, and often is one of the most cost-effective ways you can spend money to make money.

You get a lot of “bang for your buck” with press releases. Often quite a bit more than standard advertising, and normally quite a bit more than paid online advertising, which can be very expensive and yield no results.

Try six months of monthly press releases and then see what that did for your business.

Potentially Massive Exposure to Readers, Some of Whom Might Become Customers

At any given time during the day, there are millions of people reading the news. Even in your local market area, there are thousands upon thousands of people searching for goods and services online. They will never find you if you don't have what online marketers call “content” available online.

“Content” is written text about your business, your products, services, and other related news about your company or your business niche that's published in various places online. It could be published on your website or blog. It could be published as a YouTube video. It could be on a PowerPoint sharing site. Or... it could be one of the many press releases that you've had the foresight to release monthly!

Press releases rank easily. People who are searching for a product or service using keywords that relate to the topic of your press release will find that press release, be suitably interested in knowing more, click on the link that goes to your website or some other web page, and then voilà! You'll have another customer!

Of course, none of this is going to happen if you don't start publishing press releases!

Increased Trust from Both Customers/Clients and Allied Businesses

Anybody can claim to be anything online these days. Hey, ...it's the Internet, and it's virtually impossible to separate the fakes and the poseurs from the real deal. This is true with individuals, and it's also true with businesses.

With a little experience online, a gal with a laptop sitting in an Internet café can look like a multi-million-dollar business. This poses a problem for smaller businesses that actually are legitimate! There's an uneven playing field that depends on one's ability to manipulate the Internet.

This phenomenon is one of the many reasons that press releases are so important when establishing your business as a bonafide contender in your market area, and you, the business owner or manager, as a thought leader in your field.

Although compared with other forms of advertising, press releases aren't that expensive, there is a cost. The press release has to be written. That's a cost right there. And distribution on a top network can cost anywhere from \$200 to \$3000, according to the level of exposure you want for the press release. (For a smaller business, it's going to be in the \$200 to \$500 range.)

That barrier of entry is important. Not everyone is going to want to pay that much. Of course, for a legitimate business, a few hundred dollars for a press release every month or two is not going to break the budget.

Here's another issue, and it has to do with how press releases are viewed vis-à-vis to paid advertising. Well, they're viewed as having more weight, more truth behind them. This is what we call in the marketing and sales world, the third-party effect.

If I tell you something great about my business (advertising), you'll discount that information, because you'll see it as self-serving. If, however, a third party tells you, you'll not discount it as much. As a matter of fact, according to who that third party is, you might actually believe it more.

This is where the power of celebrity endorsements comes from!

Celebrities...music, acting, sports, even business...get paid all the time to endorse products that they've never ever used. People believe the product is better, actually go out and buy more of it, just because a singer who they like said the product is great. This is a great example of the third-party effect.

Now, let's take this down to the level of your business.

Let's say that a local radio show that talks about local restaurants pick up your press release. They come to your restaurant, love it, and then interview you on the radio show. Suddenly, all the listeners of the show are thinking very positive thoughts about your restaurant, just because the local "celebrity" announcer of the radio show said that they liked it!

You can't buy that kind of advertising!

Oh, wait a minute! Yes, you can, and you can do this over and over again with press releases!

Manages, and Potentially Fixes Your Online Reputation

There's an old saying that "Trust takes years to build, and seconds to break".

That's especially true in today's Internet world!

Lies, rumors, and malicious innuendos of all kinds abound online. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter are rife with "facts" that are "true" today, yet are seen as false tomorrow. The problem is that once out there, the damage is done.

In 2016 in California, Yelp was sued over the removal of negative reviews. There are certainly arguments on both sides. If someone got ptomaine poisoning from a restaurant and had to go to the hospital, I'd love to know about it before I go there and eat! However, often negative reviews, comments, and what really amounts to slander and liable, are often what these reviews really are. And, they can really hurt a business!

The only way to fight this is by maintaining a very positive, proactive presence online. This is one of the biggest reasons you need to be publishing press releases on a regular schedule. If bad publicity strikes, you want the weight of a ton of good publicity already out there to counterbalance the negative. It's going to be so much more effective to have a lot of positive news on your side already *before* the negative review or negative article is published. Otherwise, people will see your press release(s) as more of a reaction to the negative item and again, discount their validity.

Spreads Your Brand Virally

Let me give you a realistic scenario for how just one press release can spread information about your business virally.

So, let's say you publish a press release. It gets distributed to zillions of news sites, blogs, radio shows, podcasts, etc. And, let's say your press release contains a video, which is posted on YouTube, Vimeo, Daily Motion, and several other sites.

Next, here's the type of thing we often see happening.

Other websites pick up on the press release from the press release platform you used and publish it. The news sites all have RSS feeds, so thousands of blogs and other websites pull content from those RSS feeds and republish your press release. Podcasters looking for content for their shows pick up on the press release, and mention it in one of their shows, highlighting your business, your product, even you as an entrepreneur. They, of course, need content for their own blogs, so they have their podcasts transcribed and publish that online, with a link back to your press release and maybe even your website.

Your videos are picked up and reposted on various websites. If you had PowerPoint slides used in your videos, let's say you took those and published those on a PowerPoint sharing site and a PDF sharing site. Now your slide and PDF content is being picked up and shared.

This is how the Internet works!

Not sure what email client you use, but if you use something like Yahoo, on your home page, you'll see a news feed. Where does that news come from? Yahoo doesn't have oodles of reporters roaming the globe. All they're doing is what we call "curating" the content. They find news stories on other sites and publish them on their own site. The same is true with the Drudge Report, the Huffington Post, and tons of other sites.

The Internet is a content medium, and it's built on virally shared content.

All I'm suggesting you do is to use press releases to get your business, your product or service, even yourself in this viral flow.

So, What's Next?

In this chapter, I've hopefully convinced you of the power of press releases. Your next step is actually to go out there and start publishing them! In the next chapter, I'm going to show you my favorite press release format. Follow my template, and you'll look like a pro press release writer, even if all you can do is to write your name on a check! 😊

How to Write a Great Press Release

Before I show you how to create a really great press release, let's think a moment about what that press release should do for you and your business.

So, what should it do?

To my mind, a great press release should present the business or personality in the best, most professional light. It should make the reader feel good about the business or person. Make them value this business or person highly and look up to them as an example of business professionalism.

A great press release should have interesting, if not downright exciting news to convey! It should back up opinions with well-placed quotes from the principals involved. Ideally, it should be newsworthy. Basically, telling us something that we really didn't know before.

Although not everyone's going to be interested in the contents of your press releases, of those who naturally are interested in the topic, our press release should "wow" them! They really should sit up and take notice. Hopefully, clicking through to the website, or picking up their cell phone and calling the contact number.

There are a few "must-haves" that will help you create a killer, noteworthy press release. I'm going to talk about those in this chapter. In the next chapter, I'm going to show you my favorite way of writing an excellent, newsworthy press release using my own five-paragraph method.

What Makes a Great Press Release

There are three main ingredients to a great press release. In order, they're a newsworthy topic, the structure of the first paragraph, using quotes in the right way, and finally, using the right kind of hyperlinks. Let's look at each of these parts in some more detail.

Choosing a Newsworthy Topic

This is such an important part of press release writing, that I've devoted a whole chapter to this subject later on in the book. For the moment, however, let me just say that there's a lot of confusion around when it comes to the idea of "newsworthy".

To my mind, most folks apply too strict a definition of newsworthy to their potential press release topic ideas. Okay, in some strict sense, I agree that your hiring a new VP of marketing isn't really going to make it to the first page of the New York Times. And, you're not going to ever see it mentioned on the news segment of the Today show. And, I'm pretty sure that the Drudge Report won't ever link back to your press release from their site.

Look. There's news and then there's news! The latter type of news...floods, terrorist attacks, politicians being stupid, that sort of thing...is what ends up on Fox or CNN. That's NOT what we're talking about here. We're talking about anything of importance to your business, your market area, your overall industry, and especially to your customers or clients. So, in this light, your new VP of marketing might actually be very newsworthy.

Your competitors certainly are going to take note. Your investors are going to care about this a great deal. If your company's marketing has been a little sub-par, even your customers will care. All these stakeholders will also care about other seemingly mundane events like the new store location you just opened, your new website that's completely mobile responsive, and your new product line of eco-friendly doggie bags. Anything that might possibly interest your industry, your customers, your competitors, or related businesses should be considered newsworthy. And you should be churning out press releases religiously as these types of events occur!

So, that takes care of the newsworthy part. Let's move on and talk about one of the biggest issues you face when writing a press release, structuring the opening paragraph.

The First Paragraph

The first paragraph is the single most important part of the press release body text. (The headline should probably be ranked as the top factor.) Why? Well, once someone decides to actually read the press release, which happens mainly through the headline, they'll want to know quickly what this is all about. Should they continue reading? Should they spend their time on this? Are the contents of the press release pertinent to them? The first paragraph should answer all these questions and more.

Press releases are news and not advertising. As a matter of fact, if you write a press release like an advertisement, reputable press release distribution services will kick it out and ask you to rewrite it. Thus, a press release should read more like a newspaper article than a sales letter or promotional piece of advertising copy.

Newspaper articles are all written using a certain loose formula. For one thing, they seek to answer the big news questions: who, what, when, where, and why. So, your first paragraph needs to answer those clearly and quickly. Whereas advertisements seek to establish an emotional connection with the reader and then pull you into the information, hopefully leading to action on your part, a newspaper article seeks to give you the entire story fast, then use the rest of the article to bolster what was said. So, newspaper articles and press releases, the information in them, looks like an inverted pyramid. Your first sentence needs to tell the whole story in just a few words. Whatever the newsworthy item is, it needs to be upfront and center right at the beginning. No subtlety required here!

I just went over to PRWeb, Marketwatch, and PRNewswire and copied a few first sentences of a couple of press releases at random.

Let's look at them. (I've put the link to the actual press release below the quote so you can reference it, if you wish.)

“Arrow PSA, built entirely on the Salesforce platform, was developed to build upon the strengths of great project management tools, administrative tools, and executive reporting and forecasting tools - while adding a few exclusive features not seen on other Professional Services software solutions.”

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2018/02/prweb15096070.htm>

“This Valentine's Day, KFC wants you to show your loved ones how much you care by giving them a fried chicken scratch 'n' sniff Valentine's Day card featuring its iconic founder, Colonel Harland Sanders.”

<https://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/kfc-helps-you-spread-the-love-with-the-sensual-scent-of-fried-chicken-scratch-n-sniff-valentines-day-cards-2018-02-12-8183460>

Note how these first sentences tell you, in broad strokes, exactly what the newsworthy item is. Arrow PSA has a new Professional Services software solution, and KFC wants you to give their scratch ‘n’ sniff card to your loved ones.

You can click on the links and read the rest of the press releases if you wish, but basically what they do is to flesh out that first sentence with more information and appropriate quotes.

Speaking of quotes...

The Importance of Quotes in Press Releases

Quotes are a very important part of a great press release. They add variety to the press release, break up the text, and keep it from being so boring. Even more important, they add a human element and a proof element.

Remember, press releases are more news than an advertisement. Sure, you’re writing (or you’re having someone else write) the press release and publishing it for exposure for yourself and your business. But, as already stated, it’s not an advertisement. It’s an explanation of a newsworthy event. So, quotes not only add variety to the copy (the writing), but more importantly, they shore up the essential message and flesh it out.

The quote or quotes should be used as proof of your statements.

The press release says that such and such is happening and why. So, the quote should be of someone, a principal in the news event, who essentially says the same thing in their own words.

Next, let’s discuss the final really important part of a great press release. Hyperlinks!

How to Use Hyperlinks in Your Press Release

Another main aspect of the Internet is hyperlinks. My links to the quotes above are hyperlinks. As long as you’re reading this book on a phone, computer, or Kindle device that’s connected to the Internet, you can click on these links, and you’ll be taken to the page they linked to.

One of the big reasons you’re publishing press releases is to get more and more people knowing about your product, service, or all about you and your place in your industry. But there’s so much more than just spreading the word that can happen with a good press release.

If your press release is hyperlinked to your website or your company’s website, you’ll get visitors (traffic) coming from the press release to your website. If (and this would be even better), instead of just linking to your home page, you link to what we call a squeeze page, a page that offers something of value in exchange for someone’s email address, you can use press releases to gather emails, build a list, and have more and more people to market your business’s product or service to.

There are other ideas for linking from press releases and exactly what you link to depends on the press release, your business, and your reasons for publishing the press release. Suffice it to say that links are good things and should be well used!

So far, we've covered the importance of the first paragraph, quotes, and hyperlinks. Let's take this all another step and talk about my five-paragraph method for writing great press releases in the next chapter.

Anatomy of a Great Press Release (Using My Five Paragraph Method)

Although there are several ways to structure a press release, my five-paragraph structure hits all of the important parts mentioned above, and more. It has a strong first paragraph, the first sentence of which contains the main newsworthy point of the press release, with the rest of the sentences fleshing out it out. After that, there's a long quote, then a third supporting paragraph followed by another quote, and finally, in the end, there's the information about the company, often called the boilerplate.

Let me discuss each of these paragraphs in some detail so you know what you're doing if you write a press release yourself, or at least you'll know what you're looking for in a press release that's written for you.

Please note that this is not the only format for a great press release. So, if you hire a writer and they come back with something that's structured a little differently, as long as it hits the three main features I talked about above, you'll be fine. Worst case, just compare their press release with my five-paragraph model to make sure you'll get all the important parts covered.

Let's start off by discussing the first paragraph.

The First Paragraph

The first paragraph of any press release is by far the most important paragraph, and quite frankly, the structure of this first paragraph is pretty much set in stone, no matter how the rest of the press release is formatted.

The first paragraph must start off with a clear, hopefully not too long sentence telling the reader exactly what the newsworthy event is. No beating around the bush. Not cutesy stuff. Just clear writing!

"ABC Company is launching a new piece of sales software that is going to solve a major problem in the Industry by linking Salesforce with the API's of several other CRM platforms."

I just made that up. But that's not a bad first sentence, if there were a company ABC and if they were launching such a piece of software. Do you see how clear this is? I'm not trying to be cute. I'm not trying to convince you of anything. All I'm doing is stating clearly what's happening.

Let's take that example and run with it.

The rest of the first paragraph should build on that first sentence and flesh it out. Explaining it, and hopefully, adding more information to it. Note...I usually don't quote anyone in the first paragraph. I save that for the second paragraph.

So, what would the next sentences need to talk about?

Well, this gets back to good old journalism 101. Who, What, When, Where, How, and Why!

In the first sentence we just wrote, we've got the Who and the What. The Who is ABC Company. The What is a piece of needed software. So, we're missing the When, Where, How, and Why.

Let's cover that. It doesn't really matter the order. Just what makes sense.

"The software is called Sales Scout, and it's launching to the public on June 1."

That next sentence is more of the What and also the When. Let's cover the Where and How next. Finally, we'll get to the Why.

Here's a third sentence.

"Sales Scout will be released on ABC Company's website at midnight May 31st, making it functionally available the next day."

And, a fourth sentence.

"ABC's current and past customers will each receive a special invite via email the week before containing a 20% off coupon code and access instructions."

Finally, we'll hit on the How with a closing sentence.

"According to ABC Company's president, Ben Smart, Sales Scout was created to fill a gap in the sales automation landscape."

Please note that that last sentence segues nicely into the long quote...and it would make sense that this long quote was from Ben Smart backing up everything said in this first paragraph.

So, let's look at the whole first paragraph as a unit, then we'll move on to the second paragraph.

Here's the whole thing.

ABC Company is launching a new piece of sales software that is going to solve a major problem in the Industry by linking Salesforce with the API's of several other CRM platforms. The software is called Sales Scout, and it's launching to the public on June 1. Sales Scout will be released on ABC Company's website at midnight on May 31st, making it functionally available the next day. ABC's current and past customers will each receive a special invite via email the week before containing a 20% off coupon code and access instructions. According to ABC Company's president, Ben Smart, Sales Scout was created to fill a gap in the sales automation landscape.

Looking at the whole thing together, you might want to read through and smooth a few things out, but all in all, in terms of pacing, content, and structure, that's a very nice first paragraph for a press release! It comes in at a little over 100 words. 111 to be exact. Most press releases need to be at least 300 words. Something at 500 words more or less is perfect. Remember, the press release is news, not advertising, not a sales letter! All you're doing is giving information, hopefully in a way that excites the reader and helps them take the next step, calling the business, clicking the link, etc.

Let's move on to the second paragraph.

The Second Paragraph (A Long Quote)

Quotes from principals and stakeholders in press releases are very good things. They humanize the press release and also give it even more legitimacy. Quotes help the reader of the press release identify with it on a more intimate level. With a quote, the press release isn't just a notification, it's more. It's suddenly people doing cool, interesting, important stuff that the reader needs to take note of.

I like for my entire second paragraph to be a quote that essentially backs up the first paragraph. It's okay if the information in the first paragraph is repeated. Actually, it's preferable that it be repeated! Because, in a very important way, the quote is proof of the validity of what you said in the first paragraph.

When I create a press release, I interview the client, either on the phone or at least through an intake form (where they fill it out themselves). After I write the first paragraph of the press release, I'll look back at their words and stitch together a quote. I'll send them the quote, make sure they know I'm going to use it as a verbatim quote, and get their okay with that. That's completely ethical to do it this way. Also, I get a quote that matches the information in the first paragraph.

So, our fictional president of ABC Company, Ben Smart, might have said something like this...

"We're very excited to open up our new software, Sales Scout, to the public at large in June," said Ben Smart, the President of ABC Company. Ben went on to say, "Sales Scout plugs one of the biggest holes in sales automation with Salesforce by simplifying the way our software and Salesforce connect not only with each other but with other platforms via their API's. Sales Scout is going to be a must-have product for any business, small, medium, or large, who uses a variety of platforms in conjunction with Salesforce."

Do you see how the quote supports our first paragraph? It repeats some of the information, but it's all from the mouth of Ben Smart. See how this adds legitimacy and even excitement to the press release?

That right, there is the job of the second paragraph!

So, what's left? It looks like we've covered the whole thing!

Not quite. Let's move on to the third paragraph.

Third Supporting Paragraph

For me, the third paragraph is a great place to add in details that might not have made it into the first paragraph, or might have been alluded to in the second quote paragraph.

Continuing with our example (and bearing in mind that I'm making up the press release I'm writing as I type this), let's look at what a good third paragraph might be like.

ABC Company is very mindful of taking care of their loyal customers. In fact, for a period of 90 days after the launch of Sales Scout, past customers can get a 20% off, lifetime discount on the software. ABC's software is cloud-based. Customers have access to an individualized version of their own account, which gives them access to a dashboard where they have access to all their purchases from ABC. Also,

during the 90-day period after the launch of Sales Scout, past customers will be able to get lifetime access for a single payment. Everyone else will be paying monthly.

These details might or might not be important to the main idea of the press release, the launch of ABC's new product. They are, however, important to mention, and they will interest readers for whom Sales Scout would be a valuable tool.

So, bottom line, paragraph three mentions pertinent details, which flesh out the story. These details may not be completely necessary, but they do add a lot of information to the press release that the target audience would like to know about.

Now, let's move on to the fourth paragraph.

Fourth Paragraph (With a Shorter Supporting Quote)

Just as I used the whole second paragraph as a quote to "prove" the contents of the first paragraph, I often like to use a shorter quote in the fourth paragraph for the same reason, to add solidity to what I just said in the third paragraph.

Here's a possible fourth paragraph for our press release.

"ABC Company is very customer-centric," says Valerie McDaniel, ABC's VP of Marketing. "We take care of our customers above all other priorities. That's why we're mindful of offering discounts and lifetime access for a one-off payment to them." Indeed, customer loyalty and retention at ABC is one of the core values that drive their business. And, this can be seen in the percentage of people who are repeat customers. "45% of customers will buy again from us within 90 days of their first purchase," Ben Smart says. "Loyalty is baked into our business model."

With this fourth paragraph, the news announcement part of the press release ends. All that's left is what we call "boilerplate" in the trade. Boilerplate is a basic summary and recap of the company, where they're located, what they sell, and how to get in touch with them.

Let's look at a good fifth paragraph in the next section.

Fifth Paragraph (Boilerplate)

The last paragraph contains all the information that someone would need to know more about the business.

Here's an example.

ABC Company was founded in 2009 by Ben Smart in Atlanta, Georgia. The company focuses on selling three types of software, personal productivity software, sales productivity software, and sales forecasting software. Sales Scout is a new addition to ABC's sales productivity suite. You are invited to learn more about ABC by visiting their website, abcsoftware.com, or by calling +1-111-222-3333.

Notice how the boilerplate is short and sweet and ends with a very gentle call to action. You want to get people from the press release to the company's website or make the phone ring!

Below you'll see all the parts of the press release pulled together into one seamless whole. Five paragraphs all doing their assigned jobs!

The Completed Press Release

ABC Company is launching a new piece of sales software that is going to solve a major problem in the Industry by linking Salesforce with the API's of several other CRM platforms. The software is called Sales Scout, and it's launching to the public on June 1. Sales Scout will be released on ABC Company's website at midnight on May 31st, making it functionally available the next day. ABC's current and past customers will each receive a special invite via email the week before containing a 20% off coupon code and access instructions. According to ABC Company's president, Ben Smart, Sales Scout was created to fill a gap in the sales automation landscape.

"We're very excited to open up our new software, Sales Scout, to the public at large in June," said Ben Smart, the President of ABC Company. Ben went on to say, "Sales Scout plugs one of the biggest holes in sales automation with Salesforce by simplifying the way our software and Salesforce connect not only with each other but with other platforms via their API's. Sales Scout is going to be a must-have product for any business, small, medium, or large, who uses a variety of platforms in conjunction with Salesforce."

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"ABC Company is very customer-centric," says Valerie McDaniel, ABC's VP of Marketing. "We take care of our customers above all other priorities. That's why we're mindful of offering discounts and lifetime access for a one-off payment to them." Indeed, customer loyalty and retention at ABC is one of the core values that drive their business. And, this can be seen in the percentage of people who are repeat customers. "45% of customers will buy again from us within 90 days of their first purchase," Ben Smart says. "Loyalty is baked into our business model."

ABC Company was founded in 2009 by Ben Smart in Atlanta, Georgia. The company focuses on selling three types of software, personal productivity software, sales productivity software, and sales forecasting software. Sales Scout is a new addition to ABC's sales productivity suite. You are invited to learn more about ABC by visiting their website, abcsoftware.com, or by calling +1-111-222-3333.

This is 450+ words. Perfect length for most press releases!

All you need now is a great headline, and the various bits and pieces of contact information that the distribution platform you're using will require.

Let's talk about how to craft a killer press release headline. It's going to be easier than you think.

After that, in the next chapter, we'll cover how to get started writing the press release for your business.

How to Write a Great Press Release Headline

We just need one more thing for a truly magnificent press release. The right headline. There are a couple of things to think about here. One is getting your press release found by search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.), and the other is enticing readers to actually stop what they're doing and read your press release.

I'm not going to cover the search engine optimization part right here. I've got a whole chapter devoted to that. So, keep reading, and you'll see it. I would like, however, to address the issue of getting people to actually stop what they're doing and read your press release.

Getting People's Attention

One of the big jobs of a headline on anything, be it a sales letter, press release, spy thriller book, whatever, is this. The headline divides viewers into two camps. Those who are definitely not interested at this time, and those who might actually be interested.

In general, you're not going to snag someone who just doesn't care.

Let's say your business is an auto body shop, and you're located in Milwaukie, Oregon. And, let's also say that the newsworthy event is some new, high tech painting machine that you just purchased, and you're the only business in the whole state that has one of these things. Well, guess what...people in Texas aren't going to be that interested because auto body painting is a local business. Also, people who have no need for auto body painting, aren't in businesses that deal with auto body shops (like insurance), probably won't be interested either.

Do you see what I mean when I say that the headline divides people into two camps? Those who will never be interested, and those who might be interested in being those two camps.

So, for the people who might possibly be interested, the headline has another function. For those people (and those only, because the rest of them have moved on by now), the headline has the job of giving just enough information to make them stop for a nanosecond and read the first sentence of the press release.

The whole process is like the slide you used to slide down in elementary school. The headline leads to the first sentence, which leads to the first paragraph, which leads to the rest of the press release, which leads to the gentle call to action at the bottom.

Now, here's where it gets a little subtle...but not too subtle.

Remember, a press release isn't a sales letter. You can't have the kind of headline you'd have on a sales letter laden with enticing benefits that the reader will get if they spend the next few minutes reading it. A press release announces a newsworthy item. So, your headline has to do that, and do that in a way that gets people to take notice. And, the way to do this is to put as much specificity in the headline as possible, all while making sure the headline is short and sweet. Don't make people work! Don't make them think! Give them the goods right up front, and you'll be rewarded with a higher percentage of readers.

Look at this...

ABC Company's New Sales Productivity Software Solves A Vexing Problem

...as opposed to this...

ABC Company Launches New Software Solution

See how the first is more specific than the second? And, if you were in the sales automation field, or affected by it in some way (you're a sales manager for a company), you'd be more likely to read the press release with the first headline. I think we can all agree on that. 😊

In Summary

The five-paragraph model isn't the only way to write a press release, but it's a very good way. It's exactly how we write all press releases for our clients. And, unless you've got more skill than most folks who aren't experienced in this arena, you'd do well to use this model for yourself and your business.

But now that you know how the press release needs to be structured, what, oh what are you going to write about?

Glad you asked. I'm covering that in the next chapter.

Getting Prepared to Write Your Press Release

Whether you're writing your press release yourself or hiring someone (normally a better choice), everything's going to work much more smoothly and quickly if you prepare beforehand. You'll need to know a few things that you probably already know, like the name of your business, street address, email address, phone number. Obviously, you know that. (If you have multiple locations, just pick the location you want to use as your main location.) What's not so cut and dried, though, is what the press release is going to be about. What's your newsworthy event!

I mentioned earlier that a lot of folks think too narrowly about what's "newsworthy". With the Internet and the exponential expansion of marketing channels, there are tens of thousands, maybe even hundreds of thousands of places for your press release to potentially be published. It's not just your local newspaper, your neighborhood newspaper, and if you're a larger business, the three news networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS. (The three major news networks in the US before the invention of cable TV.)

Because of this, your newsworthy event does not have to be globally, or even locally, that important to everyone. It just has to be of importance to your business, your customers, your investors, and the like.

To help you create some great ideas, I've got a questionnaire you can use below to tickle your brain!

Go through this series of suggestions and see what comes out of it.

It might help to talk to someone about this. One of your employees or your business partner. When we create press releases for our customers, I go through these questions with them and come out with several good ideas. We then schedule these ideas to be written up as press releases and published on a monthly schedule. Remember the benefits to you and your business of a monthly diet of press releases!

Finding Your Newsworthy Event Tickler Questions

General Questions:

- Anything new going on?
- Any accomplishments that need bragging about?
- Any important changes?
- Any new employees of note?
- Any sales, contests, sweepstakes coming soon?
- Any financial news you want to share?

News About Products:

- Any new products?
- Changes in important products, pricing, construction, etc.?
- Changes in, or new, processes?
- Changes in services, hours, means of delivery of products and services?
- Any promotional programs?
- Trial offers, consultations, samples?
- Changes in shipping, time, cost?

News About Market Trends:

- Any new market trends?
- Any new market studies, surveys, polls?
- Company milestones accomplished, awards won?
- Anything free that's educational, white papers, eBooks, newsletters?
- Media or speaker appearances by execs?
- Any inspirational stories related to the business, employees, customers?
- Predictions for your business, or your industry?
- Any online or in-person events?
- New technology trends, new service or product trends?
- Expert opinions?

- Debunking of common “myths”?

New About Customers/Clients/Patients:

- Any customers using your product or service and happy with it telling their story?
- Any customer acquisition milestones?
- Any endorsements by celebrities or public figures?

Other:

- Branding or rebranding?
- Changes of any kind in the company?
- Charity involvement?
- Events attended or sponsored?
- Any Legal or Crisis communications necessary?

By going through these questions, you should have a few really good ideas for newsworthy topics for press releases. Next step, get the press release written and published!

But before the writing process (or hiring a writer), let’s talk about a few more things. We’ll start with what’s called Search Engine Optimization, or SEO for short.

Press Releases and Search Engine Optimization

When you type something into Google, say “Dentists Portland, Oregon”, Google doesn’t go out into the real Internet and find all the pertinent web pages, rank them in order of importance, and then show that to you. Google has a “copy” of the Internet. It’s called their Index. Basically, using software, Google is continuously

combing through all the webpages online, figuring out their relationship to each other, and creating a model of that relationship. That's the index. You might have heard web developers talk about whether a given web page was "indexed" or not. That's what they mean, that Google has found the web page and decided on its relationship to everything else, and assigned it a position vis-à-vis all this stuff in their model, their Index.

So, when you type "Dentists, Portland, Oregon" into the search bar on Google.com, Google goes to its index and just pulls out what web pages are relative to that search and ranks them in order of what Google perceives to be their importance to people like you who search things like that. (I'm vastly simplifying this! But it's accurate in the broad strokes.)

Well, this sort of begs the question of the following...how does one get a given web page to rank higher in the search results for a given search? (These searches are called "keywords". So, "Dentists Portland Oregon" is a keyword.) The art/science of influencing a page's ranking is called search engine optimization because you're optimizing the page for a given search term or keyword. We call this all SEO for short.

SEO is an extremely complex field. And, quite frankly, no one really knows 100% of how Google ranks web pages. That's a closely guarded trade secret like the formula for Coca-Cola. We do know a few things, however. One of the mainstays of SEO is the fact that if you want a given page to rank for a given keyword search, you really should have those exact keywords somewhere in the text on the page.

So, let's bring this all home to press releases.

Let's say you're a Dentist in Portland, Oregon. And, you really would like to better your chances of someone finding your press release online if they searched "Dentists Portland, Oregon". You should at least have that keyword, "Dentists, Portland, Oregon" somewhere in the text. And, it actually would help to have it earlier on in the body of the press release, rather than later on. And, if you can get it squeezed into the title, that would be even better...from an SEO point of view.

But now we have a problem!

Your press release shouldn't be written just to satisfy Google. It should be written mainly for human consumption. For instance, if your title is full of keywords, but makes no sense to a human reader, big deal. You might actually rank well, but no one's going to care!

Keywords and SEO on the one hand, and writing that delights humans and makes us want to take action, on the other hand, are usually at odds with each other. It's very, very rare when you can have both at the same time, or when you can emphasize both at the same time.

This whole issue gets even more complex because a few years ago, marketers discovered that Google really likes press releases and that they could write a press release, have it published, and that it would rank well. A lot of professional Internet marketers did this as a way of driving traffic to websites they owned. Well, the whole thing only kinda-sorta worked. Because although the press release got ranked well because for whatever reason Google seems to favor press releases, the traffic they got from these sites was just mediocre. This is an online-only sort of strategy.

I'm assuming that you, the reader of this book, own or want to own a more traditional business. You know, the kind where people get in their cars, park, walk in the door and buy stuff, or at least call on the phone to talk to one of your reps. For that sort of traditional business, using a lot of keywords and a heavy reliance on SEO tactics in your press release will do more harm than good! Having said that, you should be aware of the keywords. That is, you should be aware of what keywords people are already using to try to find businesses like yours. Fortunately, for us, there's a fairly easy way to do this, and it's provided by Google themselves!

How to Find the Right Keywords to Use

Because this isn't central to the best ways to use press releases for local business marketing, I'm just going to touch on this. You've heard of Google Ads, right? That's where you buy traffic from Google via online ads. This would be ads running on websites, ads running on mobile devices, ads running even on YouTube and other related online properties.

In order to run an ad, you have to run the ad for specific keywords. So, this means that you have to know which keywords you want a given ad to target. Because of this, Google has a free service online called Keyword Planner. Just Google "Keyword Planner" and you'll find it.

I'm not going to go into how to use Google's Keyword Planner here, because that information is very available online. (Just Google it!) Let me just leave you with this. If you want to know all the ways people are searching for Dentist in Portland, Oregon, Keyword Planner is the place to go! So, before you write your press release, or have it written, you might want to take thirty minutes or so and play around with the Keyword Planner to see what the top keywords are that people are already searching for.

Remember my caveat, though! Keywords are of only secondary importance to a great press release!

There are so many other things you can spend your time and money on that will get you so much more than finding the perfect keywords.

With that in mind, let's talk about all the exciting ways you can use multimedia in today's press releases.

Multimedia in Press Releases

One of the most exciting advancements in recent years in press releases is the fact that now you can include various other types of media. Videos are very popular, along with PDF reports and whitepapers, infographics explaining your business or your industry, and PowerPoints. It could almost be said that whenever you create any of these marketing assets, you need to issue a press release about it just to create more buzz, traffic, views, and downloads.

We call all this stuff multimedia. So, let's talk about the various types of multimedia and how to use them.

What is Multimedia?

When talking about press releases, multimedia is any type of media that's included with or linked to from the press release. This could be video, PDF's of all types, PowerPoint slides. PowerPoints turned in to PDF's, images, collections of images, Kindle books, other graphics like infographics, and so on and so forth. One of my favorites is videos. Let's talk about video in a little more detail.

Videos and Press Releases

Since the rise of YouTube, video and press releases go together like hand and glove. Why just talk about something when you can also show it? Although most web pages are still text-based, video is a very close second. YouTube is the world's largest search engine next to Google for a reason!

If your press release is announcing a new product, it should also contain a video demonstration of the product. If it's about a new manager in your company coming on board, then a video interview with the manager would be excellent! How about a new location for your place of business? Hello! Video!

In today's Internet, a video just makes sense, and you should be trying to include a video with every press release you write or have someone else write.

Besides, now that you have yet another marketing asset for your business, there's so much more you can do with it to get more traffic to your press release, more traffic to your website, get the phone to ring more, more, more, more! Let's explore other ideas for coupling video marketing with your new press release.

Other Ways to Market with Video

Of course, the "no-brainer" is YouTube. And, if you only published your video on YouTube, you'd still be way, way ahead of the competition. And, there's so much more you can do besides just that.

For one thing, there are many, many other video publishing platforms. There are social media sites, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. There's Vimeo, DailyMotion, Flickr, and MetaCafe just to mention a few more. Ideally, you should take your new video and take advantage of all of these. You'll get more a lot more exposure for your business, your brand, yourself, and your press release! More traffic, more exposure, when it's all said and done, means more sales and more revenue! Also, since compared with other types of advertising, press release marketing, and video are so inexpensive, that new revenue will turn into more profit! It just doesn't get any better than this!

Other Multimedia—Infographics, PDFs

Although video is probably the most popular multimedia to use in conjunction with your press release, there certainly are many, many other things you should be aware of.

If your press release is about something that could use some more explaining (a new product, for instance) get a report or whitepaper written about it and link to it from the press release. "For more information, please click this link and download our 30-page white paper that explains our new process in detail!" Like that...that's what you need to do.

If the product or service isn't grandiose enough to write a whole white paper, create a short report, list, cheat sheet, basically, anything that could be of use to the reader to understand your business better.

You can do the same thing with images, image collections, and infographics.

Here's where things get really interesting too!

Put access to your report, white paper, graphic, whatever you're using, behind what we call a squeeze page. A squeeze page is basically a page where you put in your email and possibly your name, hit the submit button, and then the giveaway (report, white paper, images, etc.) is delivered to your inbox. The beauty of this method is you get to collect emails from people interested enough to download your freebie. Not all, but some of these people are going to be potential buyers of your product or service. Some might be in related businesses. And, others might be possible investors.

Now that we have the creative juices flowing about what to write about and how to add spice (multimedia) to your press releases, let's talk about how to actually get the press release written and where to publish it.

How to Get Your Press Release Written, and Where to Publish It

Before I get into the details of this, let me just say a couple of things.

I've thrown a lot at you in this short book. If you're reading it, you probably own a business or you're at least thinking of starting one. This means that you have a lot on your plate. I understand, I run a business too! Doing everything yourself is a prescription for failure. Why not let a professional like me handle all this? My contact information is at the beginning and end of this book. Reach out to me and let me know if you need any help.

With that said, let me talk about two issues with press release writing and publishing. They actually boil down to the same thing, so I can say this is about one or two sentences.

You get what you pay for!

The Importance of Quality

It's just like automobiles. If you spend \$5000, you're going to get \$5000 worth of a car. You won't get the quality of a new BMW 7 Series. Impossible!

The same's true with press release writing. If you want a ho-hum press release, spend \$50 for a writer. If, however, you want one that's actually going to get the job done, you'll have to spend more. Don't worry. It shouldn't break the bank. Just remember that you get what you pay for.

The same's true with publishing the press release.

There are tons of inexpensive cheap press release distribution platforms. They have their uses (mainly for SEO as we talked about above), but they shouldn't be used for your main press releases. For those, you need a substantial platform.

One of my favorites continues to be PRWeb. As of the writing of this book, PRWeb balances affordability with real exposure. You can certainly spend more and PRWeb's parent company Cision owns other platforms that might be better for you if you need some really heavy-duty exposure (you sell globally, or you have a new product that's really going to disrupt the market). So, please explore and educate yourself. Bear in mind though that going cheap isn't going to serve you!

At this point, you've learned all about press releases, you've got my five-paragraph method, you know how to come up with great topics, and you've got some tips on how to get your press release written and published.

It doesn't stop here, though!

Publishing your press release is just the beginning of releasing what's hopefully going to be a really big "snowball". In the next chapter, let's talk about some steps you need to take after you publish your release.

After You Publish Your Press Release

Let's say you publish a press release about a new product your company is offering to the market. You have a video (which, if you publish with PRWeb, will be available on the same web page and the press release itself), and you have a whitepaper that's linked to from the press release itself. You now have two marketing assets you can use after the press release is published to get some major buzz both for the press release itself and for your company in general.

Here's a short list of other things you need to be considering.

1. Publish the video on YouTube
2. Publish the video on Vimeo, DailyMotion, Metacafe, etc.
3. Strip the audio out of the video and publish that on SoundCloud
4. Take the slides you created the video with, if you used slides (PowerPoints) and publish those
5. Contact bloggers in your niche and send them the link to the press release and the link to the white paper. Tell them you're open to interviewing.
6. Find relevant podcasts, and contact them too. Send them the press release and the white paper. Offer to do an interview.
7. Contact owners of related websites and see if they'll publish your press release. Offer to write an article for their website in addition.

I've just gotten started, but I think you get the drift here. You might be wondering, "but...doesn't the press release platform take care of all of this?" Yes, but look at it like this. You, or someone on your team, can maximize your exposure by finding the right blogs, the right websites, the right newspapers, podcasts, and radio shows manually. The existence of the press release validates you. It also makes it really easy for the person you're contacting to read the press release and decide if you're right for them. If you're a good fit for their audience. So, really, if you want to go big, you need both! You need to publish your release on a solid platform and also manually start hunting opportunities on your own. (Or hire someone to do the hunting for you!)

All of this points to how press releases fit into a more comprehensive marketing program. Press release marketing will definitely benefit your business. Just that one thing. Why not go bigger, though?

Conclusion

I've thrown a ton at you in this short book. And, I suspect you might be feeling a little overwhelmed. Where are you going to get the time to do all of this? Don't worry! This, frankly, is something you need to hire out to an expert. I am such an expert! If you feel like you'd like to know more, please reach out to me! My contact information is below.

Augusto Beato

Founder @ Portland SEO

503-278-5599

Portlandseo.net

info@portlandseo.net

10350 SE 54TH AVE # 101

Portland OR 97222