

5 Tips for High Impact Press Releases

How to write press releases that get noticed

No matter what business you are in, you can benefit from well-written press releases. Whether you are announcing a new product, a customer win or a recent award, there are lots of reasons to get the word out. Properly written press releases can result in press coverage and can drive targeted traffic to your web site – even if there's no press coverage.

Press Release Tip #1: Write for 2 audiences, and know their language

Press releases originally were written for and distributed solely to reporters at media outlets. Today's press releases have certainly changed. While they are still being distributed via news wires (BusinessWire, PRNewswire, PRWeb etc.), they now have a much larger footprint.

News wire web sites are constantly being indexed by the major search engines, and bloggers and other sites use RSS to receive automatic news feeds on their selected topics. Sites such as Google News and Yahoo News automatically gather and present press releases in response to user queries.

The net result: your press release now has at least two audiences: reporters and end user prospects who can see your complete press release through one of multiple channels:

- Direct communication from you: email blasts, newsletters, RSS feeds.
- Search Engines: you know that your prospects search for what you offer! Properly written press releases can rank highly in the search engine results pages and drive new prospects directly to your site. The backlinks to your web site remain published forever.
- Blogs: Many bloggers post interesting press releases in their entirety on their blog sites. Once again, search engines index these sites and give your press release yet another chance to be seen by your audiences.

Do you know HOW your audiences are currently searching for your product offering?

Before you write your press release, conduct a **keyword analysis** and determine your audiences' search behavior.

- Ask your existing customers how they would find you if they had to search again.
- Use your web site analysis: referrer logs tell you which keywords drove traffic to your site
- Read other articles that have been written about you or your industry. What terms are being used there?
- Use tools such as Overture to identify the frequency of specific search queries.

Press Release Tip #2: Optimize for search engines – BUT...

Now that you've identified your audiences and their search behavior, it's time to write for your audiences and the search engines. While you should definitely optimize your press release for search engines, it has to be worth reading by a human. Talk about bigger issues, use stats, and include user or analyst quotes where possible.

5 Tips for Creating Press Releases with Impact

Search Engine Optimization: Use the top keyword in your headline, and use subheads to break the release into logical sections. The subheads also give you another chance for keyword placement.

The first paragraph of your release is of particular importance. Tell your story in a short, factual manner. Include a keyword-rich link to a landing page on your web site.

The press release should answer the usual 5 W's: Who, What, Where, When & Why in less than 500 words. Online, short is good! When your reader sees the press release, you have around 10 seconds to make them stay. Short sentences and clear, easily understood subheadings help tremendously.

Press Release Tip #3: Create unique landing pages

Your press release can drive targeted traffic to your web site. Make sure that the traffic doesn't 'just' go to your homepage, but rather send it directly to a specific landing page that contains more information and a conversion offer. (Whitepaper download, webinar invite etc.). As mentioned earlier, the link to this page should be placed early in the press release and should be keyword-rich.

Press Release Tip #4: Create your own press list

If you don't already have a list of press contacts, use search engines to create your own list. Find articles written about your competitors or about relevant industry trends. From there, you can often obtain – with some manual labor – the contact coordinates of relevant reporters. Also, use blog search engines such as Google's new Blog Search to identify the bloggers that cover your market.

Having done this background work helps tremendously in pitching your story. Reporters appreciate when you know their context, and what angles they may be interested in.

Press Release Tip #5: Distribute your press release through multiple channels

To get the most mileage out of your press release, consider the following distribution vehicles:

- *Direct email pitch to your press list:* don't just send out your press release. Instead, write a short, two to three paragraph personalized email that tells the story, and why it is important to the audience that your reporter or blogger writes for. For your top contacts, be prepared to give them a unique angle and exclusive content.
- *Online newswires such as PRWeb* allow you to post your press releases for wide distribution. While the basic service is free, there are numerous benefits to paying: you can track how many people read your release, how many media contacts accessed it, and other payment levels also give you the ability to include images or to add specific search engine optimization features.
- *Web sites that accept releases* from your industry. Many industry portals accept news release submissions. It takes only a small effort to get your news release seen by visitors to those portal sites: examples of portal sites include CanadaT for High Tech in Canada or Thomasnet for Industrial News in the US.
- *Post to your own web site:* Don't forget to post your press release on your own web site. Links within the press release can drive additional traffic to pages that are deeper within your site. If you have frequent press releases, consider becoming an RSS provider as well. This allows your readers to 'subscribe' to news releases and also could enable you to become one of the 4,500 news sources that are currently being tracked by Google News.

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Keep these tips in mind the next time you have an announcement to make. Your audiences will take notice.

About the Author:

Chris Biber is the President of SearchingWorks Inc., an [online marketing consultancy](#) that specializes in search-aware marketing activities.