

# SEO Press Release Guidelines

How to Create a Google-Friendly  
Press Release & Manage SEO  
Press Release Distribution

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**MEQUODA DAILY**  
Helping Publishers Make Money Online

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## Introduction

Online PR is a great way to reach new audience members and related media outlets while broadening your brand's reach.

Successful online PR will also help your link building efforts.

The information in this free report will shed some more light on the topic of online PR and will help you begin the process so you can start receiving more links, building a larger audience and strengthening your brand's loyalty.

# **Modern Press Release Guidelines**

## **An introduction to online PR**

It's hard to contemplate the impact of the Internet. It has helped many industries and hurt others; it has given people the opportunity to find other like-minded individuals and information on topics they love. This is basically my approach to modern online PR.

Our thought process has always incorporated the desire to spread the good word on interesting and beneficial things. Often times, we find that those products, services, or informational pieces don't find the audience they deserve due to oversaturation. Let's face it, there is a lot of clutter, and much of it isn't nearly as positive as products that are hard to find. This is especially true within the online environment.

## **Online PR**

On one hand, online PR is great because you can reach a bigger, more direct audience. On the other hand, it can be tricky due to the volume of news found and displayed on the Internet.

This fact requires good online PR to be incredibly focused. The focus comes with knowing what news you want to promote, and doing keyword research based around that news. Incorporating keywords into your press release will optimize it for search engines like Google.

## **How online PR is different**

Public relations performed offline is a bit different than online PR. They both incorporate the same components of creating relationships, yet do it in different ways.

In the days before heavy Internet usage, many publicists turned to media relations. In addition to communicating with their publics, they would attempt to secure coverage in magazines or newspapers whose readership would be interested in information.

As readerships grew, more and more time was spent in this manner. However, that approach relied on external factors such as the writers and editors at the magazines.

Online PR has brought the public feel back with the ability to reach communities directly and the ability to have two-way communication with those communities.

PR still can include speaking at conferences, crisis communication and employee communication, but now there are more mediums for this communication. Press release distribution, forums, social media, video clips and audio pieces are all available to the online publicist.

One other difference is that PR used to be intangible. The advertising used by the company was considered to be the tangible because they could see direct results of the work.

However, Online PR can be partially tangible thanks to the evolution in technology. With Google Analytics you can monitor where traffic is coming from and how much there is. Goals can be set up in Google Analytics that will inform you when a specific goal is reached.

For example, when we release free reports, we create a funnel with a specific goal for each. The goal is completed when a free report is downloaded by a new user. After running online PR campaigns, we typically check the statistics on how the campaign did. These stats are a tangible way of determining the value behind the products we release, and the campaigns we base around them.

# **The Power of Public Relations**

## **Are you harnessing it properly?**

In college, one thing you can count on during PR class is hearing the phrase “mutually beneficial relationships”. It’s been heard so many times by PR students that it probably ricochets around inside their heads, like a rubber ball down a corridor.

The phrase used to wander into our articles from time to time, but now we consciously try not to allow it into the copy. It’s played-out, and besides, public relations is more than just “beneficial relationships”.

## **The depth of PR**

The Internet has made public relationships incredibly public. Audiences can be communicated with directly, through email, blogs, audio, video, social media or whichever medium resonates with them.

Because of this, public relations doesn’t have to appear as stuffy as it has in the past. For example, if you are speaking with your publics (your audience) via social networks, you don’t have to give them the information through a traditional press release. Make sure they get all the pertinent information like the “who, what, where, when and why”, but don’t treat them as if they are the media. They aren’t, and the time you put towards showing your desire to have a personal relationship with them, the more likely you are to forge that bond.

## **What’s different with public relations now?**

The expansion of Internet mediums and their ability to connect audiences has changed the way public relations is viewed. We have talked to and worked with PR professionals from the old school of thought. Their suggestions were always the same: “Focus on the media”.

We cannot dispute the value of the media, but we can simply state that a focus on the media isn’t really public relations. Media Relations is the focus of getting news outlets to report on your event or company. It may involve getting information to the public, but it doesn’t work directly with them. Therefore, “focusing on the media” isn’t a component of true public relations.

And with the immense opportunities found on the Internet, we find it hard to even say media relations is as important as public relations anymore. Many of you may

disagree (and if you do, please share your insight on our blog), but think about the validity behind each. If you are correctly working a true public relations campaign, you will be reaching your audience to some extent. If you try and receive coverage with the media, you may be doing nothing more than wasting your time if they refuse your requests.

Especially now, with the current state of the print industry, it's hard to receive coverage. A staff member at Mequoda recalls being involved in a pitch to a regional, east coast newspaper about a year and a half ago. The editor said they would be happy to give coverage on an event, but only if advertising space was purchased in that issue. Even now, that conversation leaves a bad taste in our mouths.

Our advice for public relations nowadays is to find your audience, engage them and show them you sincerely want to build a lasting relationship with them. Offer free content incentives to them and be sure to start the conversations on a regular basis. While working on building your audience, we'd suggest sending press releases to online distribution sites that are catered to journalists.

A number of free distribution sites can be utilized. Below are my three favorites.

[-Press Release Point](#)

[-PR Log](#)

[-BigNew.biz](#)



# Online PR – A Way of Gaining Visibility

## Three tips to help along the way

Online PR can be looked at as a component to SEO campaigns. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is all about building visibility by ranking in search engines. It isn't about spending a ton of money to place ads in Google, rather it's about creating keyword-rich content and getting that content to be found and ranked by Google bots.

As online PR is a popular topic of ours lately, we wanted to take some time today to discuss how online PR is truly a type of SEO campaigns. It is certainly not the only one, but it is one worth discussing.

## The basics of online PR

When performed correctly, online PR will help you gain visibility for the topics you cover. After creating your press release, you should begin the SEO process. This is where online PR incorporates aspects of SEO campaigns. With your press release optimized for your keywords, you will be positioned to receive coverage on these topics.

If your press release is picked up by Google after distribution, you will likely see the listing of the release on page-one, two, or three in Google. We have personally seen some of my press releases get picked up by Google and reside on page-one and page-two for over a week.

## Three tips for online PR

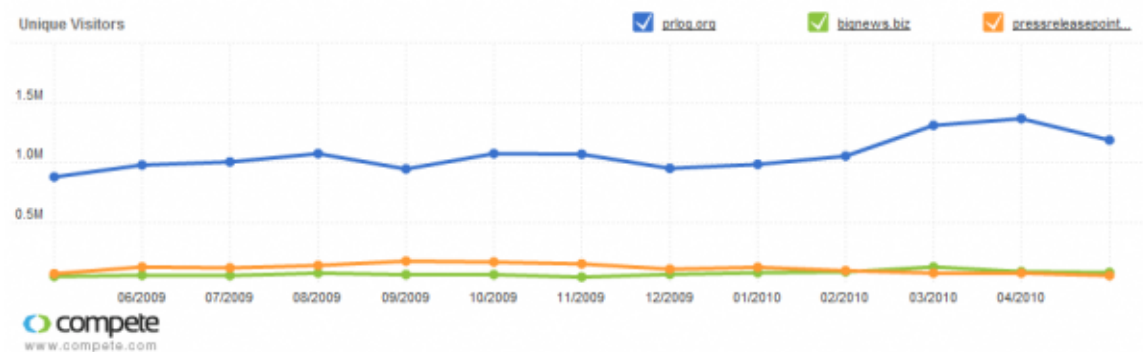
**Tip #1 for online PR** – Begin by creating a press release. It may sound simple, but there is an art to press release creation. You cannot overstep the bounds of true PR by making your release sound too promotional. Even if you are promoting for a product, make the release newsworthy. Allow the content to show the importance and value of what you're promoting. Do not come off as a pitch person.

**Tip #2 for online PR** – Optimize your press release with keywords so that your release can be found by Google. Add a keyword or two to the release's title, in addition to your company's name for branding purposes. Include your keywords throughout, for a density of at least 3%. Most press releases should be between 300 and 400 words, depending on what you're writing on. This length will be able to satisfy distribution sites and interested parties, while keeping the content to a manageable length.

**Tip #3 for online PR** – Do a little research before selecting distribution sites to use. We began online PR with free distribution websites and continue to use them on a regular basis. To research the free press release distribution websites, we turned to the [Compete Tool](http://www.compete.com) [www.compete.com]. This is a free tool that allows you to compare the traffic of different websites.

As most of you can agree, it's not worth starting out on a project that was going to waste time and not prove effective. The Compete Tool at least gave me the knowledge of which free distribution sites people were visiting, which is a big step in heading the right direction.

Three sites our PR person came across before starting online PR were [PR Log](#), [Press Release Point](#), and [BigNews.biz](#). To show how the Compete Tool works, we have included the graphic below.



As you can see, PR Log, which is represented by the blue line, has the highest unique visitor count.

We do still currently use all three of these sites for weekly press release distribution, but we have seen more successful listings on Google when using PR Log.

## Writing a Title for Your Online Press Release

The most succinct copywriting tip we've heard in a long time came from Fred Gleeck at a product development seminar. Fred cited this maxim in a discussion of how to title your book. But the adage is just as valid whether you're writing a headline for an advertisement or a press release, or a pithy subject line for a convincing email message, or a list of product benefits.

We all know that people sort for self-interest. Everyone's favorite radio station is WII-FM. That's short for "What's in it for me?"

So here's Fred's formula for writing a compelling press release that appeals to the customer's self-interest: Combine your customer's greatest need with your product's greatest benefit.

### Some examples:

**Manual:** "Low Cost Website Promotion"

(Need: website promotion; benefit: low-cost ways to do it)

**Report:** "Guide to Profitable Marketing Results"

(Need: marketing results; benefit: how to get them)

**Workbook:** "How to Get \$1 Million Worth of Publicity Free"

(Need: free publicity; benefit: how to get \$1,000,000 worth)

**Book:** "301 Direct Mail Tips, Techniques and Secrets - an Insider's Guide to Direct Mail Marketing"

(Need: direct mail how-to info; benefit: insider's secrets)

**CD-ROM:** "Building & Managing Profitable Subscription Websites"

(Need: specific how-to info; benefit: profits)

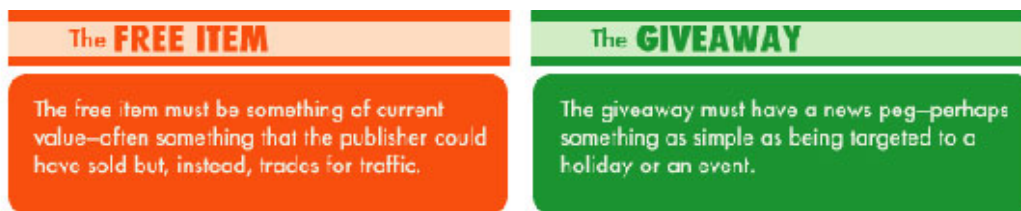
**The take-away:** What does your press release mean for your audience? Make sure to fulfill your customers' needs with your announcement.

## Isolating a Newsworthy Idea and Tying it to a Free Item

To draw traffic to your website—the place where people can sign up for your free, relationship-building, email newsletter—you need a catalyst, a free item that lines up with a topic that’s endemic to the audience in terms of their interest and on which the publisher or author is a source of authority.

To even consider mentioning your free item, the other journalist—the one whom you hope will pick up your news item—must be convinced that the producer or author of the giveaway is a credible provider of information.

The free item may be a snippet of existing content repackaged as an eBook or Special Report—or it might be a free software application or screensaver download; access to an audio or video Web cast, a blog, or an RSS feed; access to an HTML Web page or a simple coupon; or perhaps participation in a sweepstakes.



Whether a cooking magazine gives away a recipe booklet, a crafting magazine gives away free patterns, or a business magazine gives away a free report, the goal is to create an item of value that entices interested people to your site, where they register in order to access the free download.

You may have a small circulation magazine or newsletter and wonder, “Who shares my audience?” and “Who can I get to write a story about my publication?” The key is to come up with something newsworthy—the valuable free item—and then publicize it.

## **Basic Press Release SEO Tips**

You can pay big bucks for SEO press release distribution, or you can learn how to do it yourself.

How can your press release compete with the thousands of press releases that go out every day? Well you can start by making them long-lasting in the eyes of search engines.

Posting press releases on your own site gives you control of your meta data, image ALT tags and other elements necessary for good SEO. However, when it's time to submit your press releases to external sites, you lose some of that control.

Here's how to beef up your incoming links quickly. Send out a press release about your website and its new content that is also highly optimized for organic search and includes quality hypertext links to your site's landing pages.

“Generally speaking, the more links to your site, the better,” advises search engine optimization expert John Phillips. “The thing to be careful about is that you want those links to be in a similar field of interest, a similar realm of business.”

Press release websites are generally highly ranked Google SERPs (search engine results pages), and incoming links from these sites are rated highly, regardless of relevancy.

Plus, the press releases on these sites tend to live on in cyberspace forever. So you can expect them to continue showing up in search results and pointing to your site ad infinitum.

Here are some tips that can be practiced both on your own site AND on the sites you use to distribute your press releases:

### **Basic Press Release SEO Tips**

#### **Research your keywords before you write.**

Before you even put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), find at least two keyword phrases that you want to be found by in search engines. Hopefully if you're promoting a free product, you already did your keyword research before naming the product and you know what keywords you're writing for.

If not, learn how to find niche keywords with the Google Keyword Tool first. From this, take away a primary keyword and a secondary keyword.

### **Pay attention to the first 300 words.**

The first 300 words of content in your press release are what Google will use to determine how relevant your information is, compared to the rest of its search results. Use the first 300 words to set the tone of the rest of your article and make sure you include your primary and secondary keywords several times.

### **Check your keyword density.**

When you're done, use a keyword density tool to see how often you're lacing keywords into your content. Most experts agree that a good keyword density is somewhere between 3-12%.

### **Use your primary keyword in your press release title.**

On external sites, your title may also become your URL, so that's hitting two birds with one stone. You don't need to use both of your niche keyword phrases all in one place though; save your secondary keyword phrase for the subhead. Your title, subhead and first paragraph are the most search-relevant items in your press release.

### **Link keywords.**

When linking back to your site, make sure to link your keywords, not generic phrases. By linking the words "click here", you're not telling Google anything about the content of that link. Also, make sure you include the full URL (including "http://") when linking to your site.

### **Post the press release on your site.**

Don't just give away your content to the wires, post your press release at the source: your site. By doing this, you can post a link in your release back to the original press release on your site. This will encourage any bloggers or journalists to link to your site, rather than the site they found it on.

## **Advanced Press Release SEO Tips**

### **Get your press release noticed.**

We have a list of the best paid and free press release sites you can use to submit a press release, but don't forget to also submit it to social bookmarking sites like Digg. These social bookmarking sites will generate inbound links (and traffic) to your press release, and the sooner you have inbound links, the quicker Google will pick it up.

### **Track your press release.**

As with any marketing effort, after the content is distributed, it's important to track effectiveness. TopRankBlog.com offers these press release tracking tactics:

- Embed tracking codes in the links from the release to the landing page.
- Monitor the web analytics of the site the press release links to for referral traffic sources.
- Setup Google alerts to monitor when the release gets picked up.
- Monitor blog search engines like Google blog search and Technorati for pickups.
- Monitor standard search engines for pickups and links.
- Track conversions from press release landing pages.

### **Find alternatives to “wire” sites.**

Yes, send your press releases via the wire like you normally would, but don't be afraid to try some of the new sites that have been sprouting over the past few years. If your press release is for an event, don't hesitate about submitting it to event listing websites. Firstly—most of them are free. Secondly—the more niche of a site that you submit your content, the more easily it will be found and linked to by your target audience.

## Choosing Between Paid and Free Press Release Sites

When submitting your press releases to PR sites, there are two important factors that a PR site should offer you:

**Credibility:** Some PR sites are considered spammy by Google and other search engines, so submitting your press release to less than credible sites won't do you any favors. You can check the credibility of different PR sites by checking their rank in Alexa.

**SEO:** Good PR sites are built for SEO—they allow tagging, anchor text links, keyword data and other search engine elements. Sites that prohibit you from optimizing your press release are working for themselves, not you.

And there is one factor that you should avoid:

**NoFollow Tags:** You want to avoid sites that use NoFollow tags. NoFollow tags on a website tell search engines that any link you put on their site is not endorsed by them. Without these tags, the site is allowing your link to be seen as a credible recommendation by them, thus increasing your pagerank. Many sites use NoFollow tags to reduce spam in comments and submissions, but again, this won't help you increase your pagerank and credibility.

### The differences between paid and free press release sites

**Free press release sites** are usually only web-based and may or may not let you include photos, videos, or HTML formatted content.

**Paid press release sites** usually have a press list that they will send your press releases to in addition to posting your release on their website and in their RSS feed. Many paid sites also offer extra SEO benefits like tagging, the option to edit your meta data, and grammar-checking.

With all of that said, we'd like to show you our most updated list of the best PR sites to submit your press release to for maximum SEO and traffic. Keep in mind that most of the free sites also offer paid plans with extra features.

**Free press release sites** below are in order alphabetically, but our most recommended site is [PRLog.org](http://PRLog.org) because it has shown to give press releases the highest rank in search engines. PRLog.org allows you to have clickable links, one image, company logo, and multiple tags/keywords.

**Paid press release sites** below are in order of pricing, but our most recommended



site is [PRNewswire.com](http://PRNewswire.com) which not only allows you to optimize your press releases and will get you ranked higher than most other sites, it also offers activity and SEO reporting on each press release you submit.

Company	URL	Free/Paid	Price	Alexa Rank
24-7PressRelease.com	<a href="http://24-7PressRelease.com">http://24-7PressRelease.com</a>	both	\$49+ each	15980
I-Newswire.com	<a href="http://www.i-newswire.com">http://www.i-newswire.com</a>	both	\$47 mo	17745
PR.com	<a href="http://PR.com">http://PR.com</a>	both	\$199 yr	11078
1888PressPrelease.com	<a href="http://1888PressRelease.com">http://1888PressRelease.com</a>	both	\$15 each	9579
PR9.NET	<a href="http://www.pr9.net/press/">http://www.pr9.net/press/</a>	both	\$15 each	40608
NewswireToday.com	<a href="http://NewswireToday.com">http://NewswireToday.com</a>	both	\$120+ each	24605
TheOpenPress.com	<a href="http://TheOpenPress.com">http://TheOpenPress.com</a>	both	\$10+ each	30120
BigNews.biz	<a href="http://BigNews.biz">http://BigNews.biz</a>	free		16998
EcommWire.com	<a href="http://EcommWire.com">http://EcommWire.com</a>	free		31142
FreePressRelease.com.au (Australia)	<a href="http://www.freepressrelease.com.au">http://www.freepressrelease.com.au</a>	free		26364
FreePressReleaseCenter.info	<a href="http://free-press-release-center.info">http://free-press-release-center.info</a>	free		26487
Information-Online.com	<a href="http://www.information-online.com">http://www.information-online.com</a>	free		29071
MeriNews.com (India)	<a href="http://Merinews.com">http://Merinews.com</a>	free		11829
OpenPR.com (Germany)	<a href="http://OpenPR.com">http://OpenPR.com</a>	free		25813
PR-Inside.com (Europe)	<a href="http://PR-Inside.com">http://PR-Inside.com</a>	free		8268
PRdb.net	<a href="http://www.prdb.net">http://www.prdb.net</a>	free		1006672
PressAbout.com	<a href="http://www.pressabout.com">http://www.pressabout.com</a>	free		45169
PressMethod.com	<a href="http://PressMethod.com">http://PressMethod.com</a>	free		24958
PressReleasePoint.com	<a href="http://pressreleasepoint.com">http://pressreleasepoint.com</a>	free		6862
PRLog.Org	<a href="http://www.prlog.org">http://www.prlog.org</a>	free		1785
PRUrgent.com	<a href="http://PRUrgent.com">http://PRUrgent.com</a>	free		27604
YourFreePressRelease.net	<a href="http://www.yourfreepressrelease.net">http://www.yourfreepressrelease.net</a>	free		905427
BusinessWire.com	<a href="http://BusinessWire.com">http://BusinessWire.com</a>	paid	contact	5936
MarketWire.com	<a href="http://MarketWire.com">http://MarketWire.com</a>	paid	contact	8752
PRWeb.com	<a href="http://PRWeb.com">http://PRWeb.com</a>	paid	\$80+ each	3170
eWorldWire.com	<a href="http://eWorldWire.com">http://eWorldWire.com</a>	paid	\$75+ each	146097
PRLeap.com	<a href="http://PRLeap.com">http://PRLeap.com</a>	paid	\$49+ each	27082
EIN Presswire	<a href="http://www.einpresswire.com">http://www.einpresswire.com</a>	paid	\$49.95 each	258398
eReleases.com	<a href="http://eReleases.com">http://eReleases.com</a>	paid	\$399 each	54684
PRBuzz.com	<a href="http://PRBuzz.com">http://PRBuzz.com</a>	paid	\$299 yr	110086
MassMediaDistribution.com	<a href="http://MassMediaDistribution.com">http://MassMediaDistribution.com</a>	paid	\$199+ each	138316
PRNewsWire.com	<a href="http://PRNewsWire.com">http://PRNewsWire.com</a>	paid	\$195 yr	4149
SEOpresrelease.com	<a href="http://www.seopressreleases.com">http://www.seopressreleases.com</a>	paid	\$79	210651

## How to Publish a Press Release Online

When posting a press release online, start with free sites. It will give you practice before you dive into the more complex (and more expensive) paid PR site. You may find that free sites serve your need perfectly well.

When submitting your press release, pay attention to the fields that allow and do not allow HTML. Adding HTML into a non-html field can be embarrassing. Some sites will allow you to preview your article, and some will not, so make sure that it's correct the first time around. Most sites that require registration will allow you to edit your press release.

You'll be given the following fields, so it's good to plan ahead before submitting your press release.

**Headline:** This is where your headline will go, many sites will give you a maximum space of 100 characters.

**Summary:** A brief summary about the press release, usually the lead paragraph. Many sites will give you a maximum space of 200-250 characters.

**Body:** The press release. Many sites request that you do not start off using the date because they will do it for you. This is not a limited character area, but some sites will either allow or not allow HTML so it's good to spell out any URL's that you are putting in with the full "http://www."

**Keywords (optional):** The keywords related to your press release that you'd like to be found on. This field is generally limited to around 100 characters and is not offered on every press release site.

**About:** This is where you get to put in your blurb about your company and link (or give a link) to your website.

Some sites will not ask that you log in or register to submit a press release, and thus will ask for the following:

- Author
- Company
- Contact Info
- Industry
- Site URL
- Location

Otherwise, they will ask for this information upon registration and will include it in your press release when it is posted. It's good to keep a list of your PR site URLs and Passwords.

Most sites will email you a link to your press release when it is posted. Free press release sites may have a 1 or 2-day delay in posting.

Subscribe to Google alerts at <http://www.google.com/alerts> to see when someone has picked up your release.

Paid press release sites follow similar steps as we just went through, except that you'll be treated with a little more courtesy, and will be able to preview, edit, and keep track of all of your press releases.

Additionally, you are guaranteed a higher level of distribution. For example XPressPress.com will send your press release to their list of over 30,000 reporters as well as working with PR Newswire to get your press release included in AOL, Yahoo, Google News, e\*Trade, The Los Angeles Times, Lycos, Hoovers, LexisNexis, and thousands of other syndication networks.

## Social Media Press Releases

A new type of press release, generally referred to as a “social media release” is quickly gaining popularity. These types of press releases generally include many multimedia elements, enable the user to engage with the content on many different levels and allow the release to be shared in dozens of different ways.

Back in February 2006, Tom Foremski, journalist for SiliconValleyInsider proposed a new format for press releases, in an article called “*Die! Press release! Die! Die! Die!*”. In this article, he explained to companies exactly what he was looking for in a press release, which would make his job as a journalist much easier:

Deconstruct the press release into special sections and tag the information so that as a publisher, I can pre-assemble some of the news story and make the information useful.

- Provide a brief description of what the announcement is, but leave the spin to the journalists. The journalists are going to go with their own spin on the story anyway, so why bother? Keep it straightforward rather than spintastic.
- Provide a page of quotes from the CEO or other C-level execs.
- Provide a page of quotes from customers, if applicable.
- Provide a page of quotes from analysts, if applicable.
- Provide financial information in many different formats.
- Provide many links inside the press release copy, and also provide a whole page of relevant links to other news stories or reference sources.
- And tag everything so that I can pre-assemble my stories. The tags would be things like: recent share price, founders, first quarter revenues, analyst quotes, etc.

His clear, and not so subtle message was: “we should produce new media communications releases”.

[source: [http://www.siliconvalleywatcher.com/mt/archives/2006/02/die\\_press\\_relea.php](http://www.siliconvalleywatcher.com/mt/archives/2006/02/die_press_relea.php) ]

A few months after this, Shift Communications created what would be the future of social media press releases. In regards to the new template, they said, “Love it

or hate it, what is important is that the banal, unhelpful, cookie-cutter press releases of yore have outlived their pre-Internet usefulness.”



**SOCIAL MEDIA PRESS RELEASE  
TEMPLATE, VERSION 1.0**

<b>CONTACT INFORMATION:</b>	<b>Client contact</b>	<b>Spokesperson</b>	<b>Agency contact</b>
	Phone #/skype	Phone #/skype	Phone #/skype
	Email	Email	Email
	IM address	IM address	IM address
	Web site	Blog/relevant post	Web site

**NEWS RELEASE HEADLINE**  
Subhead

**CORE NEWS FACTS**  
▪ Bullet-points preferable

**LINK & RSS FEED TO PURPOSE-BUILT DEL.ICIO.US PAGE**  
The purpose-built del.icio.us page offers hyperlinks (and PR annotation in "notes" fields) to relevant historical, trend, market, product & competitive content sources, providing context as-needed, and, on-going updates.

**PHOTO**  
e.g., product picture, exec headshot, etc.

**MP3 FILE OR PODCAST LINK**  
e.g., sound bytes by various stakeholders

**GRAPHIC**  
e.g., product schematic; market size graphs; logos

**VIDEO**  
e.g., brief product demo by in-house expert

**MORE MULTIMEDIA AVAILABLE BY REQUEST**  
e.g., "download white paper"

**PRE-APPROVED QUOTES FROM CORPORATE EXECUTIVES, ANALYSTS, CUSTOMERS AND/OR PARTNERS**  
Recommendation: no more than 2 quotes per contact. The PR agency should have additional quotes at-the-ready, "upon request," for journalists who desire exclusive content. This provides opportunity for Agency to add further value to interested media.

**LINKS TO RELEVANT COVERAGE TO-DATE (OPTIONAL)**  
This empowers journalist to "take a different angle," etc. These links would also be cross-posted to the custom del.icio.us site.

**BOILERPLATE STATEMENTS**

**RSS FEED TO CLIENT'S NEWS RELEASES**

**"ADD TO DEL.ICIO.US"**  
Allows readers to use the release as a standalone portal to this news

**TECHNORATI TAGS/"DIGG THIS"**

This new press release format included content tagging, video, audio, graphics, photos, hyperlinks, rss subscription links, social media bookmarking links, etc.

This, right here, gave journalists every means of making the most out of an article, while making it interactive and engaging enough to be shared by mainstream users as well.

This was just a template, however. In practice, the social media press release looked more like this:

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** Parry Headrick (agency) 415.591.8402 office  
415-246-8486 cell  
pheadrick@shiftcomm.com  
www.shiftcomm.com

Todd Defren (spokesperson)  
617.681.1253  
tdefren@shiftcomm.com  
pr-squared.blogspot.com  
www.shiftcomm.com

**"SHIFT COMMUNICATIONS DEBUTS FIRST-EVER TEMPLATE FOR "SOCIAL MEDIA PRESS RELEASE"**

– *The "Re-Mixable" Press Release Provides Relevant Context & Content in a Hyperlinked Format for Journalists, Bloggers* –

May 23, 2006

**NEWS FACTS**

- SHIFT Communications – a mid-sized independent PR agency – is the first to offer a template for use by PR professionals looking to evolve traditional press release formats for the dawning "social media" age.
- The format is available, in PDF format, from SHIFT's website and agency principal Todd Defren's blog. Use of the template is freely available; no copyright protections apply.
- SHIFT Communications believes that journalists and bloggers are now fully adapted to using the World Wide Web for research purposes. The "Social Media Press Release" merely facilitates their research by using the latest tools (social bookmarking, RSS, etc.) to provide background data, context and on-going updates to clients' news.
- The "Social Media Press Release" is also distinctive for tying together various multimedia elements in one place, enabling the journalist to view and/or "re-mix" media elements.
- For example, the journalist can learn more about the client's story via a demo video, or, adapt the multimedia content for their own stories.
- The next-generation press release format was inspired by Tom Foremski of Silicon Valley Watcher.

Please use this link to access a purpose-built del.icio.us page, for more information  
RSS feed to purpose-built del.icio.us site – updated with on-going coverage, industry news & reaction – updated with on-going coverage, industry news & reaction

**MULTIMEDIA ELEMENTS:**



Download  
SHIFT Communications  
logo



Download headshot:  
Todd S. Defren  
Principal  
SHIFT Communications



Download "Social Media  
Press Release" version  
1.0 template

**QUOTES, ATTRIBUTABLE TO TODD S. DEFREN, PRINCIPAL AT SHIFT COMMUNICATIONS**

(Click [here](#) for Todd Defren's LinkedIn profile)

- "The ubiquity of broadband Web use, combined with ever-easier-to-use online tools and relevant, user-generated content is creating a unique opportunity for the PR profession to re-think what we do and how we do it."
- "The 'Big Change' is the recognition that journalists are internet users – they are increasingly comfortable researching and working online, across many types of 're-mixable media' (hyperlinks, text, photos, videos, etc.) ... The Social Media Press Release merely amplifies prospective source materials; it does not replace a well-crafted, customized pitch nor replace the need to provide basic, factual news to the media."
- "As the consumer-generated media wave continues to crest, it will be incumbent on the PR industry to stay current, in order to remain a relevant source of story ideas for the media."

Please contact **Parry Headrick** to arrange an interview and/or for additional quotes.

**ABOUT SHIFT COMMUNICATIONS**

SHIFT Communications' high performance **public relations services** and marketing communications programs bolster clients' marketplace reputation and produce measurable results that directly lead to increased revenues. The independent agency works with both new and established companies competing in a variety of technology, business-to-business and consumer markets. SHIFT Communications' offices are located in the Boston, Mass., and San Francisco, Calif. metros. For more information on SHIFT's **high-tech public relations** and **consumer public relations**, visit [www.shiftcomm.com](http://www.shiftcomm.com).

[Add to del.icio.us](#)

[Digg this](#)

**Technorati Tags:**

[social media](#) | [press release](#) | [Foremski](#) | [pr](#) | [public relations](#) | [SHIFT Communications](#)

[source: <http://www.shiftcomm.com/Web20Releases/5232006.html> ]

The problem back in 2006 with this type of press release was that it was nearly impossible to spread a social media release anywhere other than your own site or

with existing contacts. Getting it “on the wire” was expensive, when possible at all.

In 2008, they updated the template to highlight the importance of engagement, emphasize flexibility and to account for technology changes.

**SHIFT**  
communications

**SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE, VERSION 1.5**

<http://www.company.com/socialmedianewsroom/todaysnews>

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Client Contact	Spokesperson	Agency Contact
Phone #/skype	Phone #/skype	Phone #/skype
Email	Email	Email
Blog	Blog	
Website		

**PHOTO**  
e.g., product picture, executive headshot, etc.

**MP3 FILE OR PODCAST LINK**  
e.g., sound bytes by various stakeholders

**GRAPHIC**  
e.g., product schematics; market size graphs; logos

**VIDEO**  
e.g., CEO's view of the news, brief product demo

**NEWS RELEASE HEADLINE**  
Subhead

**CORE NEWS FACTS**  
• Bullet-points or narrative

**LINK & RSS FEED TO PURPOSE-BUILT DEL.ICIO.US PAGE**  
The del.icio.us page offers hyperlinks (and annotation in "Notes" field) to relevant content sources, providing context and on-going updates.

**PRE-APPROVED QUOTES FROM CORPORATE EXECUTIVES, ANALYSTS, CUSTOMERS AND/OR PARTNERS**  
Recommendation: up to 2 quotes per contact. Be prepared to offer additional quotes to content publishers who desire exclusive info.

**"3 LINKS THAT MATTER" (OPTIONAL)**  
Provide more info without overwhelming the reader. Links should highlight relevant data that add context to the news (e.g., blog posts, white papers). A URL "snipping" service like TinyURL is recommended.

**BOILERPLATE STATEMENTS**

RSS Feed to Corporate News Releases

"SHARE THIS" Universal bookmark widget

TECHNORATI TAGS

OPML Feed to Corporate Blogs

"SPHERE IT" Context related web search

**MODERATED COMMENTS**  
Offer RSS and email update options

Type your comment here...

**TRACKBACKS/ BLOGS THAT LINK TO THIS NEWS**

[ source: [http://www.pr-squared.com/2008/04/social\\_media\\_release\\_template.html](http://www.pr-squared.com/2008/04/social_media_release_template.html) ]

These brainy templates by SHIFT caused wire services to start adapting to new types of releases due to the onslaught of Big Brands taking these templates and running with them.

### Examples:

Nutrisystem: <http://nutrisystem.comestocanada.ca/>

Gatorade: <http://www.gatorade.ca/en/giguere/>

Ford Motor Co.: <http://www.marketwire.com/press-release/Hubspot-Inc-776889.html>

GM Europe even started a Social Media Newsroom:

[http://www.gmeurope.info/social\\_media\\_newsroom/](http://www.gmeurope.info/social_media_newsroom/)

### SEO Press Release Guidelines

For more free white papers, visit <http://www.MequodaFree.com>

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Still, many wire services require a hefty fee to use any type of multimedia elements, as seen by this comparison of the standard PR wire sites:

	marketwire	PRNewswire <small>London Business Media</small>	BusinessWire <small>A Business Wire Company</small>	PRWeb® <small>PRESS RELEASE NEWS WIRE</small>
RSS Feed to Corp Newsroom	●		***	●
Comments	●			●
Comments with RSS/Email	●			
Trackbacks	●	●	●	●
Sharing	●	●	●	●
MP3/Podcast/Audio	ADD \$	ADD \$\$\$	ADD \$\$	●
Video	ADD \$	ADD \$\$\$	ADD \$\$	●
Video hosted on Major Sites	●	●	●	
Graphic	●	ADD \$\$\$	ADD \$\$	●
Tags	●	●	●	●
Updated News Ticker	●		●	
Archive	●		●	●

\*\*\*If BusinessWire maintains the online newsroom

[source: [http://www.pr-squared.com/2008/02/prsquareds\\_social\\_media\\_tactic\\_6.html](http://www.pr-squared.com/2008/02/prsquareds_social_media_tactic_6.html) ]

This is where Social Media Release sites come in. They're a whole new breed of sites that encourage making your press release as social as possible.

**PitchEngine** [<http://www.pitchengine.com/> ] is a site dedicated to helping you build social media releases. They offer a full suite for both journalists and PR professionals. They offer a free service, where they only hold your release for 30 days, but they also offer paid services where they keep an archive of your releases (\$35 month), or offer you your own customized newsroom (\$50/month).

PitchEngine calls themselves “a social platform that enables PR to effectively package stories and share them with journalists, bloggers and influencers worldwide via the social web.” They are, however, not a wire service.

From our research, talking to popular social media experts and consumers, is that the best way to distribute a social media press release is through your own site, social bookmarking sites like Digg.com, and through your existing social networks.

#### SEO Press Release Guidelines

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Why? Because most wire sites who offer a full social media release are either very expensive or don't offer enough.

However, the future is bright, and if the online world can adapt to social media releases themselves, there will certainly soon be a new breed of wire services exclusively for social press releases.

# Strengthening Online PR Efforts with Email Newsletter Best Practices

## Tips shared by Jeanne Jennings at the SIPA Conference in Washington, DC

Jeanne Jennings is no stranger to Mequoda. In fact, Jeanne was the guest speaker for a past webinar of ours, entitled [Solving Email Delivery Problems](#). She has also authored several [email newsletter design reviews](#) for Mequoda.

At this past SIPA Conference, Jeanne Jennings presented a session on creating a great email newsletter. The following is some of the information found during the session.

### An effective content strategy

All online publishers already know it's important to have an effective content strategy. But at times, with all of the other tasks we have, it can be easy to lose sight of the components needed for doing so.

During the session, Jennings mentioned three parts that when put together, will make a strong strategy for your content development.

First, always remember that editorials are designed to provide value without requiring a purchase. Share instructions on how to do something that will benefit your audience. We aim to do this every time our writers create a post for the Mequoda Daily. Hopefully the information gets to you with some value attached. Then, when you are creating your promotional materials, make sure they call people to action. If you are promoting a webinar, physical product or special report, incorporate links into the text that point readers directly to the signup page.

Finally, make sure there is a split between your content and your promotional material. Jeanne recommends following the 60/40 rule, so your content outweighs the promotion, but only slightly.

### Effective ways of enhancing your content

Ideal content will have different voices. Constantly having the same voice in your articles can become redundant and begin boring your audience. At the Mequoda Daily we currently have six active writers, which allows for different topics and styles to take the spotlight.

Engaging your audience is another way of keeping users coming back. Offer them polls and quizzes so they can feel part of the site. Their answers may lead you to ways of better meeting their needs as well. For example, you can ask them which ways they prefer to consume your content. If a majority of users responded by asking for apps to use on mobile devices, you'd potentially have a new revenue stream.

Additionally, asking your readers for content submissions would help in gaining a new perspective and engaging the audience. The additional content generation would also help create more depth within your website.

Finally, take some steps to get industry experts to add commentary to your site. You could ask them for interviews or commission them for articles. Bringing in another professional viewpoint will add credibility to your content.

### **Using email as a source for online PR**

After you create a polished email newsletter that utilizes these steps, you can leverage its strength in the world of online PR.

For example, if you have a long email newsletter with five main stories, you can create a press release discussing the educational value and relevance behind each story. You can then submit the press release to online PR distribution websites.

Include a link to a landing page for the email newsletter, complete with the ability to collect the email address of new visitors.

## **Executing a Press Campaign with Free Distribution**

### **Discover which free press release distribution website will work the best for you**

The Internet houses a number of options for free press release distribution websites.

Some of these include:

**PR Log** [[www.prlog.org](http://www.prlog.org)]

**PR.com** [[www.pr.com](http://www.pr.com)]

**I-Newswire** [[www.i-newswire.com](http://www.i-newswire.com)]

**Free Press Release** [[www.free-press-release.com](http://www.free-press-release.com)]

**Press Release Point** [[www.pressreleasepoint.com](http://www.pressreleasepoint.com)]

**1888 Press Release** [[www.1888pressrelease.com](http://www.1888pressrelease.com)]

**Press Release Centre** [[www.pressreleasecentre.com](http://www.pressreleasecentre.com)]

**PRFree** [[www.prfree.com](http://www.prfree.com)]

**Free Press Release Center** [[www.free-press-release-center.info](http://www.free-press-release-center.info)]

**Open PR** [[www.openpr.com](http://www.openpr.com)]

**Press About** [[www.pressabout.com](http://www.pressabout.com)]

**PR Inside** [[www.pr-inside.com](http://www.pr-inside.com)]

**Press Method** [[www.pressmethod.com](http://www.pressmethod.com)]

**BigNews.biz** [[www.bignews.biz](http://www.bignews.biz)]

**Information Online** [[www.information-online.com](http://www.information-online.com)]

**PRBD** [[www.prbd.net](http://www.prbd.net)]

**Press About** [[www.pressabout.com](http://www.pressabout.com)]

**PR Urgent** [[www.prurgent.com](http://www.prurgent.com)]

Our suggestion to you is to try out as many of these websites as you'd like, especially because they are free.

For us, there are six specific distribution sites we use on a regular basis. We do this because we have received coverage in Google from these distribution sites. They have also sent traffic and helped us receive more conversions and email subscribers.

These websites are:

**BigNews.biz**

**Pr Log**

**PR Inside**

**Free Press Release Center**

**I-Newswire**

SEO Press Release Guidelines

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## **Press Release Point**

Don't just take our word for it though. Try these websites out for your own press releases. Some may work better for the topics you cover than they have for us.

## **Conclusion**

The information you just read is hopefully enough to start you on the way to successful online PR.

Go create press releases on your newsworthy content and begin the process.

**For more free white papers, visit:**  
<http://www.MequodaFree.com>