



EXPERT ARTICLE

Online PR – Get the Web talking about you

By Nigel Hall, Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast Pty Ltd

PR or Public Relations, is often also used as an acronym for Press Releases, however PR is really how your company looks to all outsiders, so there are more tools you can use other than just press releases. Charitable events or donations can be a PR exercise as can corporate social responsibility, however to gain the recognition you need to do something about it, let people know! This is where Press Release work comes into its own, however you are not always guaranteed to get printed in the press but online you may have more success and maybe more benefit. In the following article PR specialist Damon Segal talks about how to utilise online PR to its best effect. <http://www.damonsegal.co.uk>

Online PR is not only a great strategy for driving more qualified traffic to your website. Placing press releases and articles on the web also helps increase visibility and search engine rankings by forming high-quality inbound links to your website.

There are many online press release hubs. The leader in online news and press release distribution is PRWeb.com, and others include free-press-release.com, prlog.org, marketwire.com and webwire.com.

The trick to a successful online press release is making the release newsworthy. Although some newswire services are automated, most are picked up by real people so you need to make sure that you are providing the media with something genuinely interesting about your organisation, product or service.

Remember: It's got to be something that interests them – not you! Beware of telling them something that produces a “so what?” reaction.

Make sure you have a grabbing headline that hooks the reader by outlining the story and make them want to read on. Try to keep headlines under 80 characters as it will be displayed as the title tag in a search engine and if it's too long it won't be effective.

The first paragraph must contain the most important information, told in as exciting or intriguing a way as possible. People's time is short, and if you can't capture their interest in the first 15 to 20 words they will move to another page.

So if you've got a good point to make, start with it!

“XYZ have just partnered with ABC, resulting in twice as many opportunities for you to make extra money.”

“XYZ’s fantastic new online service has seen a 300 per cent increase in revenue in just three months.”

“Consumers have hit the XYZ website in record numbers because of a new Adwords campaign.”

You get the idea? No one wants to hear about what you do or how wonderful you are, it just isn’t news. Make it personal and try to relate it to a real life story.

Once the first paragraph is as sharp as it can be, the next part of the press release should give the facts. Journalists are naturally sceptical people, so making wild claims and making your story sound too good to be true - even if it is true - is likely to get your article a fast track to the trash folder. Try to avoid exclamation marks – if something is outstanding, let it speak for itself.

See what is topical in the news and find a way to make your article associate with it – what journalists call the peg to hang it on. Make your verbs strong, your adjectives positive, and your sentences short and to the point. Try to engage the reader by being human, not a robot.

Keep away from technical words and acronyms. Remember that not all readers will be up to speed on your industry jargon. If I started throwing terms in like SEO, SMO, PPC, Meta Information, CTR or CPC the article will lose attention quickly. Keep your article understandable.

Once you have written the article go back and remove all the unnecessary words. By writing less, you will say more. The more concise the message, the more likely it is to be understood and remembered.

Press releases should be no longer than 300 words. If you’ve done a good job in whetting a journalist’s appetite for more you’ll soon get an email or a phone call from them.

Make sure at the end you include all possible means by which they can contact you: office or home phone, mobile, email, website. And at the end you can also include details about the company or person who the press release is about.

My 10 top tips

1. Make it newsworthy
2. Make the headline grabbing and under 80 characters
3. Make the first paragraph have your key information
4. Don’t just make it about you or your company, tell a real life story
5. Keep it factual
6. Don’t get too technical
7. Keep the press release to about 300 words
8. Keep it concise
9. Use engaging and active words
10. Remember your contact details at the end

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