

# 7 uses for press releases

**(Besides The Obvious)**

**OVERNIGHTPR**

Small businesses are in a tough spot when it comes to promoting their product and their company. They need to get the word out most and can generally afford to pay for marketing expertise the least.

This guide is your free resource on how to maximize your marketing & public relations dollar. It's like a free consultation with a marketing pro. I hope that you find this useful, and if you have any comments or ideas for further guides, or if I can help your organization with its PR & marketing, drop me a line at: [tlongino@overnightpr.com](mailto:tlongino@overnightpr.com)

The best way to get people talking about your organization is to tell them a story about you. We've been telling stories since the first caveman made a fire in his cave, and that's still the most memorable way to communicate with other people.

When I say "story" here, I mean telling your potential customers what it is that makes your business unique. If you make the best pizzas in town, your story should be about the pizza making contests that you've entered and won, and the free pizza you give to Honor Roll students at the local elementary school. Press Releases are one of the most cost efficient ways to tell a story about your business through a variety of different means.

Like dandelion seeds in the wind, the best stories float off far beyond your control and take root in minds you've never met. New customers and opportunities will grow. Read on for some innovative ways you can get new ideas to take root around you.



# 1

# announce news

## 1. Announce News

I know that this article promised you uses for press releases besides the obvious one (which would be announcing news), but this is still worth mentioning. A new product, feature, award, or almost anything else that you can think of as “news worthy” is something that you should distribute a press release about. You don’t have to spend big money on international news wire releases for every last thing, but distributing press releases online (which is cheap!) has a number of benefits for your business. I’ll go into those later.

While we’re talking about announcing news, it’s worth briefly talking about the 3 different tiers of press release: Product, Company, and Industry.

A “product” press release announcement states, “Bob’s Widgets Announces Launch of New Widget 3000 Line.” A company press release announces, “Bob’s Widgets Receives Widget-Maker Of The Year Award for 2009.” A typical industry release: “Widget-Making Projected to Shrink in 2009, but Bob’s Widgets Continue to Gain Market Share.”

Each different tier of press releases has different focus for your story, and will appeal to different readers. Generally, product announcements appeal to customers, company releases to reporters, and industry releases to reporters and potential investors.

Keep those 3 tiers of press releases in mind; if you want a more thorough explanation of what I mean, look for next month’s article!



## 2. Boost Your SEO

Especially if your site is relatively new or if you've never done any Search Engine Optimization (SEO), publishing a few press releases on the net will suddenly make it much easier for searchers to find you. The "social media revolution" (to use a worn phrase) has put information like news releases directly into the hands of searchers on Google, Yahoo!, and other search engines.

Take advantage of this to make your site easier to find: include a link to your website in all of your press releases. As your release gets clipped and bounced around by a number of auto news-clipping blogs, you'll find that you build a network of links that point to you, all with \*your\* search terms in them.

Speaking of which, let's take a moment to talk about keywords in press releases. Think about what words you want to use to bring traffic to your site. Keep in mind that it's much easier to get traffic on a specific keyword like "pink argyle socks" instead of "socks."

Make up a list of 10 keywords that you want people to find your site with. Make sure that every press release contains one or two of those keywords, and after just a few releases you'll start seeing a change in your search traffic.

This is no substitute for a real SEO campaign, but if you don't have the money to spend on optimizing your site, publishing a few press releases is a great start.

boost your  
S.E.O.



# 3

## bury bad links

### 3. Bury Bad Links

This is kind of the flip side of #2. Type in your company's name and see what search results. If the #4 hit on Google or Yahoo is a negative Yelp review, you've got an image problem with your search traffic. Fortunately, by creating well-written, on-topic press releases, you can "bury" the link that you don't want showing up in the search results with good PR instead!

Depending on how highly Google or Yahoo ranks the link you're trying to push lower in the search results, you may or may not find that you have better luck trying a Social Media Optimization campaign to get bloggers to talk about you instead of normal PR. Either way, a series of targeted releases can put good content front and center for searchers.

There are limits to this, of course. If bad links are continuously being generated on your search terms (because your business is legitimately combatting bad press or some kind of customer service disaster), press releases alone will not suffice for repairing your good name on the web. Also, if a link comes from an old and well-established website, it will take a lot more effort to bury the link than if it's a post on some obscure forum.

Serious problems with internet reputation require that you meet with a social media marketing expert. OvernightPR is happy to recommend a few good ones to you if you're looking to patch up your online reputation.

# 4

## reach out to buyers

### 4. Reach Out to Buyers

News releases go out to more than just the press; if you pay for online distribution that gets on Google News and Yahoo! News, you're getting your news out to anyone on the Internet who searches for what you're writing about.

You could write a blog with the same focus, but it can take years for a blog to get the kind of viewership that a press release can, and if you wait around to speak directly to your customers, you're leaving a lot of money on the table. So write your press releases thinking of what a reporter might want to know, sure, but keep in mind that the person who's going to matter most to you as he or she reads it is your future client or customer.

Any talk about blogging or writing a number of press releases (which are similar, although with press releases you're paying to insure a wide distribution of your story) inevitably takes us to the "The Long Tail," a phrase coined by Chris Anderson. Basically what he says is that the sum of all of the weird, specific search terms (like "pink argyle socks," "green knitted socks," and so on) is greater than the number of search terms for generic phrases (like "socks").

So why do you care? Because if you're a small business in a crowded marketplace, you don't want to try to reach everyone who's buying socks. That's a lot of work and money. But if you dominate in a number of less common search terms (The Long Tail), you can gain plenty of revenue and have limitless markets to expand into!

## 5. Level the Field

In *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*, author David Meerman Scott writes about a company that wrote a press release a week for two years. Over a hundred press releases later, they grew their website presence, spoke directly to millions of potential buyers, and had created thousands of inbound links to their website--all things that I've mentioned above. But what they also did was manage to create a massive Internet presence for a fraction of what big, national brands pay for the same kind of thing.

When a company has a marketing budget of millions of dollars, it is unsurprising that they're prominently ranked on Google or Yahoo. But for fifteen or twenty thousand over the course of two years, a business that sets a schedule of PR and keeps to it can achieve many of the results that the big guys get for their millions of dollars. It won't be quite as effective as all those dollars that large companies can afford to spend, but it goes a long way toward levelling out the discrepancies in budgets between large and small companies.

"Inch by inch, anything's a cinch, but yard by yard everything is hard" If you're a small business--or heck, even a large one!--and you want to gain a huge market presence online immediately, you better have deep pockets. If you're willing to chip away at your goal for a few years and stick to your schedule, you'll look around one day and realize that suddenly you've gotten all that success you were hoping for--inch by inch.



5  
level  
the field



# 6

## ride the wave

### **6. Ride the Wave**

When there's something big being discussed in your market, if you can release PR that discusses it and how your company is related to that news, your PR will get read by more of your buyers; it will further level the playing field and drive more traffic to your site than it ordinarily would. But you need to move quickly.

One of the differences between interesting news and boring old rehashes is the timeliness of your story. All of the side benefits of press releases are magnified when you get your story released in a way that reflects and echoes a big news story. If you're implementing a press release schedule, do yourself a favor and set up a Google Alerts system that tells you when your key phrases are being cited in the news and on the web. Google Alerts are a great way to make finding out about the new trends in your industry as easy as can be. Once you've found out what's happening in your industry, you need to take action.

If there's something in your industry that the press is talking about right now, write a release about it and get it out on the wire pronto. This dramatically increases your chances of getting picked up by a blog or a traditional media outlet, but it also dramatically increases the chances that your next customer is searching on that exact term, too. Waiting two days, a week, or longer to turn out the press release is too long in the 24/7 world of the Internet. As soon as you hear about a trend or event, think about a release you need now and a writer who can deliver it to you. Need one? Email me.



# manage crises

## 7. Manage Crises

This is a tricky one, since press releases alone will not suffice for crisis management. But the immutable truth of PR is that the story that gets told is the one that people hear about first. If your company has the bad luck of a crisis and you need to get out ahead of the story to manage damage control, current press releases will be among the first results that a person searching the web will find for your business. If you choose your keywords wisely when you write a crisis management release, it may even show up first in the results for people who are looking for more information on what has just happened--for a while.

Reporters will be the earliest searchers for news of your company after a crisis has broken, so making sure that you present the story how you want it told first can help shape the direction of the news coverage that follows.

This kind of crisis management press release needs to be released as soon after your company has realized that there's a crisis as possible. The best way to control a crisis' story is to get out ahead of it.

Of course, if you don't have a writer in house to craft a press release for you, or if the freelancer that you've been using for press releases takes a week to turn around your article, you may find yourself in a quandary because you need that PR right away.

Oddly enough, that's what I happen to do. Need to talk? [Tlongino@overnightpr.com](mailto:Tlongino@overnightpr.com).



# Handy-Dandy Reference Sheet

*(Because who has time to read 8 pages of text anyway?)*

## **Let's Make This Easy:**

That's a whole lot of reading for a quick how-to. If you want a handy reference to 7 ways to use press releases, then go no further: Bob's your uncle!

1. Announce Something: Yes, it's the obvious answer. Doesn't mean that it's not worth stating anyway.
2. Boost SEO: Pick the key words that you want people to find your site with, and include them in your release.
3. Bury Bad Links: If you've got a web reputation problem, a series of releases with similar keywords to your problem should help bury the link.
4. Reach Out to Buyers: Write releases so that they appeal to reporters and customers. Think of the three tiers of releases while you write.
5. Level The Field: Gain inbound links, site prominence, and internet presence through a relatively inexpensive release campaign.
6. Ride the Wave: When there's hot news in your field, a topical press release quickly written & distributed can be hugely more effective for you.
7. Manage Crises: Get out ahead of the news and control it with press releases as part of your crisis management PR schedule.

Some secondary points to consider as you write a release or as you talk to your writer about doing so:

1. The Three Tiers of Releases: When you're creating a release, write either about a product, your company, or the industry. By varying the focus of your press releases, you make it much easier to create PR on a schedule and maintain it.
2. Patience is Paramount: 1 press release won't drive the world to your virtual door. 10 releases will start to make a difference in your site traffic and your market presence. 50 or a hundred releases later, though, you'll find that you're getting site visitors and customers from every thing you've written over time, and your presence will be pretty solid.
3. The Long Tail: It's easier to be the Internet's strongest presence for "pink argyle socks", "green knitted socks" and "McCleary tartan plaid knee high socks" than it is to be the Internet's strongest presence for "socks." Pick a few market niches and dominate them quickly.

If you've got any question about this, press releases, or marketing in general, give me a shout at: [tlongino@overnightpr.com](mailto:tlongino@overnightpr.com) or 407.802.6139.

--Trevor

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