



## Making Sense of Your Press Release Distribution Options

On behalf of our customers at HRmarketer.com and SeniorCareMarketer.com, we have distributed tens of thousands of news releases over the last decade. We've used traditional wire release services like PR Newswire and Business Wire. We've used "search-optimized" wire services like PRweb. We've used "social media" press release services like Pitchengine. We've used hybrid services that leverage one or more of the above platforms. And we've occasionally used free distribution services – although not anymore because of the mounting evidence that these services can actually harm your brand and search rankings.

We don't just send the releases. We spend time studying and measuring the results. We talk with our customers about their experiences using these services. We follow industry thought leaders in the merging fields of public relations, marketing, social media, search engine marketing (SEM) and search engine optimization (SEO).

In short, I feel we have a pretty good understanding of the space. And I believe we have the objectivity and have earned the credibility to advise our customers on best practices in press release distribution.

And that is the focus of this article.

Making sense of your press release distribution options is difficult because there are so many product choices, with new ones emerging monthly and existing ones adding features regularly.

If that were not challenging enough, the way news is distributed and consumed is radically changing – and the lines continue to blur in terms of who and what is a news information source. One Tweet from the right Twitterer can give you more and better exposure than a lead story in a national daily. We're all information sources today.

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Adding to the confusion is the fact that many so-called “experts” have muddied the waters with misinformation. As a result, you are hearing statements like:

- *Unless your news is distributed by [insert traditional wire release service], it's not news.*
- *If your news is distributed by [insert non-traditional wire release service], it's not credible.*
- *[Insert your favorite wire release service] is better than [insert all other wire release services].*
- *If your news is distributed by [insert your favorite wire release service], it's not search optimized, social, getting to journalists, bloggers, etc., etc.*
- *There is a lot of junk on [insert non-traditional wire release service] because there is no vetting process for news. (Trust me, there is a lot of junk on all news distribution services).*

Blanket statements like these are never universally correct and are becoming irrelevant.

This article does not criticize any news distribution model because, presently, all play an important role in your marketing and PR. I say “presently” because they all seem to be converging, and one has to believe that at some point in the future “traditional,” “search-optimized,” and “social media” releases will be one and the same. For example, people are often surprised to learn that many of the following features are currently available on most major press release distribution services (yes, even those “traditional” services):

- “News” and other images.
- Embedded multimedia files (video and/or podcast).
- Embedded hyperlinks for your key words/phrases.
- Social media sharing features.
- RSS feeds.
- Search optimization.
- Comments.
- Tiny URLs and/or Trackbacks.
- Links to additional resources and archived news releases.

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***...the line is blurring  
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Indeed, the line is blurring between traditional, search-optimized and social media press release services.

## So Where and How Should You Distribute Your News?

Take a step back and ask yourself what exactly is the purpose of sending a news release. What are you trying to accomplish?

*You want to distribute your news release to relevant bloggers, publishers, journalists and "consumers" (your buyers) in order to build awareness of your news. You also want to get your release online so it can be indexed, found and shared – resulting in even more exposure, improved SEO and increased traffic to your website.*

To accomplish these goals, you need a well-organized and -executed news marketing campaign consisting of a number of tactics.

Sorry, no single news distribution service presently exists that does it all and no one service likely ever will. So if you are married to one service/tactic, you are not achieving the above goals.

## Content: Where It All Starts

Good PR begins with great content. As with journalism, storytelling is at the heart of good public relations. If your news releases are interesting and compelling and you follow the best practices outlined below, there is a good chance your news will be:

- Written about by journalists, bloggers and other website publishers;
- Shared by social media participants on services like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn;
- Found online by "consumers" (your sales prospects).

This will result in hyperlinks that point back to your content and/or website, equating to increased online visibility and website traffic and improved search engine rankings.

I occasionally hear people claim they secured a story in some national daily or business periodical because of a particular wire service they used.

Baloney.

They got the coverage because their content was compelling. If your content is interesting to a particular journalist, it rarely matters where they found it.

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Remember, the Internet has made everyone and every website a potential information source. This is one reason why promoting your news releases via one single channel (e.g., posting on your website only) is a flawed strategy.

OK – so you have your great content/news release. Now what?

### Best Practices In News Distribution



1. **Email your release directly to your short-list of targeted journalists**, including local media. Do NOT blast it to thousands of journalists and don't send a release on plumbing fixtures to fashion editors. Include a personalized note ("pitch") explaining why you are sending the release and why they should care. Then either paste your release in the text email or, better yet, provide a URL to the online release where people can share it and access supporting files and multi-media.

This is called media relations, folks, and no wire service replaces this.



2. **Email your release to your short-list of targeted bloggers** (and, if applicable, industry analysts). Again, include a personalized note (with a link to the online release) explaining why they should care and how it is relevant to their blog.



3. **Send your release via an Internet wire service.** We believe sending a search-optimized release via an Internet wire service (disclosure: we really like and partner with PRWeb) is still the most cost-effective way to distribute your release to achieve broad online visibility. The data continues to support this fact – and being able to search-optimize your releases, get it indexed by search crawlers, have it visible on News search engines, syndicate it to web sites, have it in RSS format, attach files, and incorporate other social media features makes it a no-brainer.

But don't make the mistake of thinking this is all you need to do! Again, no distribution service does it all nor is a substitute for media relations.



4. **Post the release to your own website's news page.** Ideally in the form of a social media press release (SMPR) with the features we described earlier. If you do not have this capability, you should make plans to add it. You can build your own news page on your website using a service like Wordpress. Having these releases reside on your website gives you SEO benefits and eliminates concerns that a third-party service will remove your releases in the future. Or, just use a service like Pitchengine that provides a very cost-effective "SMPR" solution. Business Wire's EON service is another good one. These "SMPR" releases work best for companies who are actively involved in social media/networking (see next best practice point). Otherwise there is less value in using them.



5. **Spread the word about your news to your social media networks.** Tweet it, send it to your Facebook and LinkedIn networks, blog about it. Share and syndicate on industry-specific communities and directories like HR.com and HRmarketer's [HR Directory](#). I cannot stress how important this is. Kevin Grossman, president of HRmarketer.com, reaches thousands of customers, prospects, journalists, analysts, bloggers and other information sources through his various social networking services. So when he announces compelling news, it goes viral. It's actually quite astonishing to me how effective this is. It works.



6. If you are publicly traded subject to fair disclosure regulations or believe your release has widespread and national news relevance (and you have the budget), **send your release through a major traditional wire service** like Business Wire or PR Newswire. Here you are hoping for exposure to news rooms and bureaus across the nation or globe. However, our experience shows that if you are a privately held B2B company in a vertical-specific industry (e.g., human resources), you may be disappointed with your results. And again, don't think that because you send to these services that your release is getting in front of the journalists in your market. Nothing replaces media relations.

Whatever news release services you choose, take advantage of the available services! I recently visited several prominent social media news release sites and randomly checked several hundred releases. What I found blew me away. Less than 10% of releases actually used the "social media" features. In other words, companies are paying for these releases yet posting a bare-bones text release with no embedded hyperlinks, no images, no multi-media, no Web optimization, nothing.<sup>1</sup>

We recommend doing all of the above for each news release you distribute. Relying on any single tactic above is a mistake. It is not that simple.

Does the above sound like a lot of work? It is. It will take several hours per news release and considerably more for media relations. But it is worth it. If you can't do it, outsource it.

### Additional Resources:

[eBook: Conversation Starters – Social Media Marketing in the HR Marketplace](#)

[eBook: How to Reach and Engage Human Resource Buyers and Convert Them to Leads](#)

[Tip: The Importance of Media Relations to Your Marketing Plan](#)

[Tip: Pitching the Media Telephone or E-mail?](#)

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<sup>1</sup> HRmarketer.com (and SeniorCareMarketer.com) customers are reminded to take advantage of our journalist and blogs databases to create targeted distribution lists as well as our online press release distribution service that leverages the PRweb platform (partnerships with other news distribution platforms to be announced soon). Pay attention to the metrics and reporting we provide for your sent releases. Also use our social media databases to find out which social media services your journalists are using – and follow their Twitter feeds. Monitor your news coverage with our eClipping service and track your keyword rankings using our keyword-ranking tool. Use these features and information databases – they will save you a lot of time and improve your results. If you need training please let us know.

## About HRmarketer

HRmarketer.com, a service of Fisher Vista LLC, is the no. 1 Internet marketing and media visibility service in the human resources industry. Over five hundred human resource suppliers have used HRmarketer.com to generate publicity, website traffic, sales leads and improved search engine rankings. The HRmarketer Services Group helps HR suppliers who do not have the internal resources available and or internal expertise to fully leverage the power of an HRmarketer.com membership. For these companies, the HRmarketer Services Group offers a full range of marketing and public relations services as well as Web 2.0 digital media services.

### HRmarketer.com

If you sell to human resource professionals, you will benefit from a membership to HRmarketer.com, the no. 1 Internet marketing and media visibility service in the human resources industry. Over five hundred human resource suppliers have used HRmarketer.com to generate publicity, website traffic, sales leads and improved search engine rankings.



[www.HRmarketer.com](http://www.HRmarketer.com) –  
For companies selling to the human resource department of an organization.

### HRmarketer Services Group

Many organizations do not have the internal resources available to fully leverage the power of their HRmarketer.com membership. For these companies, our Services Group offers a full range of marketing and public relations services as well as Web 2.0 digital media services.



### SeniorCareMarketer.com

The senior care industry is booming – and it's just getting started. From home care services and medical products to housing options like assisted living, the demand for products and services relating to the care of older Americans is growing exponentially. SeniorCareMarketer.com will help you get a jump in this competitive market by helping you generate publicity, website traffic and sales leads.



[www.SeniorCareMarketer.com](http://www.SeniorCareMarketer.com) –  
For companies selling products and services relating to the aging of America.

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## ShirleyBOARD.com

The ShirleyBoard is an online community for people caring for aging loved ones, helping caregivers centrally store important information, keep a log of daily activities, and network with other caregivers. The ShirleyBOARD can be licensed or private labeled by organizations who want to imbed this service within their website. Please contact us for more information.



[www.ShirleyBOARD.com](http://www.ShirleyBOARD.com) –  
An online community for people caring for aging loved ones.

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