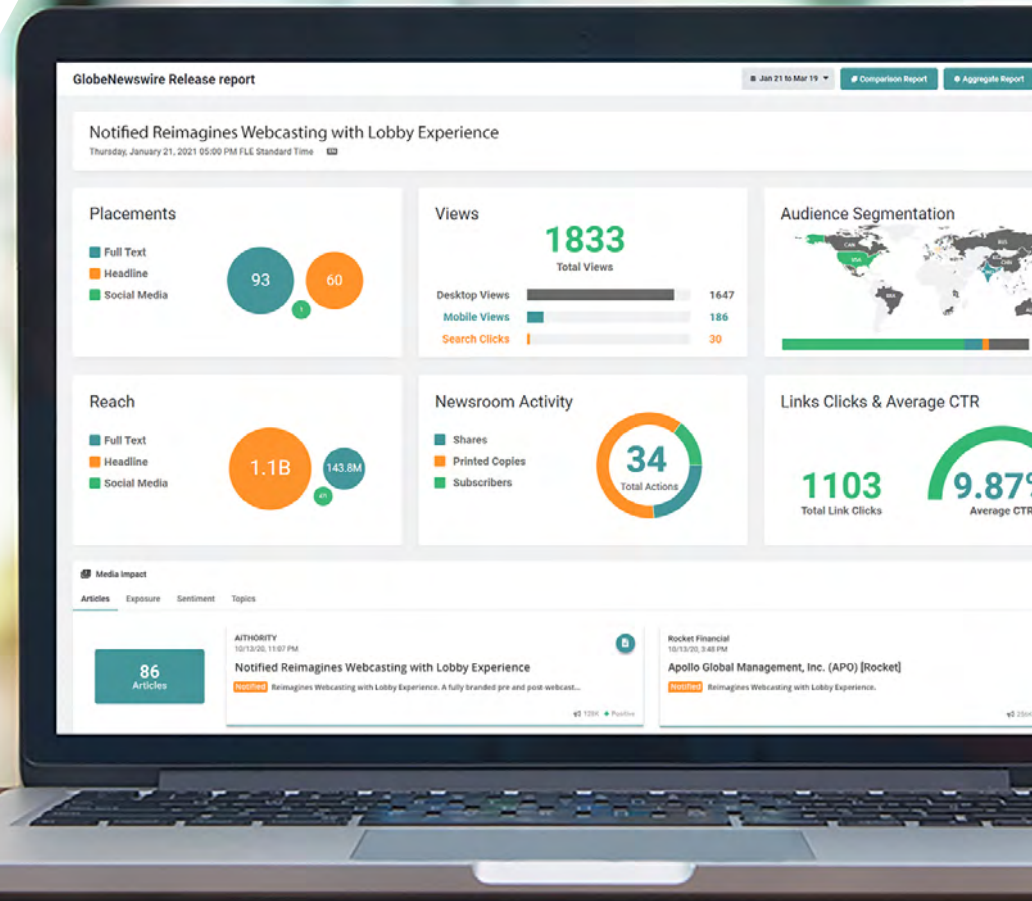# How To Be More Strategic With Your Press Releases

Tips for better content optimization, monitoring, and measurement

notified

Introduction

For many public relations (PR), investor relations (IR), and marketing teams, press releases are an integral part of communicating with media, investors, customers, and other key audiences to create awareness and drive earned media coverage.

But too often, releases are treated tactically and as a siloed effort. They're written and distributed without much consideration for how they can make a measurable and sustained impact in supporting the company's business strategy.

How can you be more strategic with your press releases? **The key is to treat them as part of your integrated communications program** – as content that can increase sales, attract attention from media and customers, increase your company's share of voice (SOV), and more.

In this eBook, we'll look at how to think more broadly about your press releases, and ways you can improve their performance and business impact by considering:

Content Optimization

Monitoring

Measurement

Content Optimization Best Practices

An effective press release starts with the content and builds from there. This is when search engine optimization (SEO) comes into play. You want to have strong, targeted content to drive traffic. Here are six important content optimization best practices:

1 Know Your Keywords

Before writing your press release, it's important to identify your target audience and develop a keyword list that matches the message. (Read more about how to do this in the Monitoring section of this eBook.) Thinking of the keywords and keyword categories early will allow you to incorporate them organically, rather than fitting them in after the fact. The result is a much more natural, well-written (and better optimized) press release that builds your company's credibility as a news source.

2 Think Like a Journalist

To create readable, search-friendly press releases, use the inverted pyramid writing style long favored by journalists. In other words, put the most relevant information first, followed by other important details. Let the rest of the information unfold as you craft your message.

3 Place Your Keywords and Links Strategically

There's valuable real estate in a press release, so use it wisely - starting with the headline. Remember, the first line of your Google search engine result listing will be pulled from here, so make it compelling. Use your subheadings and intro text for keywords as well. Just don't overdo it.

Tips for Better Keyword Placement and Links

Press Release Headline: *Keep your titles under 60 characters.*

Google typically displays the first 50–60 characters of a title tag, so by keeping your titles under 60 characters, you can expect about 90% of your titles to display properly. Short headlines force you to prioritize relevant keywords, which in turn maximizes your visibility to search engines. Limit your use of "filler" words – anything that wouldn't be capitalized in your headline won't do much for your press release SEO. Instead of "ACME To Hire Executive of Competing Firm as CEO," try "ACME Names New CEO." It conveys all the information necessary for a headline, and there's very little in it that you wouldn't want to rank for in the Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs).

Press Release Subheadings: *Use Google Autocomplete to find keywords for your subheadings.*

Keywords are much easier to place in your subheadings. Use Google Autocomplete to find search terms that are closely related to the ones you're pulling from your research. Say your headline is "ACME Announces Annual Meeting." When you type "annual meeting" into the Google search bar, one of the first things that comes up is "annual meeting agenda." While the word "agenda" may not belong in your headline, it might fit snugly into a subheading.

Your Press Release Intro (The First 100 Words): *Be concise and place the most important content up front.*

Your release will rank higher for keywords when they're placed in the first 100 words than it will when they're placed later in the text. Just as your release's headline becomes the title of your Google SERP listing, the first sentence of your release becomes the description (the two lines below the headline). Google limits the description to about 155 characters including spaces – so be concise and place the most important content up front.

Press Release Anchor Text Links:
Your press release shouldn't include more than two links.

Google has publicly stated that they make efforts to ignore links in press releases, but this doesn't mean you should avoid links altogether. Links to relevant product pages or an event registration, for example, are fine, and provide a relevant, measurable call-to-action for readers. If your release announces an executive appointment, or covers a topic on which someone in your company is considered a thought leader, consider also linking to their blog, executive bio, and/or LinkedIn Influencer page. Another tip? Your press release shouldn't include more than two links.

Press Release Image Alt Tag/Alt Text:
*Include keywords in the metatext for your images.*

Compelling images, videos, and other media can boost press release SEO. Including keywords or related search terms in the alt text for your images increases your chances of being found via Google Images. When including an image, use a standard file extension name such as .jpg or .jpeg and name the file with a title that includes keywords and effectively describes the image in question (e.g., new-ACME-ceo-jane-doe. jpg). High-resolution images are more useful to the media, and make sure any images used in a press release are compressed to improve page load times.

4 Follow SEO Do's and Don'ts

To engage your target audience and hold their attention, "do" write in short, declarative sentences and keep your headlines short as well. When selecting words, "don't" choose hyped expressions like "one of a kind," which are associated with advertising content. Also limit filler words, like conjunctions, in headlines. Not capitalized? Then it probably won't do much for your press release SEO.
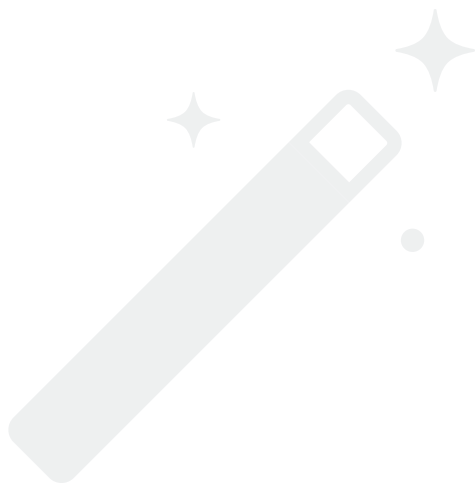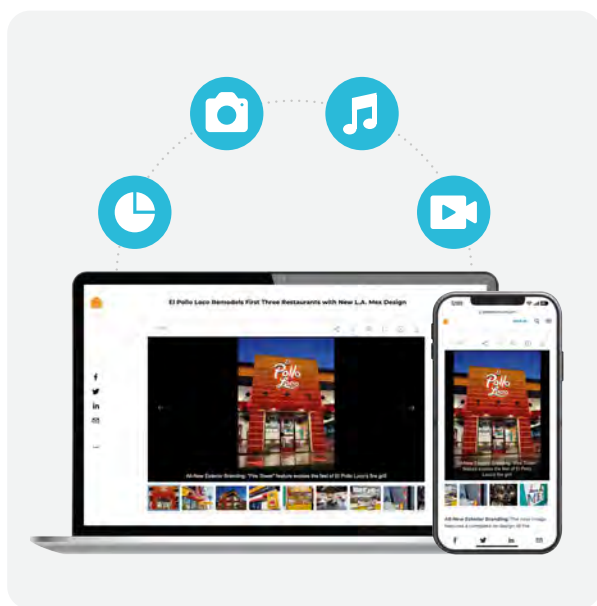
5 Use Multimedia To Boost Engagement

While words alone are powerful, you can create a far more comprehensive and engaging press release and increase your chances of getting coverage by including embedded (and downloadable) images, videos, audio clips, graphics, and other media. Not only are you piquing interest in your topic, but you're also making additional storytelling assets easily available for journalists.

Media Snippets are interactive multimedia modules that can be seamlessly embedded into your GlobeNewswire press releases, blogs, and web pages to help you provide an immersive and information-rich experience for your key audience. Images, infographics, PDFs, on-demand video, audio, and webcasts – even streaming video of live events – can be included in a Media Snippet.

6 Publish in Your Online Newsroom

Journalists regularly check an organization's online newsroom for story ideas and company information. So do influencers and bloggers, investors, consumers, and even your own employees. Why? Because they're looking for content that's up to date and easy to consume, in a place they trust.

An online newsroom is the perfect place to host your releases and build relationships with the media. More than just a page with links, your newsroom should be an online content hub to showcase press releases, earned media, social media, contact information, and more – consider it a one-stop information destination for the media. It's easy for journalists to follow your newsroom and for you to keep them updated with your latest news. Online newsrooms are part of our Notified PR platform, and we can help you build one that's custom branded, easy to update, and measurable.

Monitoring

It's important to proactively listen and monitor the conversation about your company and industry even before you write the first word of your press release – not just after it has been distributed.

Why? Because people may be talking about you or the subject and tuning in early can pay off with more relevant and informed content and messaging. Here's how media monitoring and social listening can benefit your press releases:

1 Listen for a Better Press Release

For maximum impact, you want your press release to reach the right audience at the right time with the right message. Through social media listening, you can gain valuable insights into consumer sentiment, trends, and your competitors' activity. You'll also be able to identify keywords in the conversations and determine what to emphasize – or avoid – in your release.

2 Watch for Social Media Reaction

Keeping tabs on the social conversation isn't just smart to do. It's necessary. In today's increasingly complex media mix, more and more coverage is taking place outside traditional outlets - monitoring coverage across blogs, podcasts, social media, and other sources is imperative. Beyond tracking earned media coverage, you need to know the reaction and sentiment on social media, both positive and negative. What are your customers saying? Is there a new audience talking about your announcement? If so, make sure you engage with them.

3   ### See How Your Messages Are Resonating

The social reaction to your release also provides real-time clues to how well your key messages are connecting with your audience. Did people "like," share, or comment? By following the social conversation, you'll better understand message pull-through, and how your keywords resonated with your key audiences (or not).

The Notified PR platform gives you access to world-class media monitoring and social listening so you can get an instant view of your brand and media exposure across global news and social media sources.

It's easy to get the insights you need about your brand reputation or specific industry news and use this intelligence to create messaging and content that's aligned to what's being talked about and targeted to your key audiences.
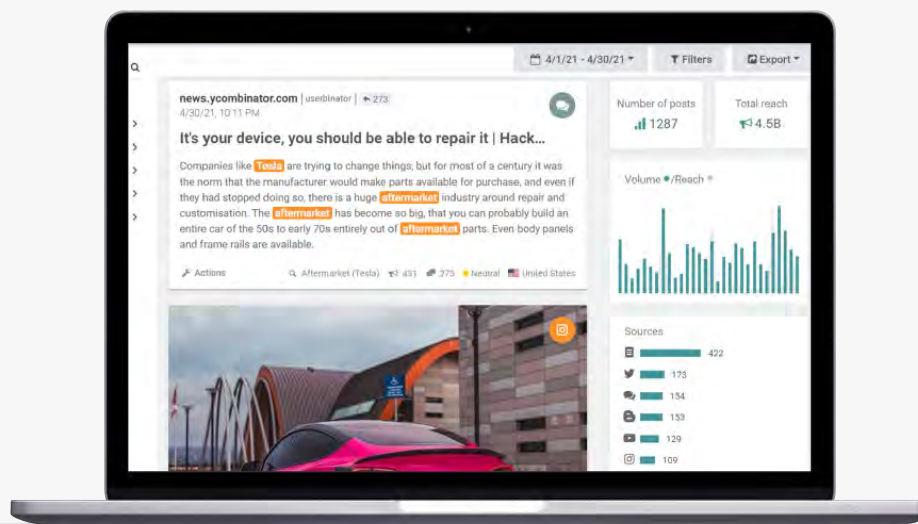
Measurement

Once you've distributed your press release, it's time to shift your attention to measuring its performance. Fortunately, there are several ways to do this, both for conventional media outlets and social media channels.

Analyzing these metrics is important because you can better understand everything from how many people opened your release to earned media coverage. Did your release perform as expected? How can you improve with future releases? Here's how you can measure performance:

1 Keep Tabs on Earned Media Coverage

A common way to measure earned media is to look at how many outlets covered your announcement. For a fuller picture, though, you need to examine the type of coverage, placement, and reaction. Did your press release generate pickup from a prominent and relevant media outlet? Was there substantial message pull-through? Did it get picked up by an influential blogger or was it ignored on social media? All of these factors, along with what people are saying, provide you with context and actionable insights.

2 Take Advantage of Tracking Links

The tracking links in your press release are an easy and effective way to measure engagement, whether it's from the media or in terms of sales prospects. For example, you can use specific tracking links to see who registered for events or product demos, or who downloaded resources. Similarly, you can track inbound traffic to your website from hyperlinks in your press release. Remember, no more than two links are recommended in your release.

3 **Act Now and Plan for the Future**

Once you have measurable results, use them to respond to immediate needs – such as handling media inquiries or customer feedback – and to shape your overall PR, IR, or content marketing strategy. If something worked with your press release, like specific key messages, linked content, or audience targeting, consider it for your next release. If it didn't, it might be a good idea to revisit messaging.

GlobeNewswire's Newswire Analytics help you understand how your press releases impact your business and brand. Instantly connect to the data you need to help measure the performance of your GlobeNewswire-distributed releases – the number of people who viewed it, social media shares, multimedia engagement, link click-throughs, and more.

You can even see online earned media coverage resulting from your releases through a Media Impact widget that gives you data and insights you need to tie ROI directly to your press releases.

Summary

Thanks for reading our eBook! When it comes to making your press releases more strategic, the key is to use them not just as tactical announcements, but as part of your holistic communications and content marketing strategy.

With better optimization, monitoring, and measurement, you can improve both the performance and impact of your releases so that they drive measurable results for your organization.

About the Notified PR Platform

The Notified PR platform powers your communications with social listening and media monitoring, a media contacts database, press release distribution, newsroom publishing, and PR measurement. It's built to support your PR workflow with integrated modules and user-friendly tools in one place – no more disconnected systems and logins.

Real-time data and analytics flow seamlessly, providing you with a unified data layer and a single source of truth to help you measure your performance and ROI across social media and earned media. Our technology innovates at the speed of communications, taking advantage of artificial intelligence (AI) to quickly surface actionable insights so you can make more informed business decisions.

Simplify your workflow with PR software that's integrated, intelligent, and easy to use.

About Notified

Notified, a West business, is a globally trusted technology partner for investor relations, public relations, and marketing professionals. The company's suite of world-class, award-winning communications solutions and its dedicated customer service team are relied upon by more than 10,000 customers, from growing businesses and newly public companies to some of the world's most recognizable brands. Notified's solutions help organizations effectively reach and engage customers, investors, employees, and the media – from virtual events and webcasts to earnings calls, IR websites, social listening, media engagement tools and regulatory and press release distribution via GlobeNewswire. Notified is headquartered in New York, N.Y.

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