



Extending Your Online PR Efforts beyond a Press Release

With today's cost-constrained budgets, PR can be an important strategic component of a marketing mix. Extending beyond the press release, PR encompasses a wide range of communication and customer-engagement tactics. It can cost-effectively help build a brand, drive traffic, appeal to new customer segments, attract new investors, increase revenues, and accomplish other marketing objectives. To achieve this, a PR strategy must be more creative and be integrated into your total marketing plan.

To fully leverage the benefits of online PR:

- **Understand your marketing objectives and how PR can help accomplish them.** Just as you tailor different marketing strategies for each business objective, you must target and integrate your PR message and approach. "As the line between marketing and PR blurs," says Edelman VP Morra Aarons, "you need to consider what will work best for each PR campaign. It may be a press release, a keyword buy, or an ad."
- **Examine your marketing calendar.** Look at your marketing or editorial calendar to determine when targeted PR can strengthen your promotional efforts. Consider whether you're doing something newsworthy that people care about or that can create buzz.
- **Create a hook that consumers, bloggers, and the media will find interesting.** Focus your pitch on the story or consumer benefits, not on your company. Survey results are always a favorite for garnering press attention. For example, Unilever's Campaign for Real Beauty research finds only 2 percent of women thought they were beautiful, which generated lots of press and buzz. Also, being the first in your category to do something different or adapt a new technology is a time-proven approach.
- **Assess which consumer segments are interested in your campaign.** Consider secondary targets as well. Find a PR theme that will catch your target audience's attention.
- **Leverage online engagement to extend a story's reach.** This can work especially well if you're marketing a media site that may have difficulty attracting press. Options include:
 - Create a special section with deeper content.
 - Develop viral content to fuel buzz. PR firm Vorticom promoted the Hollywood issue of "Vanity Fair" with five campaigns containing links to the original VanityFair.com video content in February and March 2006. As a result, VanityFair.com traffic spiked dramatically. The traffic generated an increase in online-generated print subscriptions.

HTB's hotel e-Marketing success formula: TRACK. ANALYZE. OPTIMIZE.



- Include customer involvement features, such as a quiz.
 - Use a blog to engage users in a dialogue or a podcast to provide useful or entertaining content.
 - Partner with a non-competing site so you both gain from the cross promotion.
- **Use online functionality to increase your PR campaign's impact.** Check out the following:
 - **Search.** Make press releases search friendly by using search-rich keywords and links to your site. Augment important promotions with related keyword buys, and check that links direct to the appropriate content or press release. Ensure your site is optimized for these terms.

"Online press releases can be an important component of your search marketing strategy," Reprise Media's Josh Stylman notes. "Since the content is valuable, it should be visible for the people trying to find it."
 - **Web site promotion.** Publicize the promotion, event, or press release on your site with links from the home page and onsite ads. Make the promotion or content easy to find on your site. Have a press center associated with your site's corporate information section. Post press releases, recent media stories, and blog mentions.
 - **E-mailings.** Promote the event to your e-mail database in an engaging way.
 - **RSS.** Use feeds to distribute your information to a wider audience.

Analyze PR Efforts

From an analytics perspective, PR doesn't always yield predictable or quantifiable results. A story's timing and placement is beyond your control. If PR is well integrated with your other marketing initiatives, its impact may be even more difficult to isolate. But you can assess the impact it has on achieving marketing goals over time. Here are some metrics you should look at:

- **Assess site visitors, page views, and revenues.** Compare the period before your release with that following it. In addition, many business-to-business (B2B) marketers ask for registration to allow readers to get white papers, which aids tracking.
- **Monitor blogs for company mentions.** This can be augmented by using a third-party monitoring service, such as Nielsen, which tracks a wide range of consumer-generated media sources. They can be very useful for brand and reputation monitoring.

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- **Track press pickups and related media mentions.** This can be done by using online services, such as Google Alerts, or more sophisticated paid press-tracking packages for offline media.
- **Measure brand impact.** Use surveys and related metrics to assess impact. Alternatively, some marketers use time spent on the site as an engagement indicator.
- **Assess search impact.** Check referring URLs to determine where traffic is coming from.

In a connected, digital world, PR isn't just about the press release; it's about connecting with customers. PR is an integral part of a multichannel marketing program. At its best, PR is the communications, media-focused component of a broader marketing campaign. With well-thought-out goals, a good understanding of your target markets, enabling technology, and a clever, relevant hook, PR can be one of the most cost-effective tools for spreading the word.

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About Hotel Traffic Builders (HTB):

We are a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to the boutique hotel & residential resort industry.

Our mission is very simple: ***"To maximize sales success by providing our clients with exceptional internet marketing results"***.

Our clients consistently enjoy industry leading success because of our dedicated focus and experience. Our use of state-of-the art tools, best in class technology and wealth of industry experience enable us to provide full solution applications. We recognize that our clients are experts at running their hotels, and our role is to develop and maintain online marketing leadership for our client hotels.

We differentiate ourselves through:

Industry Expertise

We have a singular specialized focus on boutique hotel, resort and vacation home e-Marketing. Our sole goal is to be the best at what we do by ensuring maximum success for all of your e-marketing activities. Our 52 person design and development technology team delivers unparalleled quality and results. Our sole focus is resort marketing.

Individual Customized Creative Approach & Solutions

Every client has unique needs, opportunities and priorities, our e-Marketing plans are always custom built and based on in-depth research of your specific hotel.

Cutting Edge Technology

We use proprietary state of the art tools and applications that enable project efficiency, measurability and success of your e-marketing. We not only promise success, we document it in a 24/7 real-time secured private reporting platform that we create for every hotel client. Our clients never wonder about how hard their marketing dollars are working because they always know!

Return On Investment

The true measurement of our success is our proven ability to deliver reservation bookings. We grow booking results year over year, and we grow advance bookings, which result in higher occupancy levels and ADRs.

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Contact us at: www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com or call us **954-421-6399**

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