# press release essentials



## Search Engine Optimization
## SEO
## Report

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# Search Engine Optimization with Press Releases

Increasing you search engine traffic is not an option these days; it's a necessity. After all, more than 80% of Americans search online BEFORE they buy.

But in order to get noticed online, one of your marketing goals may be ranked on the first page of the search engines like Google and Yahoo. Why? Think about when you do a search online. You often just scan the first page of results. And like most people, it's very rare to move onto the second or third page.

Search engine optimized (SEO) press releases once had the ability to bring you first-page visibility for your keywords very quickly. At times you could take over multiple spots on the the first page of Google for your keywords. This is no longer true. However that doesn't mean they've lost effectiveness altogether.

## *Why Publish SEO Press Releases?*

There are plenty of benefits of SEO press releases if you do them correctly:

- Backlinks from credible news sites which increases the ranking of your website or blog for your keywords
- Visibility in search engines
- Ranking in Google News and Yahoo News for your keywords
- Potential media coverage

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## What is an SEO Press Release?

An SEO press release or 'search engine optimized' press release is first and foremost a way to deliver news of new events taking place within your company. However, it is written in such a way that it will rank well in the search engines for your keywords and provide your website with important backlinks that will also help boost it's position in the search engine rankings.

**TIP!** Most people focus on how to get search engine rankings by using press release sites (which are no longer a wise strategy and in fact may be penalized in some instances) but they miss the potential goldmine of optimizing press releases on their OWN websites.

We'll start with that – in some cases that may be all you do with your press releases. In other cases, you'll want to ensure wider distribution and promotion than simply posting to your website.

## Optimizing Press Releases on Your Website

Before we begin – this is crucial - each press release that you put on your website needs to have its own page. You can (and should) have a main page that provides a summary of what's included in each release, but ultimately you want each press release on its own page on your website. That way, each page can rank well for its chosen "keyword phrase".

I suggest creating an actual media room website exclusively for your press releases and using Wordpress as the platform of your website. That's because Wordpress automatically makes each post (in this case, your press releases) a page. You'll find a full guide to doing so in the resources section of this Publicity Essentials series.

A "keyword phrase" is simply the words people would enter into a search engine to find information on a certain topic or product. For example, "reduce spam email" or "reduce wrinkles".

# SEO PRESS RELEASES

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Here are the steps to optimizing your press releases:

1. **Start with a little bit of keyword research.** What is your press release about? Remember, focus on the story – the problem the release solves – not on your product. It is easier to target informational phrases as they are not as COMPETITIVE.

   Do a search at:
   [http://wordtracker.com](http://wordtracker.com)

2. **When you name the file of your web page where you'll place your press release, make sure you name it appropriately to fit the page's content.** If your page is about "reduce spam email", call the page reduce-spam-email.html or reduce-spam-email.php (or whatever type of page you make it). If you are using Wordpress, make sure that your permalink has the title of your post (Reduce Spam Email) in it.

3. **Make sure you choose an appropriate title tag for your page.**
   Title your page that has information about reducing spam email "Reduce Spam Email". Don't call it "My-Site.com" because that's the name of your website. That's not descriptive.

   Your title tags go in the head of your html document and look like this:
   <title>Reduce Spam Email</title>

   ▸ ▪ **Make sure your description tags include your chosen keyword phrase.** The description tag is what some search engines display in their search engine listings, so make it a sentence describing your content. Don't just cram a bunch of keywords in there as the keywords won't likely be given much consideration, but how your page LOOKS in the search engines listings will be greatly affected by this tag.

   Your description tags go in the head of your html document and look like this: <meta name="description" content="Here are some practical and low cost ways to reduce spam email.">

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Of course, if you are using Wordpress, you would use the tags area to add your tags.

- **Write informative content based on your keyword phrase.** Again, if your press release is about "reduce spam email", you will use the words reduce + spam + email throughout your content, right? Good writing demands that you say what you are talking about, so repeating the phrase a couple times will do.

  Of course, you need to be careful here. You don't want to lose the message of your press release to achieve top rankings. Use your judgment in how to accomplish this.

- **Use the keyword phrase in your headline, if possible.** These headlines will help your visitors scan the document for useful information and may help search engines determine how relevant your content is.

  Of course, this is a really big issue when it comes to making an attention-getting headline for your press release. So again, use your judgment. Don't consider sacrificing a bit of oomph in your headline just to get your phrase in there, use the most attention-getting headline possible.

  Your headlines go in the body of your HTML document and look like this: <H1>Eight Ways to Reduce Spam Email</H1> (with the number in the tags corresponding with size of the font – ex <H2> <H3>)

  In Wordpress, simply write the headline at the top of the page. And select a larger font size.

- **If you have any graphics, be sure to include an ALT tag.** ALT tags are the descriptive text attached to graphics. It's the text that appears when you put your mouse over the graphic, depending on what Internet web browser you use. It's also the text that appears if your graphic hasn't been uploaded to the server or a visitor has graphics turned off on her browser. The tags are also used by the visually impaired who use special software that will actually read the content in the ALT tag. So be

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courteous and make sure your ALT tags make sense and actually describe the picture you've included.

The code goes like this:
`<IMG SRC="URL" ALT="Insert your Alternative Text Here">`

Wordpress also allows you to write a description on the image as well.

9. **Is your new press release page easily accessible from your home page?** Make sure your main media page is accessible from every page of your website. Then, you will link to each press release from your main media page. Visitors and search engines should be able to find their way through to each press release.

10. **Use your keyword phrase in the links to your press release.** In other words – don't link like this:

New Formula Helps Your Dog Reduce Risk of Cancer
[http://www.mysite.com/dog-cancer-reduce-risk.html](http://www.mysite.com/dog-cancer-reduce-risk.html)

because the keyword phrase is not in the link. You need to make the link look like this:

New Formula Helps Your [Dog Reduce Risk of Cancer](#)

(assuming that "dogs reduce risk of cancer" is your keyword phrase – I didn't do any keyword research for that!).

Of course, you need to balance your visitors' experience and understanding of what to click on – but ultimately ONLY your keyword phrase should be in the link going to the page. "New Formula Help" is not part of the keyword phrase.

## *Optimizing the Releases You Distribute Online*

A number of press release distribution sites now allow you to anchor text in the links of your press release. PRWeb.com allow you to do this for an extra fee. You can help increase your traffic and search engine rankings by including anchor text in the links pointing back to your site.

For example, where you used to have to link like:

Visit http://www.mywebsite.com for more information.

You can now do something that looks like this:
Learn more about red dog collars  at MyWebsite.com.

## *Basic press release tips – for both online and offline releases*

**IMPORTANT:** You must write your press release as if the user is reading the newspaper. Keep the following most important TIPS in mind.

1. Press Releases should be written in the "third person" and are written like a news story.
2. NEVER in your press release try to include "advertising" or "hard sell" language such as "Opportunity of a lifetime"
3. NEVER in your press release speak to the reader by including phrases such as "By doing this you will get that …" or "Are you in need of …"
4. Include at least one quote.
5. Write in proper English and always spell check your press release before submitting.

## *Where to submit your press release*

It used to be common practice to submit press releases to multiple sites in the hopes that the backlinks would give you some SEO advantage. This has been largely displaced now and the only reason to consider using a wire service is to attract the attention of legitimate related media. However, be aware that these services do not guarantee your best media targets will be reached. You'll need to approach some media outlets on your own even if you use a wire service.

There can appear to be an overwhelming number of press release services out there. Here are a few of the remaining online PR distribution outlets. You'll need to review several of them to find which one is right for your release.

In general, you will need to pay for distribution for a wire service. It used to be in vogue (and questionably effective) to submit to free press release distribution services, but these have lost any effectiveness they may have had in recent updates to search engines like Google.

**PR Newswire**
PR Newswire was one of the first press release wire services, with a large client base, because of its efficient and professional setting. It is a very helpful website, because of its mass amounts of information. When clicking on a tab or a link, there is always information that explains its function to the viewer; proving its helpfulness and ease. In addition, there are also many spots within the website that allow for the consumer to add their feedback. There are also many interesting features that one can use to enhance their service. They offer a eWatch service that monitors and tracks your press release. It automatically emails you with any changes. In addition, PR Newswire offers MEDIatlas which distributes your press releases 24/7 automatically to over 460,000 contacts. There is also a free service called ProfNet, which connects you to many experts in each field. These features are all optional but according to PR Newswire are very useful.

**BusinessWire**
BusinessWire (www.businesswire.com) has a similar feel to it as PR Newswire. They provide all the basic information about sending press releases, but also offer a little more. They have a section that will actually help you write a press release, for those who are not sure how. In addition it clearly shows the distribution of where your press release will go, and who will view it. Another helpful tool is that the website comes in five different languages. This can be very helpful if you are doing business with companies overseas, or simply for people whose first language is not English.

**PRWeb**
PRWeb (www.prweb.com) is one of the most informational and user friendly press release websites out there. On the home page it has the most recent press releases within fourteen days, rated by "importance" which depends on how much the sender paid for the release. One helpful feature is their "release features" tab, which will tell you everything you need to know about your press release. They have broken it down to four packages.

Each package states what it offers and how much it costs. This lets the business or agency know what they are going to be offered right away, while also keeping in mind budget. In addition, if you are not clear as to why you should use a press release wire service, PRWeb has a YouTube™ video which plainly and cleverly describes why, by showing the benefits. Along with the video, there are many picture and descriptions throughout the website that further guide you. In addition, PRWeb also has helpful tips and samples on how to write a press release, making sure your best work is distributed.