

THE NEWSWORTHY

Guide to

Public Relations

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INTRODUCTION:

A New Age of Public Relations

Old-school public relations has a lot in common with old-school advertising. While ad agencies relied on the “spray and pay” approach, PR professionals were hired to “smile and dial” to secure coverage that would ultimately sell your product, increase your brand awareness, and quickly propel your company to greatness. But here’s the problem: The old-school model of media relations was predicated on the way people interacted with radio, television, and newspapers. People used to spend Sunday brunch reading a printed copy of *The New York Times*, and no one fast forwarded through content or advertising they found annoying. There were no easy vehicles to share recommendations among friends or colleagues other than word-of-mouth, making “earned media” in publications the driver behind awareness and purchase intent.

The way people consume media has changed considerably. Alongside that shift, a transformation in the media industry has occurred. There are fewer top-tier print outlets, fewer long-form stories, and far fewer journalists, editors, and beat reporters at most traditional publications. At the same, we’ve been introduced to a massive proliferation of blogs that make it hard to differentiate news from promotional content. Given all these changes, what’s a brand

to do if all you want is to secure great coverage and build a long-term, successful media relations plan?

This ebook is designed to help your company develop and implement an inbound public relations strategy that drives awareness, creates marketplace differentiation, builds lasting relationships with journalists, and delivers results, so you're front-page news — not yesterday's news.

CHAPTER

01

**BE YOUR OWN
STORYTELLER.**

Be Your Own Storyteller

Conventional wisdom around public relations suggests that you draft a press release or media kit, send it to journalists who cover your space, then cross your fingers and hope for the best. However, there are three clear problems with this approach.

1. Journalists don't work off your company's promotional plan: The reporters you contact have their own priorities, deadlines, and editorial calendars to work with. Unfortunately, they are likely not sitting at their desks waiting for your press packet to arrive to file breaking news that you're opening your doors or releasing a new product.

2. Journalists need to give their readers what they want: The role of a journalist is to tell a great story that is relevant and newsworthy for his or her readership, so he or she might choose to write a different angle than the one that is most likely to drive traffic to your store or encourage people to visit your website for more information.

3. Journalists are drowning in pitches: Think about how crowded your inbox gets. Now put yourselves in the shoes of a top-tier reporter, many of whom receive up to 250 pitches per day from marketers worldwide. Reporters are bombarded with emails, phone calls, and tweets, which makes cutting through the clutter a significant challenge, especially if you don't have the brand recognition enjoyed by Twitter, Google, and other massive brands. You can wait forever for reporters to notice what you're doing or you can think outside the box.

This sounds easy in practice, but what does it actually mean? Let's say you have an upcoming announcement that could potentially warrant press outreach, such as a product launch or a new board member. You can (and should) draft a press release to make it as easy as possible for journalists to pull information or quotes to file a story about your news.

You should also invest the same amount of time (or more) in crafting a blog entry with your perspective on the story, what makes it newsworthy, and most importantly, why your customers and industry should care about it. Let's not forget one of the biggest benefits of sharing your own news: Creating your own content drives inbound interest to your website. Many reporters will include a link to your website in a piece of coverage, but you can't always bank on it. Crafting a blog entry that is highly trafficked by customers, prospects, and leads will ensure that you're sending the majority of people to the sections of your website that are most directly relevant to the news while helping your website rank highly for keywords related to the announcement.

PRESS RELEASE

HubSpot Names Lorrie Norrington to Board of Directors

by Hannah Fleishman

September 25, 2013 at 8:46 AM

Silicon Valley Veteran Brings Experience from eBay, Intuit, and GE to The World's #1 Inbound Marketing Platform

Today, HubSpot announced that Lorrie Norrington, an industry veteran with over three decades of experience in global business ranging from GE to Intuit to eBay, will join the company's Board of Directors. Currently an Operating Partner at Lead Edge Capital and a board member at Autodesk, DIRECTV, and TaskRabbit, Norrington previously served as president of eBay's global Marketplaces, the chief executive officer of Shopping.com, and EVP of Intuit. Norrington will serve on HubSpot's Board effective immediately and will provide ongoing counsel as HubSpot continues to grow and scale its marketing transformation software and services globally.

Of the announcement, HubSpot CEO Brian Halligan said "At HubSpot, our aim is to be remarkable, and that includes recruiting truly exceptional individuals to join our team. Lorrie's intellect, experience, and perspective constitute the very definition of remarkable, and we believe she'll add significant value that extends to the core of our business, growth, and strategy."

Norrington noted, "Five years ago, an integrated suite of tools like HubSpot didn't even exist for enterprise customers, and now HubSpot is delivering an inbound marketing platform to give all business owners the tools they need to grow their business efficiently and effectively. The fact that companies now have access to technology that is easy to use, powerful, measurable and enables entrepreneurs worldwide to compete on share of mind over share of wallet, is transformational. HubSpot's goal has been to build a once-in-a-generation company leveraging their unique value proposition, technology, culture, and commitment to the inbound marketing movement, and I'm honored to join their Board."


BLOG POST

Lorrie Norrington Joining HubSpot's Board of Directors

by Lorrie Norrington

September 25, 2013 at 1:00 PM

I lived and worked through the beginning of the online marketing era in Silicon Valley. It was awkward, complicated, messy, clunky, and confusing. The only people and businesses who knew how to do it well were individuals who were incredibly tech-savvy or companies that could pay large sums of money for consulting from other tech-savvy individuals. Yet consumers at that time knew what few marketers would admit: the entire buying experience needed to change, and marketers needed to adapt or face extinction.



While I was at eBay, we leveraged this fundamental shift to connect buyers to sellers globally with a marketplace that made it easier than ever for consumers to find items they treasured and for small business owners and entrepreneurs to launch businesses that scaled massively without overhead. We disrupted traditional shopping by building solutions that delighted small business owners and buyers alike.

Today, I'm proud to join HubSpot's board because I believe it is uniquely positioned to lead a similar paradigm shift in the world of marketing. This shift benefits small businesses and consumers by delivering a more efficient, integrated, and measurable buying experience that mirrors the way people shop and buy in the 21st century. Here's what excites me about HubSpot:

Here are a few ideas to get you started on being a storyteller:

1. Create a narrative your customers care about: A news story about your new product or office is going to focus on its implications for your industry or your neighborhood, depending on the publication. What your customers, prospects, and leads care most about is how your news benefits them. Does it make your product easier to use or more effective for their business? Will your growth make their experience with your service more seamless? More importantly, always remember to speak your customers language when crafting these posts.

Marketing expert David Meerman Scott has long espoused the notion that your releases should reflect how your customers think and talk about your product. Instead of crafting your releases and blog entries to try to impress reporters, make sure they resonate with your customers. Replace flowery, nonsensical terms with words and problems your audience actually uses every day. If you're not sure whether an announcement passes this test, try it out -- send it to a long-time customer you trust to ask for their insight before publishing!



The media has been disintermediated. The Web has changed the rules. Buyers read your press releases directly and you need to be talking their language.

David Meerman Scott, *The New Rules of PR*
[\(Click to Tweet This Quote\)](#)



2. Think outside the box: You may not always have a huge product announcement on the schedule, but there are unique opportunities for every company, big or small, to get noticed. Look at your company on a granular level and ask yourself: What are we doing that's remarkable?

Maybe you host a company-wide flag football tournament for a local charity or offer perks that are unheard of in your industry. These stories may not be *New York Times* material, but by posting a blog or news update on your website, you keep your customers and followers intrigued and increase the likelihood of attracting traffic to your website.

Here are a few ideas to start conversations and leverage your company as a thought leader:

- Use the format to your advantage. When HubSpot acquired oneforty, a Twitter marketing start-up, the release was formatted entirely in tweets, and it got picked up in the *Wall Street Journal* and many other outlets, many of whom called out the creativity of the announcement in their coverage.
- Replace the traditional press release with an infographic or other piece of visual content. To help you get started, we pre-built [15 free infographic templates in PowerPoint](#) for you to customize and use.



- Instead of emailing reporters to tell them why your cofounder or VP of Marketing is an expert on a given topic, have them publish a blog entry on the topic first, then pitch it second so reporters know their take is interesting and relevant.
- Give your executives a voice in popular debates by listening to social media discussions and weighing in with your company's thoughts and ideas.

EXAMPLE

Don't Forget to Have Fun

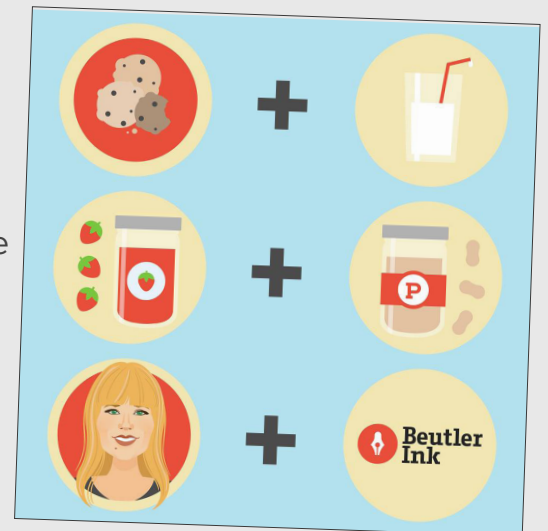
[PitchPoint](#), a public relations and creative services firm, wasn't afraid to make fun of their own industry when they [posted a satire press release](#) titled "The Most Amazing Press Release Ever Written." The release, published by PitchPoint executive Mitch Delaplaine, did not feature any news, launches, or updates, instead, it used the conventional press release format to play a prank with lines like, "Elaborate notes from [a] brainstorm were then formulated into mesmerizing sentences, paragraphs and pages ... all expertly designed to make you pause and reflect at the brilliance of this press release." Want to know the best part about this stunt? It got picked up by TechCrunch, Adweek, and Huffington Post (and now this ebook) for its bold and hilarious approach. Maybe it was the most amazing press release after all.

3. Create Remarkable Content: When marketers start writing press releases, we automatically default to the traditional “who, what, when, where, why” approach to content, which is often decidedly unremarkable. Newsflash: Reporters are humans, and 99.9% of humans prefer remarkable, interesting, and dynamic content over bland, boring, and unequivocally promotional writing. When writing an announcement, either on your blog or as a press release, focus on what’s different, unique, and narrative-driven versus just going through the motions with a release. Don’t be afraid to spice up your releases a little bit for lighter announcements. You could even provide some ‘Tweet This’ links for reporters, viewers, and customers to easily share your headlines and quotes.

EXAMPLE

Think Outside the Box

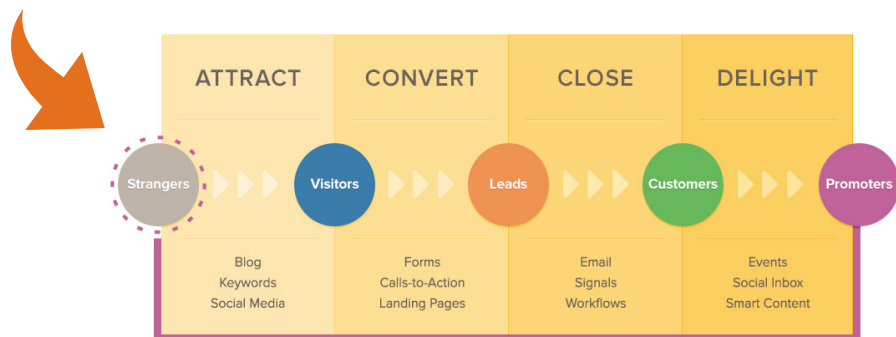
When Leslie Bradshaw, successful entrepreneur and COO at Guide, [joined Beutler Ink’s advisory board](#), the content marketing firm didn’t issue a press release. Instead they did what they do best: They created remarkable content to announce the news. The firm designed a fresh, fun infographic illustrating things that go hand-in-hand like milk and cookies, and peanut butter and jelly. In line with these two pairings was Leslie Bradshaw and Beutler Ink. Hats off to Joe Chernov for sharing this example with us.



The Role of PR in Marketing

Creating your own content and using your blog as a media resource allows you to not only create your own narrative, but to drive traffic to your site. However, if you're just getting started, another great alternative to traditional pitching is to craft high-quality guest posts for industry blogs in your space. This will result in benefits for SEO and potential media coverage. Google's search engine algorithm now rewards quality as much as quantity, so invest the time and energy to develop thoughtful guest posts for consideration on blogs in your space. This can often capture the attention of industry thought leaders and journalists while driving relevant traffic to your website.

Far too many companies sit and wait for reporters to notice or cover what they are doing. The first fundamental tenet of inbound public relations is to tell your own story first. Whether that story is told through blogging, social media, or guest content on other blogs, doing so will help you garner valuable traffic — which is why it falls under the 'Attract' stage of inbound marketing. Next we'll talk about how to further leverage your website to serve as a magnet for bloggers, influencers, and reporters to cover your organization.



This graphic represents a brief overview of the inbound marketing methodology. Get the details at [hubspot.com/inbound-marketing](https://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing).

CHAPTER

02

INBOUND
MARKETING
THAT
JOURNALISTS
LOVE.

Inbound Marketing That Journalists Love

In a world of breaking news and social media, journalists often have minutes -- not hours, days, or weeks -- to find sources and file stories. As a result, reporters from top-tier publications simply cannot spare significant time trying to locate your media center or finding a phone number or email address to reach your marketing team. To that end, best-in-class companies take the work out of coverage by making it intuitive, easy, and lightning fast to get the information they need.

That's why your website should have a press page that hosts your media relations contact info, pertinent company statistics, recent news coverage, and other materials that would be of value to a journalist covering your company or your space. Some best practices to include for this page are:

- **Provide real contact information:** Give visitors the name and contact information of an actual, real-live person that they can contact to get more information (info@yourcompany.com doesn't seem like it will get a response quickly enough. Show reporters you care about their email).





Stop & Think:

You may be thinking, but wait, companies like Apple just have a media contact box, why can't I? In Apple's case, they can afford to skip out on smaller press opportunities -- they actually want to be really selective about their media opportunities. For 90% of businesses, that's not the case, and talking to a human always beats a random inbox, don't you agree?

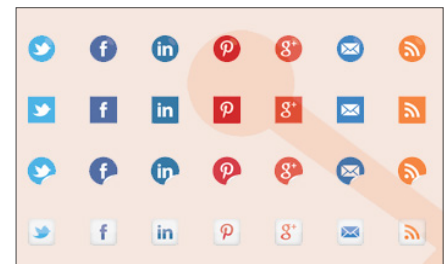
- **Decode Your “About Us”:** The description of what your business does should be crystal clear to journalists -- whether you're focused on astrophysics, landscaping, retail, or technology. Far too many people stock their “About Us” pages with flowery language that doesn't actually make sense. Gut check your overview content to make sure a person brand new to your industry can understand it. Too hard to explain? Consider using illustrations or diagrams to showcase your business in visual terms. If a reporter doesn't understand what you do, there's no way he will accurately describe it in a piece, so be clear, concise, and specific in the overview section of your site.
- **Include profiles of your executive team:** Your executive team is the face of your company and, most of the time, reporters will want information on your CEO, CFO, and CTO to develop stories. Provide high resolution images, bios, quotes, and social media profiles of your executive team for reporters to investigate and reference. Having this information readily-available makes it hassle-free for journalists to get the content they need for their next piece.

- **Offer helpful industry data:** Chances are if a reporter is filing a story about your industry, not only does she need personal anecdotes, but she also wants data and relevant statistics to illustrate the growth of the market or capture trending topics. As a result, housing industry data that relates to topics reporters in your field might be interested in helps journalists do their job and also increases the likelihood they will return to your site for similar requests moving forward.
- **Add social sharing buttons:** Make it as easy as possible for employees, customers, and media alike to share your news with the world. Having Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn sharing icons on your press page or accompanying each news headline will help spark social media discussion about what your company is up to.

If you need help on the social sharing buttons creation front, here are two resources to assist you:



1. Social Media Icons: If you need stylish buttons for your webpage, you can download a group of pre-built social media icons to save and place on your page. [Just click here.](#)



2. Guide to Social Sharing Links: Once you have your social buttons on your page, you'll need them to work! This blog post reviews how to create social media sharing links for Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. [Click here to read the post and grab the social codes.](#)

- **Share your coverage:** If you were shopping for a new television, would you lean toward a brand you had never heard of? Probably not. Reporters are less inclined to cover companies they've never heard of online or by word-of-mouth because it suggests they aren't newsworthy. This is a challenge for small businesses, and makes it crucial to get your media hits on your visitor's radar. When your company is covered, interviewed, or referenced in an article, blog post, video, or talk, post a link to the content on your Press Page. When you begin building out a long list of coverage, create a new landing page just for news coverage that's easy for reporters to find the buzz about you.

If you're trying to make a dent in your industry, your website should be the go-to spot for journalists, press, and analysts to find statistics, milestones, and news on your company and space. By building out a comprehensive "About Us" section and hosting a depository of industry news and statistics, journalists can contact or cover your company hassle-free.

CHAPTER

03

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEDIA.

Building Relationships with Media

So now you have a great story to share, remarkable content, and a plan to get the word out to key reporters, but how do you build relationships with media members who cover your space on a regular basis?

Before we get into tactics, it's important to clarify some guiding principles to building relationships with media.

First and foremost, respect their role. Regardless of the outlet, a journalist's job is not to sell your product or promote your idea. His or her role is to tell a great story, capture relevant news for her news outlet, and to be fair and reasonable in his or her assessment of your company's launch, announcement, or product. One of the biggest mistakes people make in PR is assuming that journalists exist to grow their business. By respecting their role and craft, you'll get better results, manage expectations more carefully, and build a more lasting relationship over time.

Second, make sure you're in it to win it for the long haul. Emailing every reporter who has ever covered your space for one announcement is spammy, and can often lead journalists to dismiss or discard future announcements.

As a result, think of reporter contacts as long-term relationships and value their time accordingly; only email them when you have something of value to offer that fits their beat, and be an avid consumer of the content they work hard to create every day -- not just when it benefits you.

Below we've outlined five tactics you can leverage to identify, reach out to, and engage with reporters in your space:

1. Do Your Homework: You can typically find basic background and contact information for reporters on their news outlets home page under "About Us" and "Editorial Staff," or by using the "Contact Me" button at the top or bottom of a story. We use Cision to make this process easy, but if you have a small (or nonexistent) media relations budget, you can use Google Docs to build your lists -- just be sure to aggregate the following relevant information from the journalist's personal website (if publicly available):

- A link to their recent coverage
- Context from his or her Twitter bio
- Link to his or her Twitter handle
- General contact information.

For most outlets, email is the most effective way to reach out initially, but if you have breaking news you can always call the news desk or editorial department to speak with your contact or follow up on a news alert.

2. Leverage Social Media: One of the easiest ways to drive inbound PR results is by monitoring how and when reporters are talking about topics in your industry and responding with helpful content, tips, or links.

At HubSpot, we use our [own Social Inbox tool](#) to create lists of influencers and journalists, allowing us to create easy notifications when people are talking about our industry on Twitter. Social Inbox also allows you to forward tweets within HubSpot to contacts for additional information, so if you need to seek out a response from a C-level executive for a tweet or ask one of your colleagues for the latest numbers to share with the reporter, you can do so without leaving your HubSpot account.

If you don't have HubSpot, make sure you create a list in Twitter to make it seamless and easy to interact with what your media friends are talking about on a daily basis. You can also consider using this information to drive future content considerations. For example, if you see reporters constantly buzzing about an industry issue, consider creating a blog post in response and sending them the link instead of waiting for them to reach out to you.

3. Take the Time to Personalize: You don't email your friends or colleagues with a "Dear Sir or Madame" email, so don't do it to reporters you're looking to build relationships with. Personalize your approach, tactics, and outreach to each individual journalist. Doing so is imperative to the success of your media outreach.

Typically our team generates all of our outreach emails in draft form with personalized notes in advance of a big announcement. This takes the stress and adrenaline out of a rushed morning push and ensures that you send well-organized and formatted releases to everyone on your list.

We get a lot of questions about using CRMs or email platforms to send out press releases. Our stance on this has generally been to avoid sending media outreach emails via an email platform, so we do all of our pitch emails as individualized notes in Gmail or Outlook. However, if you're hosting events reporters might be interested in, very high value thought leadership content, or updates on your business you send regularly, you can certainly ask reporters to opt-in to receive those notifications. For those more frequent updates, you can use your email service provider to send out monthly or quarterly updates.

4. Give Before You Get: Nobody likes being contacted only when you need something. Find ways to add value to your reporter's daily lives as well. You can share and promote their content when it's unrelated to you, comment on great pieces they write to demonstrate genuine interest, or potentially provide them with sneak peeks to explore your business, your approach, or meet with your team. Media relationships should be a two-way street, so make sure you meet journalists half-way and deliver value.

CONCLUSION:

Don't Let Your Inbound PR Learning End Here.

Now that you've finished reading this guide, don't stop there! You've established the principles of Inbound PR, and learned what it takes to truly be newsworthy. Your download of this ebook comes with a free press release template and promotional plan template for you to customize and use.

If you're still craving more public relations knowledge, [click here](#) to check out all our public relations-focused content on the HubSpot blog. Among them is one of our favorites, "S%*t PR People Do That Journalists Hate."