

SMART PR Communications

Communications/PR for Technical Organizations

If your prospects don't know who you are, nothing else matters.

A Fresh Approach to Public Relations & Marketing

Executive Summary

- *No one knows who we are...* this is one of the most frustrating business dilemmas.
- Most marketing activities designed to remedy the situation just don't work.
- Our method does work. We have spent the last 10 years continuously focusing on what works and abandoning what doesn't.
- What works for our clients is creating and sustaining visibility—that is what drives sales and delivers obvious ROI.
- To accomplish this, we use strategic tools such as optimized and leveraged media releases—see the attached *The Benefits of Online Media Release Distribution*.
- Did you know that, today, the typical buyer of both low end and high end goods and services is about 70% of the way to a buying decision by the time they first contact the seller?
- This means you need to influence the buyer while they are in the research stage—while they are searching with key terms, visiting websites, and exploring LinkedIn.
- If you cannot find your company by searching on the same key terms that your prospects are using, few buyers are going to know who you are.
- We create and sustain not just online visibility for our clients, but also credibility—meaning that once you do get on the radar of a potential buyer who then researches your company online, everything they find will be impressive.
- Since many of our clients do not have a robust marketing department, we round out our services by creating additional materials (such as case studies) and providing additional services (such as pitching and placing articles) as part of the agreement.

So...

Why People Don't Know Who You Are.

You are not where they are looking. This is the #1 reason that organizations begin using our services. Surprisingly this lament is not only coming from small, struggling start-ups, but from established companies as well. And, unless you are operating in an extremely crowded field, buyers very much want to know who you are.

Why it Matters More Than You Think

In all of the marketing noise, a fundamental truth is lost: you need to be everywhere your buyers are looking. It's that simple. If you don't get on prospects' radar—particularly when they are ready to make a buying decision, how can you expect to grow and how long can you expect to stay in business? So whatever marketing activities you are engaged in now, ask yourself if they will matter the moment that people are ready to buy.

The Buyer Has Control

Research conducted by Google's for its e-book *Zero Moment of Truth* concluded that today the average buyer is already at least 70% of the way toward making a final decision by the time they first contact the seller—this applies to basic and high-end goods and services. Buyers come this far in the decision-making process by performing an online search for relevant key terms and then inspecting the websites and LinkedIn pages of companies they are interested in. That's how you research, correct?

SEO for Key Terms

So try this: Pick 3 terms that prospects would use to search online for what you are selling. See if your organization is in the first page of search results. See if any of your competitors are there and also who is paying for AdWords on that page. If your competitors are in that search space, particularly if large competitors are paying for AdWords there—that is prime territory and you need to be there too.

Prospect Research

Online visibility is not all SEO though. It is also about putting your best foot forward when prospects are trying to find out more about your company online. Research shows they: scrutinize your website; review your LinkedIn company page; and perform a search on your company name. An impressive company stands out in all 3 of these places.

How All of this Drives Strategy

Knowing that today's buyers are close to buying by the time they first contact the seller, our strategy is to maximize our clients' presence where buyers are researching—search results for relevant terms; LinkedIn (both the company page and search); and the client's website.

Our Strategy

In the technology community, visibility and credibility are prime drivers of success. To that end, we do 3 things exceptionally well:

- Get clients on the first page of search results for relevant terms
- Generate quality leads
- Create and leverage corporate-quality content

One Price Includes Additional Services

Our services are ideal for a small, rapidly growing company that needs immediate and sustained visibility backed by core marketing services. Following is a sample of marketing products and services included in the retainer:

Services

- Strategic Planning
- Branding/Differentiation
- Award Opportunity Search/Application
- Article Pitching & Placing
- Small Event Planning
- Media Relations
- Social Media Curation
- Market Research
- Surveys
- SEO Integration
- Online Reputation Monitoring
- Tradeshow Support

Products

- Messaging guides
- Media/marketing kits
- Case studies
- Trade articles
- White papers
- Media releases
- Media lists
- Web copy
- Email Copy
- Speeches
- Marketing collateral

For a detailed description of how we leverage media releases, please review the attached: *The Benefits of Online Media Release Distribution*.

The Benefits of Online Media Release Distribution

The goals of traditional media releases—increasing an organization's visibility and credibility and announcing news—are now equally as important as new goals that traditional media releases cannot accomplish. These new goals include:

- Reaching prospects directly
- Search engine optimization
- Creating online content

As opposed to traditional media releases, which are a channel for communicating only with the media; online media releases reach both the media and the public directly.

There is currently no more cost-effective tool for quickly building and maintaining the online visibility that is critical for success in today's market than *strategically written, optimized, and distributed* media releases. The key word here is *strategic*.

It has taken us 9 years to fine tune this methodology for leveraging releases. Part of the reason we have been so much more successful than other marketing organizations is that we have the advantage of regularly developing and distributing releases for multiple clients. Tracking a large volume of releases every month helps us continually identify and adjust for ever-changing elements of the Google algorithm without having to speculate. For our clients, this means that they have a significant advantage when it comes to search results for key terms that are relevant for their markets.

In most cases, large competitors of our clients are paying for AdWords in the same space where our clients' releases are appearing. The fact that they are paying Google 1,000s of dollars every month is an indication of just how desirable that space is and how difficult it is to get there organically.

Benefits

The releases that we create accomplish everything Google AdWords accomplish—enhancing visibility and driving traffic to the website—for a fraction of the cost. They have the additional advantage of credibility and they accomplish much, much more.

Capturing New Leads

Our goal is to place our clients on the first page of search results for terms that are relevant to their products and services. We conduct a search term review once a month in order to see where the client ranks for the approximately 30 terms that we have identified. The results are factored into the decisions we make about terms for the coming month. It's important to bear in mind that search rank isn't forever. As soon as companies stop using the term regularly, the rank will begin to drop. How quickly it drops depends on a number of factors, such as competition and the news cycle.

Research conducted by Google's for its book *Zero Moment of Truth* concluded that today the average buyer of high end (not basic consumer) products is already at least 70% of the way toward making a final decision by the time they first contact the seller. And they come this far in the decision-making process by performing an online search for relevant key terms and then inspecting the websites of companies they are interested in.

Another advantage of digital releases is that search results are not limited to search engine results. By linking distribution to the clients' social media accounts, potential buyers search on applicable terms and find releases on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc.

All of this means that being in relevant search space is *not* optional; it is an imperative for running a successful business today.

Nurturing Existing Leads

Research shows that anyone thinking about doing business with you or working for you—i.e. people you met at an event--will research your company online to see how credible you are before they call. They do this by:

1. Performing an online search on your company name, where releases will appear in results and boost credibility.
2. Inspecting your website: where they will see PDFs of releases that received national attention and also a list of links to releases picked up by national news outlets.
3. Reviewing your LinkedIn Company Page, where they will see regular updates with releases attached.

By fully leveraging media releases, everywhere these existing leads look to find out more about your company will increase your credibility and incentivize them to make direct contact.

Controlling the Marketing Message

Another benefit of online release distribution is that the company controls the message. When releases go directly to media outlets, they are rewritten and stripped of anything that looks like advertising or marketing. There is an advertising line that digital releases can't cross either, but it's much less severe. Online releases are typically published either exactly as they are submitted or rewritten only slightly to conform to the outlet's guidelines.

Maintaining Contact with Social Media Followers

Another benefit of digital releases is effortlessly maintaining regular contact with social media followers. As mentioned earlier, when the release is submitted for distribution, there is an option for alerting followers.

Inbound Links

One of the benefits of online release distribution that is often overlooked is a significant increase in inbound links. The number and especially the quality of inbound links are primary parameters that search engines use to rank websites. Higher profile websites, (even the release distribution site itself) that link back to a website increase the importance of the site they link to. Approximately 2/3 of all visible inbound links to our clients' sites are connected to release distribution.

International Publicity

Although the releases are not distributed internationally through the service we use, they are getting limited pickups by international search engines through RSS feeds of U.S. publications. So we are seeing these releases come up in European and Asian search results. Note that general distribution throughout Europe is an option.

Connecting with Current and Prospective Partners

Most larger companies monitor media mentions daily through programmed alerts. Adding the name of a prestigious partner strategically to a release will put your company on their radar.

They Are Remarkably Cost Effective

There isn't any other marketing tool that can accomplish all of this for a fraction of the cost of a typical AdWord campaign. In fact, we find that our clients usually abandon Google AdWords quickly after we start working with them. Google is not losing out; these releases are providing the foundational content that allows Google to balance AdWord ads with credible organic search results. *Google needs the content our releases provide.*

So What Results Will You Notice

- More and more people in your market will know who you are and what you do.
- People that contact you will be surprisingly educated about your products and services.
- Bigger channel partners will start giving your company a second look.
- You will see secondary evidence that more people are visiting your website: i.e. your website rank will steadily rise.¹
- Your sales reps are doing less selling and more closing.
- Leads are better qualified
- Although most people won't say that they researched your company, some will say that they found you via search.

According to a survey conducted by The Society for New Communications Research, the most frequently mentioned criterion for evaluating the success of online press releases was:

- The number of media outlets that picked up the release (79.6%)
- The number of times the release has been viewed online (76.8%)
- An article based on the release (75.4%)
- Media interview requests as a result of the release (74.2%)

We look forward to immediately creating the visibility and credibility your organization deserves and sustaining it over the long term.

To find out more, contact us now.

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¹ Most website analytics platforms, including Google Analytics, will not record a website visitor that clicks on a link in a release they find in search results. These platforms treat digital releases like PDFs. You can test that for yourself by clicking on one or more of your organization's releases that come up in search results, clicking on the link in the release, and checking Google Analytics to see that it wasn't recorded.