

Online Pressrooms Are Great Media Resources

Every business with a website should have an online pressroom. A pressroom is where journalists go to get information about the company. If the information is organized, quick to scan and easy to find, the company increases its odds of finding itself in print.

What does the media expect to find in the pressroom?

In a recent interview with iPressroom.com, *Wall Street Journal* Technology Columnist Walt Mossberg voiced his expectations of corporate online news rooms. “I expect to see a depth of information about a company’s business and products,” he said. “Corporate and executive bios are hard to find but they should be on the website. I also expect the website to navigate easily and be easy to search. There should be hi-res [high resolution] images for reproduction in print and online.”

In line with Mossberg’s thinking, here are some tips for businesses to follow to ensure a media-friendly online pressroom.

Organize your website to include a section called “Press Room” or “Newsroom” or “News.” This section is preferably one click away from the home page.

In the pressroom, post bios, financial data, company histories, backgrounders, reports, executive speeches and interviews, company events or trade show appearances, photo archives, press releases, and contact information, including names, titles, phone numbers, fax, emails and mailing address.

Not all pressrooms will include every item listed above. However, the contact information is essential, especially if public relations individuals are involved. In fact, according

to Steve Momorella and Ibrey Woodall of TEKgroup International, Inc., providers of online public relations software for corporate communications, journalists themselves rank access to PR contacts as the single most important feature of an online newsroom.

Most pressrooms will feature press releases. These should be posted immediately and in reverse chronological order.

Though not all businesses will have access to audio or video files, they should be posted wherever possible, as they can emphasize a press release, provide a product demo, capture an important company event or give life to a CEO.

According to Jeff Christensen, Managing Partner of VideoIntros Plus, a newly launched firm out of New York City that specializes in online video, “55% of a message impact is derived from facial expression.”

One advantage of the internet pressroom is the ability to post and therefore easily share photographic images, logos and graphics. To deadline-minded journalists, this means that product photos or professional headshots of the CEO are instantly available to them, night or day, such as the case with Paul Orfalea, founder of Kinko’s. He’s already been profiled by *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *People* and *The New York Times*. Nonetheless, he’s ever ready for the media and his numerous speaking engagements. On his website, he has posted three hi-res digital photos of himself, all set for downloading and marked “interview, informal, formal.”

Not all businesses, even those with an online pressroom, are evidently ready for media inquiries, according to an IBM Spain study, “Best Practices in Public Relations: An Analysis of Online Press Rooms in Leading Companies.” The study involved 170 companies in eight countries, including the U.S. and “the technologically advanced” Singapore.

A 116-page report was issued about the findings, including:

Websites are targeted at the media as the second most important audience after clients.

Telephone contact, considered the traditional method of contact, is found in only 85% of the press rooms worldwide.

Requests by email are only replied to 30% of the time.

Or, in other words, up to 70% of all queries via online pressrooms by journalists go unanswered. And those that were answered took two to three days in response time.

A smart businessman with a website will not only set up an online pressroom but he will be ready and willing to take action on queries by journalists – immediately.

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