

Communities

- BANKING & FINANCE
- BIOTECH
- BUSINESS SERVICES
- EDUCATION
- HEALTH CARE
- LEGAL
- MANUFACTURING
- NON-PROFIT
- PEOPLE
- REAL ESTATE
- RETAIL
- TECHNOLOGY
- TRANSPORTATION

Events Menu

- WBJ EVENTS
- ADD EVENT
- EDIT EVENT



KnowHow: Online Newsrooms

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Give the media what they want

By Matt Ward
 Special to the Worcester Business Journal

While I don't think the days of mailing press kits to reporters are over just yet, more companies are beefing up their media relations by making an online newsroom part of their web sites. In fact, the majority of journalists expect some type of newsroom on a company's web site now.

The online newsroom is nothing new but the content is changing rapidly. With social media tools becoming more popular and journalists working at all hours of the day, the online newsroom and the content in the newsroom is becoming more important. And if you don't want to miss out on an opportunity to get a little media attention for your company, providing reporters with the tools and information they need to finish a story at any time of the day is in everyone's best interest.



Also keep in mind, the online newsroom is not just for reporters. Depending on what you have in your newsroom, you can attract other interested parties to your web site including potential new customers looking for a broader snapshot of your company.

Basic Ingredients

So what goes in your online newsroom? You can use it as a place to post press releases and articles and leave it at that. Or you can use your online newsroom to build a resource for journalists to gather anything they need on your company and build an online presence that will leave your competition behind and new customers at your door.

Of course you want to have the standard information in your newsroom such as a public relations contact, press release archive and company facts. You should even have a downloadable press kit so when you are communicating with a reporter, you can send them the link to the kit. You should have company bios of the senior management or principals of the firm and a brief history of the company with timeline.

To bring your newsroom to the next level, have downloadable headshots of company principals, graphics including logos and stock photos of relevant company activity and products that media outlets can use with stories.

In this ever-changing social media world, there are many tools you can add to enhance your newsroom. Have an RSS feed or email function so journalists can subscribe to your press releases, blog postings or event updates. Prominently post links to any outside sites you have such as YouTube, MySpace and individual links for company principals such as LinkedIn profiles. And if you have the resources, and the time, you can post podcasts about timely information and video commentary to show off your expertise in your

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industry.

There's one more reason that should convince you to put some more time into your newsroom. Posting press releases and other content, including PDF files, to your web site on a regular basis helps with your search engine optimization (SEO). If you get anything out of this effort, you'll surely see more web traffic that will give you a chance to close more business.

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[< Prev](#)

[Next >](#)

[\[Back \]](#)



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