

# I NEED A KILLER PRESS RELEASE

*Now What???*

— A GUIDE TO ONLINE PR —



JANET MEINERS THAELER  
FOREWORD BY ANITA CAMPBELL

HappyAbout.info



# **“I Need a Killer Press Release—Now What???” Book Excerpt**

A Guide to Online PR

**By Janet Meiners Thaler**  
Foreword by Anita Campbell

**Subset of the book brought  
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## Foreword by Anita Campbell

One of the key small business trends we've been following over the past 5 years is the dramatic change in public relations. The web, and the rise of online press release tools, blogs, and social media websites, has flipped PR on its head.

PR now takes place in large part online.

And that's a great thing for small businesses.

Today, you can be in control of your own public relations. With online PR, you no longer have to work through others to get your story told. Now you can tell it directly—to the entire world. Your announcement or story can be picked up not just by journalists but also on blogs, through press release sites, and ultimately by search engines.

Online PR is just like it sounds: essentially you are publicizing your brand and products and services online. Tactics include submitting press releases to PR sites that syndicate them to various outlets. And with the rise in blogs (there are literally millions of them today), you can also quickly submit press releases to bloggers—as well as to traditional journalists.

Online PR also involves something I'm passionate about—social media: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and similar sites. Social media sites enable your news to spread even wider. Social media "amplifies" the messages that appear on other websites, and allows them to spread faster and to more people.

This opens up enormous opportunities for businesses of all sizes, but especially small businesses.

First of all, your costs can be kept low. Online PR is an ideal way to save money yet still proactively grow your business. During a recession, opportunity opens the door while your competitors are distracted. Take advantage of the opportunity through online PR, and not only will you be prepared when the slowdown ends, you'll be well-positioned to grow your business to the level you dream.

With online PR you also gain speed—and we all know how important speed to market is. Need a press announcement out within a couple of days? No problem. The web is available 24/7.

We've all read a book or watched a presentation that is long on theory but leaves you wondering where to start. It's easy to get overwhelmed by all the tasks you "need" to do to market a business. There is pressure to "do it all" and in the world of social media, that can mean spending a lot of time with little to show for it—unless you have a plan. That's why you need a practical guide.

When you don't have a lot of money to market, you have to come up with creative techniques. In 'I Need a Killer Press Release, Now What???' you will get past the theory and get straight to practical guidelines. You'll see precisely how to use tools like Twitter, PRWeb, HARO, Google Insights for Search, and social sites to increase your visibility and authority online.

I am very familiar with Janet Meiners Thaeler. I'm proud to call her one of the hand-picked contributors at my independent publication, Small Business Trends. Having read many articles by

her, I know what she is good at. She's good at giving practical and solid advice, and painting a roadmap you can follow.

In this book you get the essential information you need to get publicity for your business, build brand awareness by the public, drive traffic to your website, and trigger positive word-of-mouth about your business. Put it all together with what small businesses are best at—creativity—and you have a winning formula for achieving your business goals.

Large companies spend millions every year in advertising and PR. The good news is a small business doesn't have to spend millions or go through a PR firm to get found online. Now you get equal footing with larger businesses—and even get *more* online visibility than some large businesses—while spending a fraction of what they spend.

**Anita Campbell**



## Intro

This book is written for the small business owner who needs to learn how to use press releases and social networking sites to expand their marketing online. It's also for the PR pro who wants to master the Internet part of PR and offer online PR services to their clients.

I mention online news distributor PRWeb (<http://www.PRWeb.com>) often in the book because it is my most trusted source to distribute news online. PRWeb consistently ranked the highest in search engine rankings. I've always gotten excellent customer support and great results for myself and for my clients and, compared to traditional wire services, it's a good value.

By applying what you learn in this book, you'll see big improvements in your results for a fraction of what you'd pay for advertising—and it will have a much longer visibility span than advertising.

I'm going to tell you a secret—the press release, as a way to reach the media, is essentially dead. There are far better ways than sending out a press release to get traditional media coverage—most of that includes responding to inquiries and building relationships with journalists. Online you can get visibility through social media, your own blog and by using online distribution services to spread the news.

Where online press releases shine is in getting you noticed online in search engines where it's easier for people to find your news and therefore

your business. It's very good for that. And many times the coverage you get online will take you much further than a great story in a newspaper or magazine. You can trace sales directly from a press release.

Some businesses I know have gotten coverage in major magazines or newspapers but say they get more sales and a larger response from getting online visibility. A write-up about your business in a popular blog like Entrepreneur.com can get you more mileage than being mentioned in a column in Newsweek. Getting your business on a blog or social media site might not have the glory and prestige associated with getting your name in print, but if it increases your ROI who's complaining?

Because the Internet is so dynamic, by the time you are reading this, some of the data will be outdated. There will be new tools, sites, and fads but the principles will remain. Marketing and communicating online is more about listening to, facilitating, measuring, and participating in conversations rather than controlling them. I'm providing tools to help you write, promote, and develop PR campaigns. You can then use social media, online press release distribution services (both free and paid) and your online networks to get the word out about your news.

The principles in this book will be relevant even if the tools change dramatically. This is not fast marketing like advertisements—it's building trust and helping others interact with your business. It takes time and consistency but can have large payoffs for your effort. People don't do business with companies, they do business with people. And to do business with people you must show a human side, one that others can relate to.

**Remember, when it comes to online PR you CAN:**

- Start a conversation
- Encourage others to start a conversation by giving key influencers something to talk about
- Publicize conversations
- Participate in conversations
- Monitor conversations
- Respond to people in conversations

But there's one thing you cannot do. That is, you cannot *control* the conversations. You have to give up control. It's not possible anyway. Approach online PR with this mindset. Give something to a community that they will value. These are the guiding principles of online PR.

I'm convinced that every business has amazing stories to tell but they are often overlooked. Look for and keep an eye out for those stories and then tell them. When something you do starts to catch on and create a small buzz or interest, use online PR tools to "fan the fire." These include blogs and social bookmarking and networking websites where you can share and promote your news. You can even use these tools to quickly learn about and respond to bad news.

Using the tips and techniques in this book, you'll soon be a press release and online PR ninja.



# 2

## Online PR Defined

*Don Middleberg coined the term 'Online PR' in 2001 and attempted to claim the Internet back then for the PR industry. He pointed out that PR is about a brilliant idea communicated through various forms of media and online was the next form.*

Salesvantage.com

Seth Godin is a master at marketing online because he understands that it's better to pull your customers to you than to push your message to them. He says:

*PR is the strategic crafting of your story. It's the focused examination of your interactions and tactics and products and pricing that, when combined, determine what and how people talk about you.*

**With online PR you take your story, interaction, and tactics online. There are people communicating all of the time and you can view and join those conversations.**

Where traditional PR is used to influence broadcast and print media (papers, magazines, radio, TV, and so on) online PR influences your reputation with online. There are ways to

combine online and offline media to extend the reach of your campaigns. Often a successful PR campaign starts online and is then picked up by traditional media rather than the other way around.

Here are some key ways online PR differs from traditional PR:

- Online it's much more of a conversation than a one-way communication.
- The tone is usually more conversational and casual.
- People can and are likely to respond (negatively or otherwise) to your marketing efforts. Sometimes the backlash can be harsh (just ask Motrin who angered moms with this controversial video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmykFKjNpdY>). You can see what people said about it on Twitter at <http://search.twitter.com/search?q=motrin+moms> or <http://hashtags.org/tag/Motrinmoms>.
- You have to give up control of the message because people can and will change it and voice their opinions. All opinions will not be positive.
- Things happen fast and negative news or free food promotions can get big within minutes or hours.
- Online PR requires more technical skills and as it gets more advanced may even require specialized programming skills.
- Online PR has its own terms and methods.

Demand for online PR is rising and it requires different skills than traditional PR—usually more technical skills. Talk to anyone in PR and they'll tell you how much they've been influenced by the Internet. All marketing has been. And, like the newspaper industry, the grim truth is that for most, the choice is to either adapt or have your business die.

More people are getting news online and from each other rather from watching the news on television. Sites like Twitter can deliver news before traditional channels and individuals are reporting news directly rather than waiting to read about it or hear about it on the news.

In coming years more people will be on social networking sites. Since 2005, the number of people on these sites has risen dramatically. People with strong online networks have more reach than ever. That reach will continue to grow.

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project:

"The share of adult internet users who have a profile on an online social network site has more than quadrupled in the past four years—from 8% in 2005 to 35% now, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project's December 2008 tracking survey."<sup>1</sup>

Just recently more people have reported that they use search engines as much or more than the Yellow Pages to find local businesses.<sup>2</sup>

## People Have More Control Over the News

It's important to understand the lack of control you have over the medium. People are more in control and they decide how, where, and when to get information online. It's much easier to guide a story that only reaches a few, but when it goes to the public they can respond to, add to, and modify the story in unexpected ways.

We live in an ADD world which means people have short attention spans and are doing many things at once. That means you've got to be engaging!

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1. <http://tinyurl.com/d4g93e>  
pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Adults-and-Social-Network-Web-sites.aspx

2. <http://tinyurl.com/mrof65>  
smallbiztrends.com/2008/12/not-just-the-yellow-pages-any-more-how-people-find-local-businesses.htm



## Afterword

Now it's your turn to apply what you've learned. After your first press release, the cycle begins again. Once you market your online press release go and find a new topic. Create an editorial schedule (like a editorial schedule that magazines write up) so your marketing is continuous and consistent. For online PR campaigns, write a marketing plan using elements from this book. It can be very simple.

I welcome online PR success stories. Please go to <http://www.OnlinePRBook.com> and fill out the email form on the right hand side. Or, email me at [janet@affiliateflash.com](mailto:janet@affiliateflash.com).

My hope is that you have learned enough to begin marketing your business online with online news as a foundation. However, if you need additional guidance, please contact me.

To your online success,

**Janet Thaeler**



## About the Author



Janet began her career at Internet startup companies as a web developer until she determined her true passion is marketing—specifically Internet marketing. She is a professional writer and blogger whose work has been published in both offline and online magazines including *City Search*. She has presented to business owners and the PRSSA.

Janet has been employed as a business-to-business tech marketer, a web-marketing manager, and a brand managing and strategy coordinator. In addition to her own consulting, she writes SEO press releases and specializes in Social Media at OrangeSoda.

As a coach she has helped many businesses of all sizes start blogs and learn about social media and online PR tools. She is not only an evangelist of social media but she is actively involved, beginning as a blogger in 2005.

She blogs on Marketing Pilgrim (<http://www.marketingpilgrim.com>) and is a guest blogger at Small Business Trends (<http://www.smallbiztrends.com/blog>). Her blog can be found at [www.newspapergrl.com](http://www.newspapergrl.com). Follow her on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/newspapergrl>.

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- Twitter Means Business:  
<http://happyabout.info/twitter/tweet2success.php>
- 42 Rules for Driving Success With Books:  
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- The Emergence of The Relationship Economy:  
<http://happyabout.info/RelationshipEconomy.php>
- Tales From The Networking Community:  
<http://happyabout.info/networking-community.php>
- Marketing Campaign Development:  
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