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BLOGPOST: Distributing press releases successfully



Do you have news about your company, your products or services or about an event? Have you written a press release describing it and now you would like the media and public to learn about it? Then now it is a matter of optimally distributing it. This article shows you how to successfully publish your press release to get the most possible attention and visibility among your target groups.

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Why am I distributing a press release?

Only by clearly defining the objective behind your message can you determine the relevant target groups accordingly. Therefore, you should be asking yourself these questions beforehand and answer them as specifically as possible:

- What is the purpose of my press release? Am I looking for attention, reach and more awareness, or to increase sales of our products and services, or to recruit new staff for us?
- Who are my target groups and who is interested in the topic? Press releases always target two groups: media creators and whoever receives what they create. The more precisely you define your target groups, the more specific the group you are targeting with your press release can be and the more you can tailor your press distribution list to whom you wish to reach.
- Is the occasion or the topic really relevant for the media? Does it meet at least one of the [news values](#)?

Can you answer the last question with 'yes'? Then you have already met the most important prerequisite for successfully distributing your press release to the 'media' target group. In addition, it is essential that your message follows the usual [structure and linguistic style of a press release](#) in order to be noticed by journalists.

Which channels should I be using to distribute a press release?

Once you have clarified the objective, target groups and content of your message and you have written your press release according to journalistic requirements, now is the time to distribute it. There are several options and ways of distribution, which we explain in more detail below.

Email distributions lists and distributing through email

Email has become one of the most common distribution channels. When you send out a press release, make sure your [distribution list is customised](#) to your intended target groups and as up-to-date as possible. Never send your message aimlessly or to every possible recipient. Sending journalists content they find irrelevant too often leads them to ignore your messages, even if the press

release happens to be relevant to them. So check whether the topic is really relevant for your contacts before you distribute the press release to them.

Follow the rules below if you will be emailing your press releases:

1. Your subject line should make it immediately clear who is speaking and what the message is. Ideally, your press release's headline answers the who and what of your wh-questions. Let go of the prefix 'press release', because it only unnecessarily lengthens your email subject headline.
2. Personalise the salutation for journalists you know. Otherwise, do not use a salutation.
3. Make it as easy as possible for your recipients by copying the press release's full text in the email. This lets them copy and paste the text material to work easier with it.
4. Attach less. Do not attach open files like Word or Excel, because nobody likes opening them due to their vulnerability to viruses, especially if they come from an unknown source. If you attach anything, confine yourself to meaningful additional material such as image or graphic files. Make sure your attached files are not too big. Some mailboxes block emails as small as 10 MB.
5. Optimally, you should completely avoid attachments and instead send a link to an external download page such as the press newsroom section on your website.
6. Be sure you put all your recipients in the BCC field if you are not personalising your email message.
7. Never request a read receipt. It will just force your recipients to click away.
8. Remember to add your signature, with complete personalised contact information, at the end of the mail.

Use your own website, too

Publish the press release on your own channels besides distributing it to the media. Put your announcements on the corporate website. Preferably, they should be clearly structured in the site's separate press or news section. If you publish many messages, the search function is quite helpful.

It's a good idea to have 'Press' or 'News' directly on the main menu to help journalists find the press section quickly. A common alternative is to highlight it in your website's footer.

Even within the website's press section, make it as easy as possible for journalists to navigate it. You should be able to find all relevant information at a glance and not just press releases, but any other media-relevant material such as photos, videos and fact sheets along with whom to contact and their details. Moreover, give medial representatives interested in your press release the opportunity to register themselves in one of your press distribution lists.

In contrast, you should avoid placing registration or login barriers in your website's press area. In too many cases, this just leads journalists to abandon the effort prematurely.

An optimal solution is to offer various options for further processing directly in each press release. Examples include PDF downloads, forwarding as an email or sharing options for social media.

Social Media Channels

You should be additionally distributing your press releases yourself on your own social media channels, because social networks enable you to not only reach your clients and potential clients, but many media professionals and other multipliers, too. Sharing your posts with high-reach journalists can increase the credibility of your content and you might receive even more attention and visibility from social networks than you would have had through traditional media distribution.

But be sure to tease your topic in a way appropriate to your target audience and specific to your channel. Never lump Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and TikTok together.

Press portals

Another possible way to distribute your press release is to put it in press portals. You can publish your messages there partly free of charge. Both media professionals and anybody else interested can read the press releases on the portal, usually according to specific search criteria. The degree of professionalism among press portals differs. Some are specific to an industry, while others focus on a general theme. They offer you an additional opportunity to increase your web reach. Of course, it varies greatly depending on the portal. One of them, with the widest reach in Germany, is [Presseportal](#), a service from news aktuell with around 15 million visits a month. Click on the link [to the chapter "Using news aktuell to distribute a press release"](#) and let us explain to you why your press releases perform well in the long term on Presseportal.

Native Advertising

When your press release is distributed traditionally to the media, journalists decide whether your release will be covered or not. So-called 'native ads' guarantee publication in editorial environments. The content is marked as an advertisement, but is adapted to the design, style and content of the respective medium.

Optimally, native Ads complement traditionally mailed press releases, because advertisements can never obtain the value of independent reporting and replace the trust gained therefrom. But combining both formats offers the potential for long-term reach and visibility. To learn how you can best use this format for your communications, read the [blog post on native advertising](#).

When should I distribute a press release?

Is there ever a right time to distribute your press release? No, there isn't. But there is better and worse timing. Topicality plays a major role here. Be sure that you distribute the press release for your communication event as soon as possible to give the media the 'topicality' news factor. Provide editorial offices with enough lead time for the coverage you desire. If you are reporting a scheduled event, send the press release to the media a few days to weeks beforehand so they have enough time to include it among the stories they are planning to cover. When it comes to timing, keep in mind the editorial deadlines and publication dates of your most important media.

There is also a greater probability of editors noticing press releases that refer to current topics or pick up on current trends. If a particular topic is already getting a lot of press, editorial offices and other potential target groups are going to be increasingly interested in everything to do with it. Every communications professional should be scanning the media landscape daily to find out which stories are going to be important today, tomorrow or the week after next, while also keeping an eye out on social media channels for the crucial players in their own sector.

It is also advisable to check what stories key media are looking to cover. Many editorial offices time their special reports and stories up to a year in advance for certain periods, which are then announced in so-called 'media data'. They are usually found as PDFs at the publishers' websites, or you can best ask through their advertising departments.

When distributing press releases, there is no such thing as the perfect day of the week or the perfect hour. Instead, there are more favourable and less favourable times for sending them. Statistics say that most press releases are distributed between Tuesday and Thursday. It might make sense, because many editorial teams are tied up at the beginning of the week with organisational issues and by the end of the week they may already be halfway through the weekend.

Generally, early morning hours are more suitable than late afternoon or in the evening. After 10 am, many editorial teams are already in conferences or planning their stories for the day. For radio stations and online media, the early morning hours from 3-7 am are the most favourable, while for reporting on finance and business it tends to be 7-9 am before the stock markets open. When timing is less critical, press releases can be distributed during lunch breaks, on Sundays, and on holidays when up-to-date material is less frequent. And it does not always have to be on the hour.

Using news aktuell to distribute a press release

Not only is building a press distribution list quite time and resource intensive, but maintaining and updating press contacts takes a lot of work, too. So it makes sense to use external service providers. [Zimpel](#) is a database and PR software from news aktuell that contains over 612,000 global records of contacts that our research team continuously updates, verifies and approves for communication. It can easily create customised distribution lists for you.

The integrated mailing tool lets you distribute your press releases in just a few steps. You can also use the HTML editor to adapt your mailing layout individually to your corporate identity. You also have a range of other mailing features at your disposal, such as linking, file uploads, CTA buttons, individualised addressing, dispatch planning and mailing history. Major indicators such as delivery and opening rates enable you to evaluate your distributed press releases in a targeted manner. You also have the option of exporting your distribution lists in all common formats and processing them further with your own mailing tools.

If your occasion or topic is relevant to the broader public, you might want to consider using external service providers. The advantage is: the very high reach and visibility you achieve from the wide variety of payout channels supplied by these networks of professional providers. news aktuell's own distribution network [ots](#) plays your press release on the dpa ticker directly to the right sections of editorial offices and additionally publishes them in its own newsroom at [Presseportal](#). Because Presseportal at news aktuell is one of the widest reaching PR portals in Germany, your message will get even more traffic, higher findability on Google and so even more visibility.

Checklist for distributing press releases

1. Being prepared is the be-all and end-all! Before you start writing your press release, always clarify what your objectives behind it are going to be, who your exact target audiences are, and whether the release meets news values.
2. Distribute your press release as targeted as possible and pay attention that your distribution lists are customised and up-to-date.
3. When you are distributing your press release in an email, make sure the subject line is short and concise, copy the full text into the email, avoid attachments and instead use links to external multimedia documentation your recipients can download. Provide contact information below the text for queries.
4. Publish your press release in your website's press section and on your social media channels, too.
5. Think press portals and native advertising to generate even more reach.
6. Correctly time your distribution: Know the editorial deadlines and publication dates of your most important key media.

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