

**PR Newswire®**

EBOOK

# **The Definitive Guide** to Crafting an Engaging Press Release



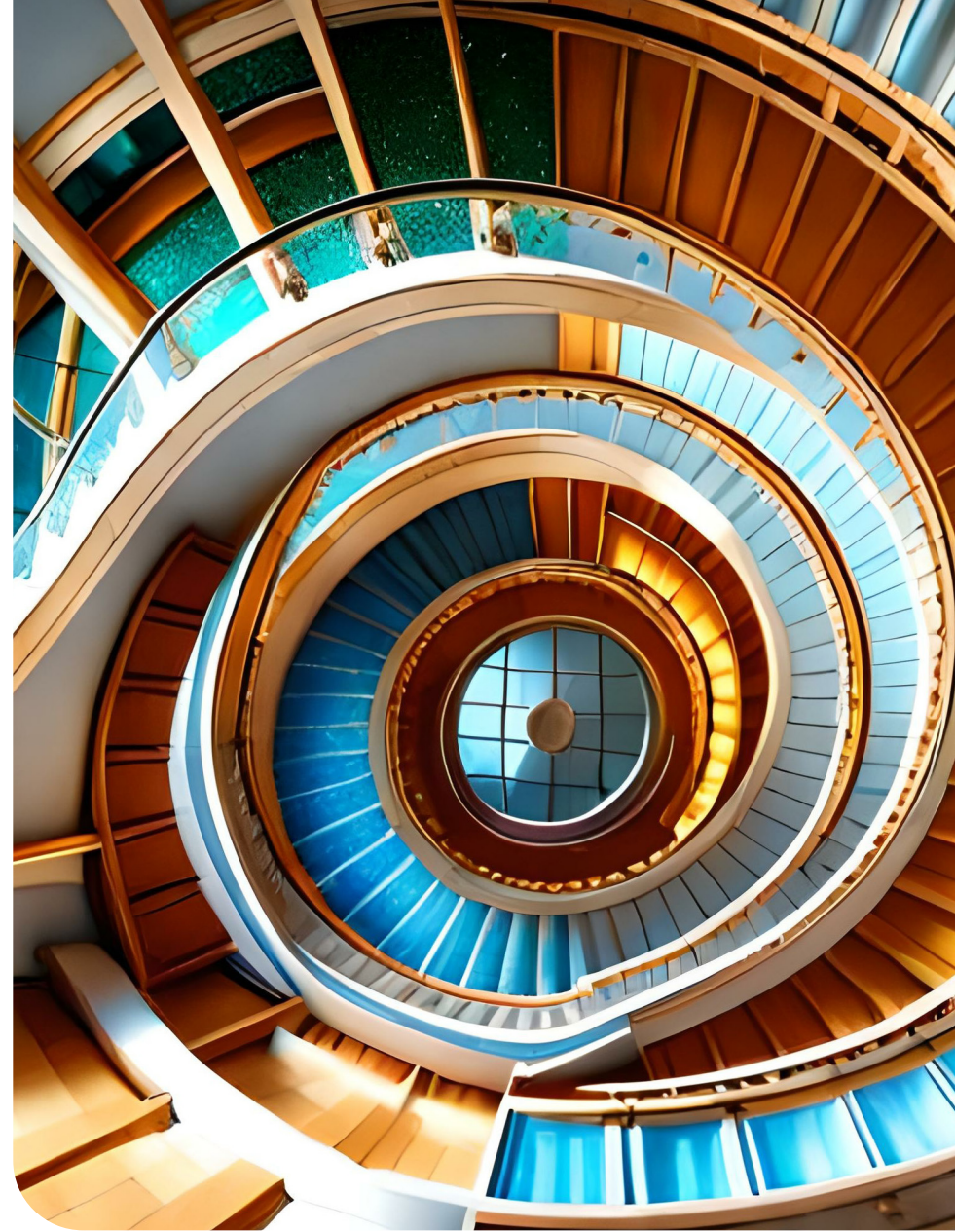


## Make it Matter

PR pros often ask us “What’s the best template to use for a press release?” As much as we’d like to hand you a paint-by-numbers kit to create your next press release masterpiece, it’s not that simple. In truth, there is no one-size-fits-all press release template hack. Instead of trying to fit the content into a specific template, comms professionals should **focus on the hook that will draw in readers.**

The number one question PR professionals should consider when crafting their release is “Why does this news matter?” Regardless of who your target audience is, every press release you distribute needs to address this critical question. The answer will be the launching pad from which you can create a piece of engaging content that then fulfills your goal of getting the ROI you hope to get from your campaign.

While we can’t ensure that a particular template will attract your audience, there are certain elements you can include in your next release that have been proven to increase engagement and readability.

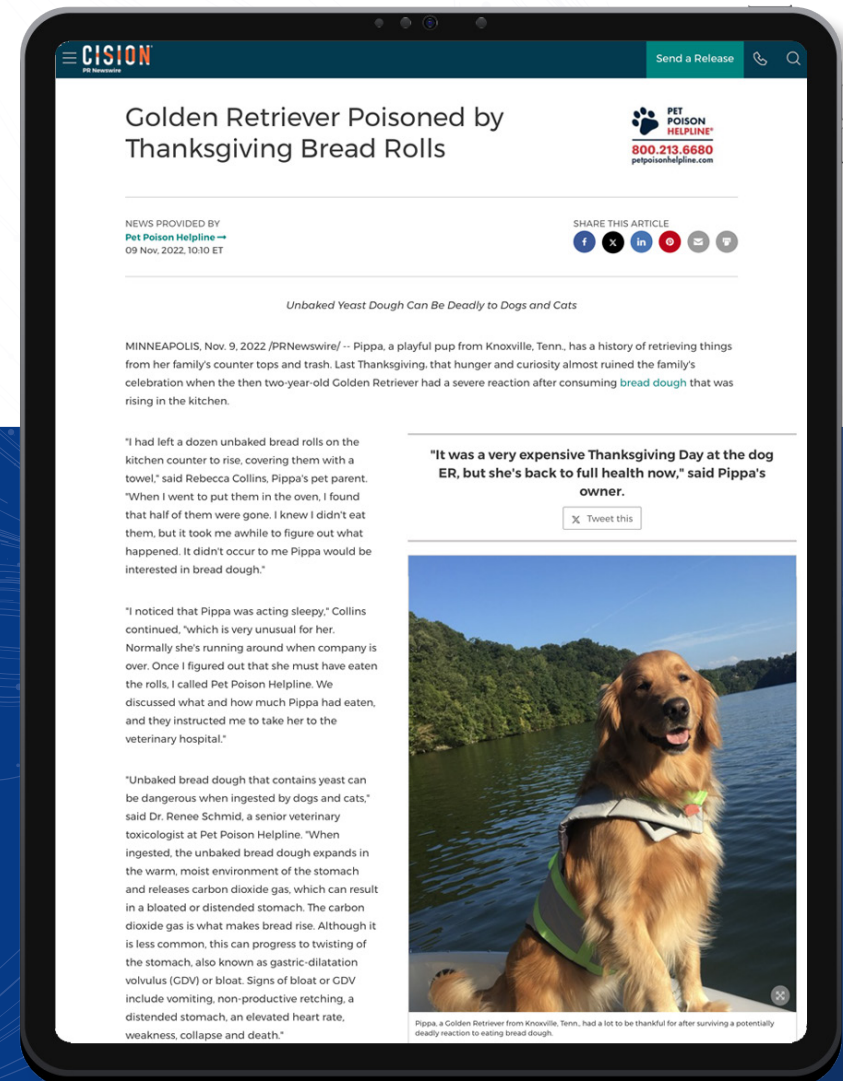




# WHAT'S IN A HEADLINE?

Your headline is the first impression you're giving to your reader, so you need to make it powerful while setting up what the reader can expect to learn from your story.

After reading your headline, no one should wonder, "Why does this news matter?" Your headline should answer that question concisely up front. Additionally, your headline should include a positive action verb relaying your key message within the first 60 characters (for SEO purposes, you should always strive to keep your headline to 100 characters or less).





## Creating Headlines

There are different approaches for crafting headlines depending on the content of your press release. If your message is timely, lead with the main data point, key takeaway or most impressive highlight. On the other hand, if you're creating a piece of evergreen content or thought leadership, lead with the story – not the brand. The unbranded headline can be a great content marketing approach.

Finally, use your subhead to provide additional context. Include key data points, event dates, etc., to further entice your audience to continue reading your story.

**P.S.** While it may be tempting, avoid writing clickbait-y headlines that don't accurately convey the takeaway from your story. Doing so could get you blackballed by journalists, so refrain from the practice.

### What is an “Unbranded Headline?”

Simply put, “unbranded headlines” are press release headlines that do not include a brand name.

A company might choose to use an unbranded headline in their press release if they are sharing informative content from a study or want to emphasize an available resource to solve a problem. A brand name takes up precious real estate in a search engine result, so you may want to forsake using it for putting a keyword or campaign at the forefront of your message.

Some of our favorite examples from the past year:

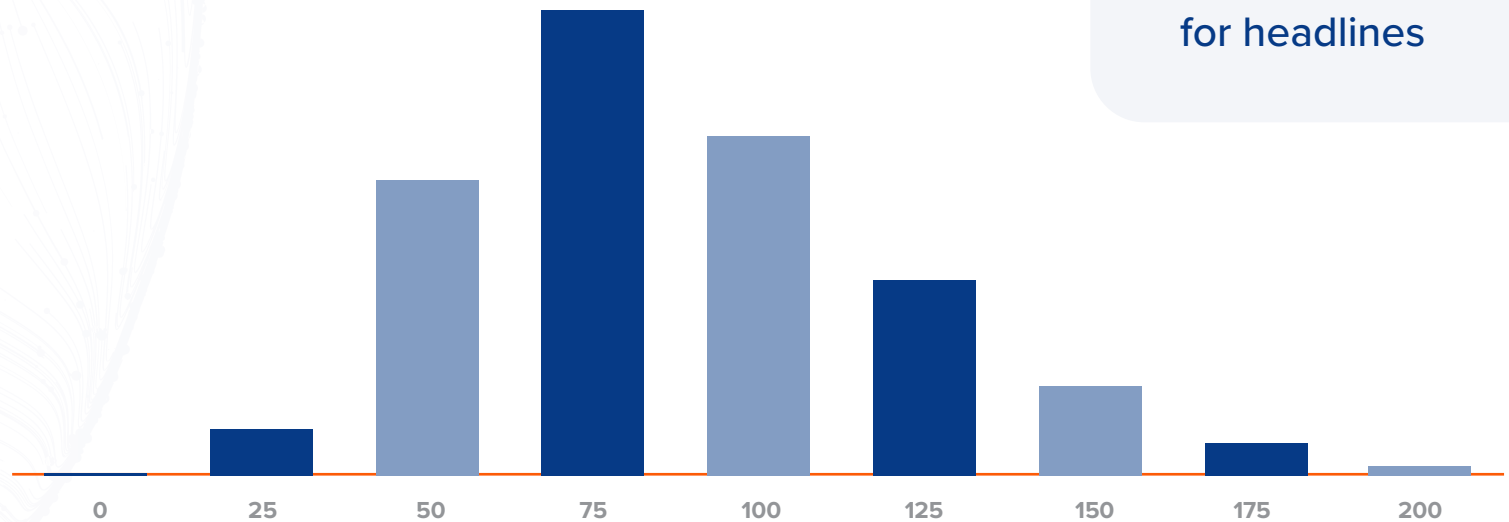
- ▶ **GOLDEN RETRIEVER POISONED BY THANKSGIVING BREAD ROLLS** (Don't worry! She's fine!)
- ▶ **NEW RESEARCH UNDERSCORES IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAMS**
- ▶ **6 TIPS FOR SMOOTH SAILING THIS BOATING SEASON**



## Make it Count

You have mere seconds to grab someone's attention, so crafting the right headline is crucial for getting your audience to read the body of your press release. We recommend keeping your headline around 70 characters. Not only is that the sweet spot for getting an optimal number of page views, email applications and Google's search engine results will cut off text over that amount.

### Page Views by Headline Character Count on PRNewswire.com



Ideal character count  
for headlines



## Getting in on the Action (Verbs)

If you want to grab a reader's attention, you must be unique. To stand out, you should forgo some of the most commonly used words in press release headlines. Journalists read many press release headlines that sound similar, so avoid clichés.

"Announces," "launches" and "names" are perpetually preferred by PR pros. While "names" and "expands" are more proportional in their use and page views, the ubiquity of "launches" makes it less of an attention grabber.

In previous analyses, we have found that "unveils" and "reveals" have lower levels of commonality but have higher average views proportional to their use. These colorful action verbs are more likely to pique interest and pull in the reader and are excellent replacements for the overused "launches."

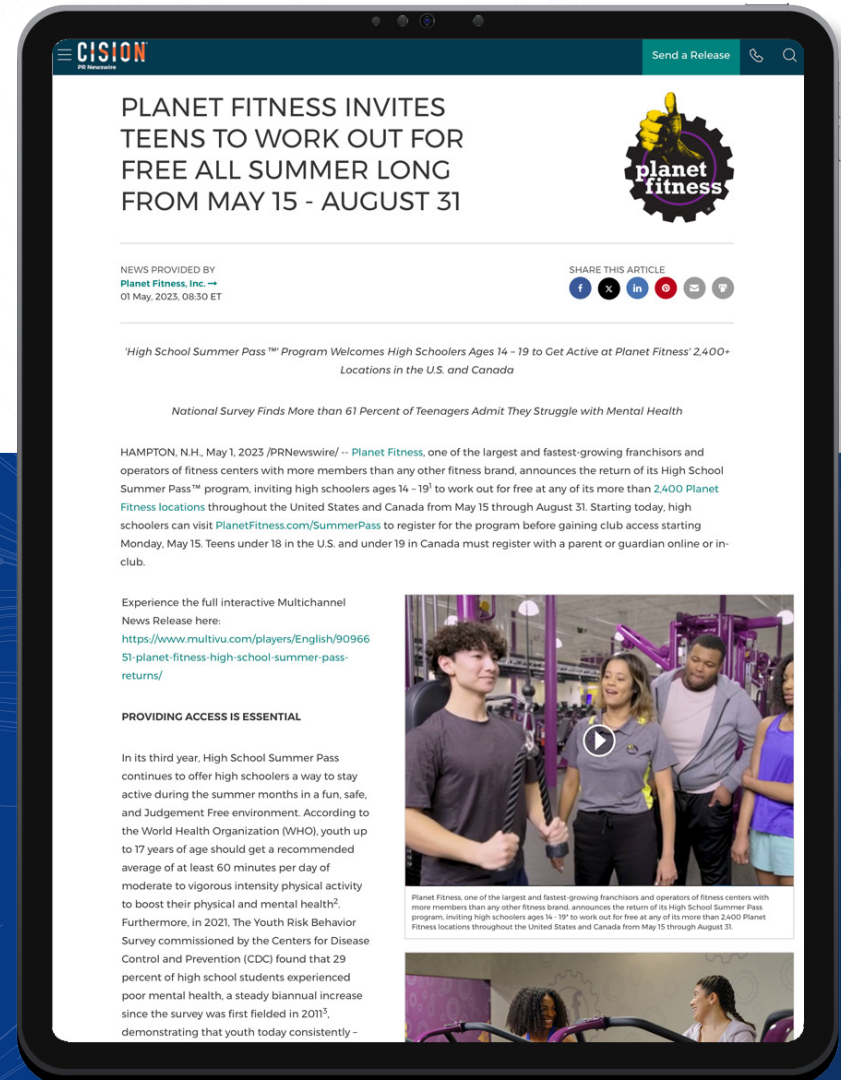
Finally, "reports" and "acquires" have lower levels of commonality, but press releases that use them in headlines receive more views, proving that research content and investor relations news are popular with PR Newswire readers.





# WORK ON YOUR BODY

Your press release might be special to you, but chances are it's one of many your reader has seen, so you need to make it eye-catching and easy to read if you want the viewer to stop and take notice before moving onto the next one.



## Show and Tell

We continually advise clients to add relevant multimedia assets to their press releases, and for good reason. In fact, here's three that will help you understand why including multimedia is essential to any successful comms strategy.

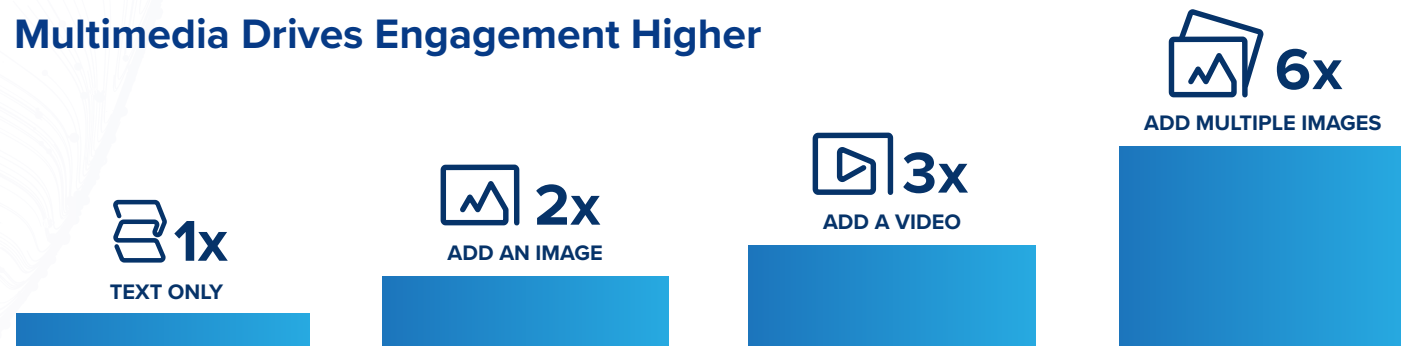
According to research, our brains process visual imagery faster than lines of text and have an incredible capacity to store and recall it weeks or months later. With an avalanche of content bombarding readers daily, it's becoming harder for stories to make a lasting impression. By adding multimedia components to your written content, you are helping your readers store the memory of your message for recall later.

Second, online users prefer video over any other form of content. So, if you add a video to a page, visitors are likely to watch it, thereby enhancing and underscoring your message. Additionally, including a video component also encourages users to dive deeper into the subject by consuming your entire written content.

Finally, visual components serve as a guide for your text content. According to research, most people are visual learners, so when you provide multimedia assets with your content, you are helping most readers process your message more easily.

PR Newswire analyzed levels of engagement for press releases distributed through our network and found that releases with various multimedia components resonated more with audiences and received higher levels of engagement than text-only releases.

### Multimedia Drives Engagement Higher



#### Press Releases

This data was collected as part of an analysis of more than 160,000 PR Newswire press releases distributed in 2020.  
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## Become Data-ble

As journalists' credibility is increasingly coming under attack, the use of data in their stories has become more common.

In the most recent State of the Media Report, two-thirds of journalists said they preferred receiving data from comms professionals and that it is the most effective resource they can provide to make journalists' jobs easier.

It's clear that providing data in a press release increases the likelihood of getting your story covered by helping journalists strengthen their story.

You can present data in many forms within a release:

- Bulleted lists (like this one)
- Infographics (as seen on the right)
- Charts or graphs
- Bolding the text of your most important data point within the body copy

As mentioned earlier, the more visual you can make your information, the better chance it has of making an impact and being remembered by the reader.

# 68%

**of journalists said they want data from** strategic communicators—in the form of original research, such as trends and market data.

66% of journalists want strategic communicators to **provide data and expert sources to make their jobs easier.**

The more communications professionals understand how and why journalists are using data elements in their stories—and can provide access to the data they desire—the more they will be able to position themselves as indispensable and in-demand partners.

# 66%



## “F” is for Format

Studies show people tend to scan online content more than they thoroughly read it. So, in addition to what you say and how you say it, you also need to think about how you present it. If you want to ensure your audience isn't quickly moving on from glancing at a basic, block-paragraph press release, use more engaging formatting techniques for your message whenever possible.

One of the more common forms of eye-scanning is the F-shaped pattern, wherein people read across the top (title/headline), then scan down the left side of a page. Common ways to break up text include using multimedia, section headers, bullets, italicized words and strong calls-to-action (CTAs).

If you're not presenting your content with engaging elements – features to draw their eyes inward – then your target audience could potentially miss key messages or CTAs you want them to take.

### Sound the Alarm! Domino's® is Giving Away Free Emergency Pizzas!

NEWS PROVIDED BY  
Domino's Pizza, Inc. →  
09 Oct, 2023, 07:07 ET

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



*Domino's customers can earn a free medium two-topping pizza to use whenever they need it most*

ANN ARBOR, Mich., Oct. 9, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- When life gives you lemons, Domino's gives you free pizza. **Domino's Pizza Inc. (NYSE: DPZ)**, the largest pizza company in the world, is introducing Domino's Emergency Pizza: a program that offers a free medium two-topping pizza to customers to use whenever they need it most.

"Perhaps you burned dinner, the power went out or maybe your in-laws just dropped in without notice – whatever your emergency situation, Domino's believes a free pizza can make anything better," said Kate Trumbull, Domino's senior vice president – chief brand officer. "Why did we launch Domino's Emergency Pizza? With so much uncertainty in everyday life, we believe everyone needs a pizza pick-me-up at some point! The hardest part may just be deciding when to use your Emergency Pizza!"

Any Domino's customer who places a qualifying online order can earn an Emergency Pizza from now through Feb. 11, 2024. Customers can then redeem it from their Domino's Rewards account. Domino's recently launched Domino's Rewards, its new and improved loyalty program, which gives members even more opportunities to earn and redeem points, as well as exclusive access to member-only deals like Emergency Pizza.

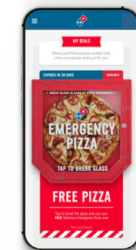
#### How to Earn and Redeem a Domino's Emergency Pizza

- Place a delivery order online, or a digital carryout order of \$7.99 or more. Customers will automatically earn a Domino's Emergency Pizza after the order goes through.
- To claim their Domino's Emergency Pizza, customers must sign into or join Domino's Rewards within seven days. They should then visit the "My Deals & Rewards" page under their Domino's Rewards account to redeem their Emergency Pizza within 30 days.

To sign up for Domino's Rewards, visit [dominos.com/rewards](https://dominos.com/rewards). For more information about Domino's Emergency Pizza program, visit [dominos.com/emergencypizza](https://dominos.com/emergencypizza).

#### When life gives you lemons, Domino's gives you free pizza.

Post this



#### HOW TO GET ONE

- STEP 1** Place an online order for Delivery or Carryout
- STEP 2** Sign into or join Domino's Rewards to claim your free pizza
- STEP 3** Go to My Deals & Rewards to redeem within 30 days

NOT VALID FOR REDEMPTION ON 10/31 OR 12/31

The largest pizza company in the world is introducing Domino's Emergency Pizza, a program that offers a free medium two-topping pizza to customers to use whenever they need it most.

## Call Me, Definitely

A press release is not a self-contained story. The press release is a culmination of months or years of planning and executing a vision which is the subject of your message. Therefore, your communication shouldn't end with the press release. You should always invite readers of your press release to learn more with a CTA.

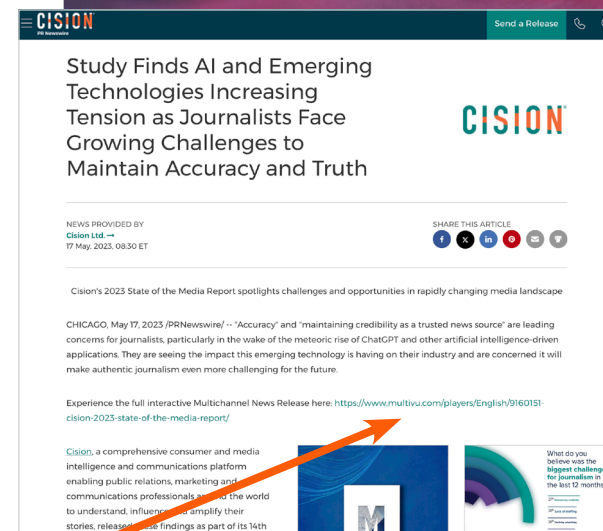
Common CTAs found in a press release include:

- Encouraging the reader to “learn more”
- An invitation to participate or register for an event, contest or service
- Providing an offer to your readers

Some comms professionals consider a CTA to be an “exit ramp,” so they stick it at the end their release. Our advice is to include your CTA “above the fold” so your reader won't miss it if they don't make it to the end of your release. If you're worried that your audience won't read your whole press release, don't be! Consider your press release to be the gateway to engaging with your story.

CTA

here: <https://www.multivu.com/players/English/9160151->



## Forget Me Not

If you've followed all of our tips so far, you are well on your way to creating a press release that will dazzle your audience. But there are a few more pearls of wisdom we want to leave you with to keep in mind as you build out your next release:

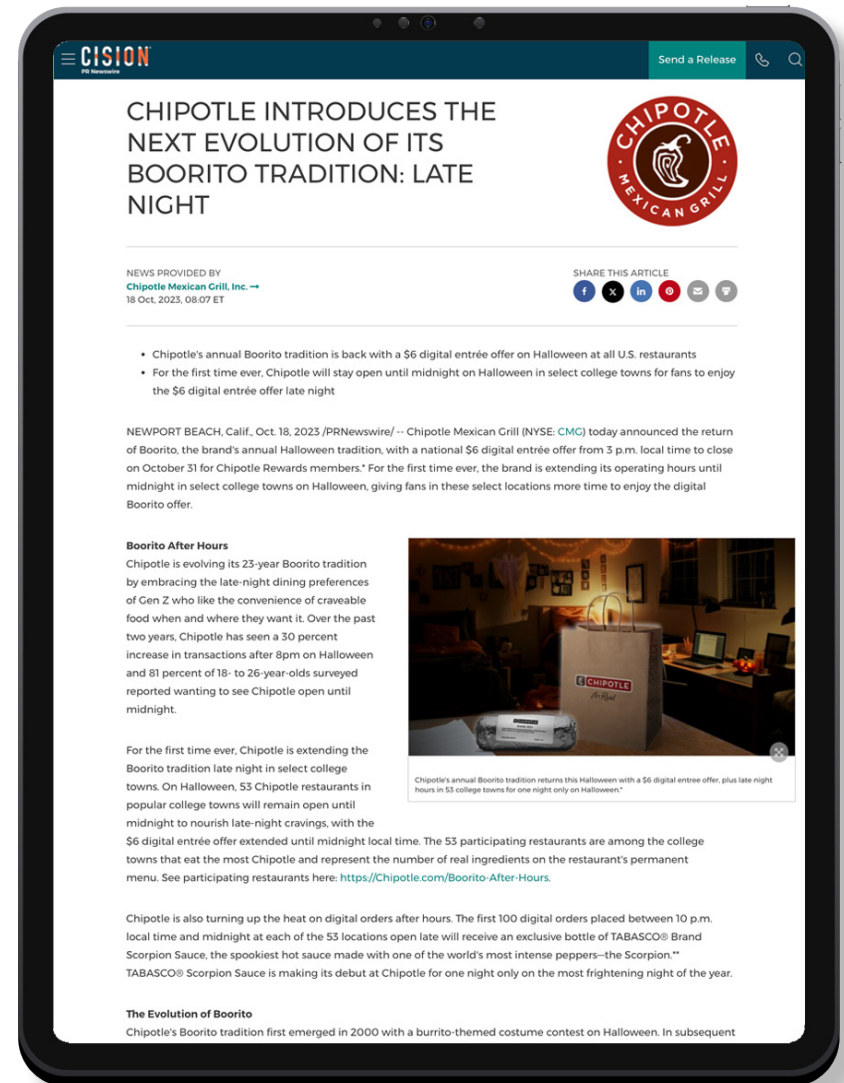
**DO include your logo on your release.** Your logo is your official stamp that this release is a message from your brand and will help catch the eye of anyone interested in reading your news.

**DO incorporate an executive quote.** Journalists often take quotes right from a release, so make their jobs easier – and increase your odds of getting coverage – by including one.

**DO place your contact information at the bottom of your release.** It would be a shame if a journalist wanted to follow up with you to cover your story but couldn't because you left them hanging.

**DON'T stuff your press release with keywords.** Your press release should be informative and helpful, and keyword stuffing will give your press releases the reputation of being neither.

**DON'T worry about the word count.** Unlike headlines, there's no "optimal length" when it comes to your body copy, so convey all the pertinent information in a concise, yet thorough manner.





# RELEASING THE RELEASE

You've followed all of our tips and best practice recommendations and are ready to share your release with the world. Now what?



## Choosey Comms Choose the Right Newswire

Picking the right distribution target is one of the most crucial decisions you can make once you're ready to send your release. Luckily, there are several options available to you. You can send your release to the following distribution targets:

- National
- International (by region or by country)
- Regional (i.e., Midwest, Northeast or by state)
- Industry specific (i.e., tech, healthcare, entertainment)
- By subject matter (i.e., ESG, scientific research)
- Cultural

If you send your release to a narrow target, you run the risk of not getting in front of journalists who may want to cover your story. However, there are instances where broad distribution may be wasteful.

For example, if you're sending a release for a regional restaurant chain, choosing national distribution doesn't make sense. On the other hand, if you're a small tech company whose products are available nationwide, choosing national distribution might be your best chance of getting noticed.

You might be surprised which outlets end up covering your story, so while you should be prudent and methodical in choosing the right distribution, don't be afraid to think outside the box and choose a broader distribution that increases the odds of getting coverage for your story.



# Timing Is Everything

If you’ve ever wondered when the “best” time was to send a release, there are a couple of factors to consider.

PRNewswire.com receives its highest amount of traffic Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. in North American time zones. To maximize the number of views your press release receives, we advise distributing your release during this timeframe.

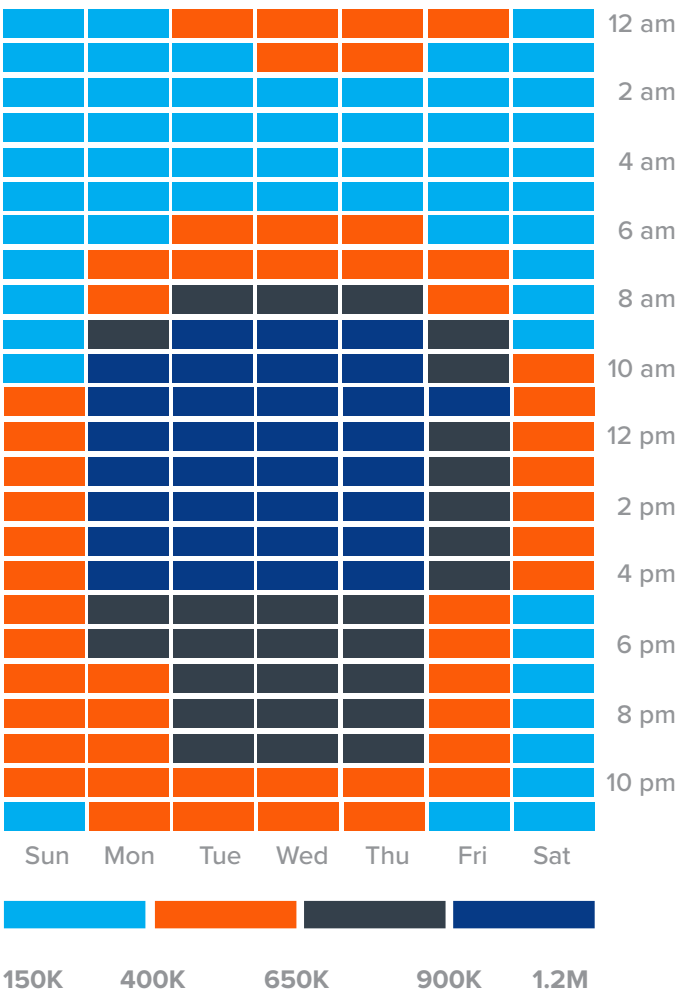
PR Newswire for Journalists (PRNJ) users log into their accounts during typical business hours (Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) with a spike occurring in the morning from Monday through Thursday.

Comms professionals often distribute their press releases at the top or bottom of the hour. To prevent your story from getting lost during a crowded time, we recommend sending your release at an atypical time like 10:18 a.m. or 1:39 p.m.

## DON'T GET LOST IN THE CROWD

Instead of issuing a release at 10 a.m., try 10:18 a.m. for better results. Sending your press release at an atypical time helps you stand out.

PR NEWSWIRE VISITORS BY TIME OF DAY



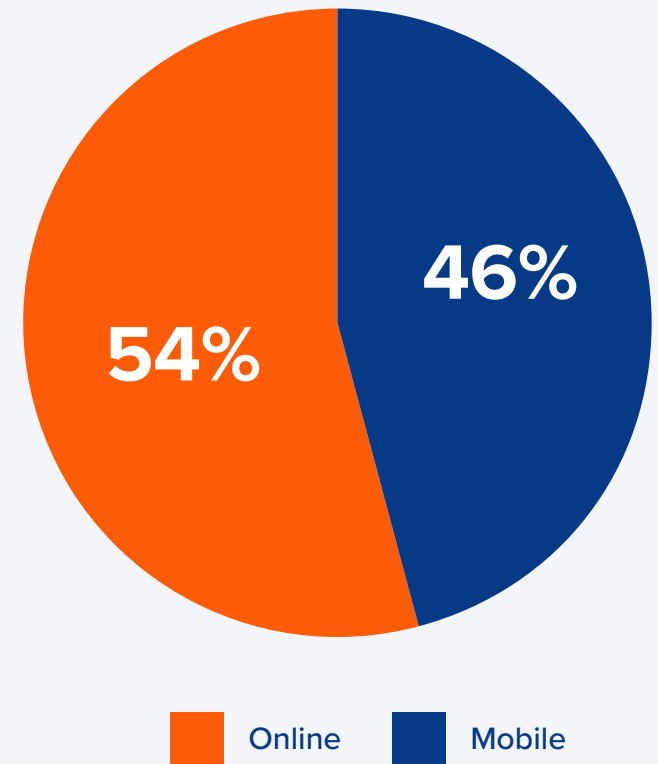


## CREATE SEAMLESS EXPERIENCES

How readers are viewing press releases on prnewswire.com has changed a lot in the last couple of years. Just two years ago, three out of four press releases were read on a desktop computer. Now, viewers are nearly split between desktop and mobile devices.

The implications of this change are clear: if you link to an external site in your release, you want to ensure that site is optimized for mobile viewing. **Providing your readers with a seamless viewing experience increases the likelihood they will engage with your story.**

PERCENTAGE OF VIEWS



## Final Thoughts

Sending a press release is an important moment for your organization. Don't risk having your story overlooked by failing to adopt proven press release best practices. Implementing these recommendations will increase the odds of getting your story seen and receiving high engagement.

The majority of journalists [told us](#) the number one type of content they want to receive from brands and comms pros pitching a story is a press release. But journalists are short on time and resources, so they won't waste their limited time on lackluster releases.

Additionally, 40% of journalists also told us that they are now relying on data to inform their editorial strategies. Just like comms professionals and marketers, journalists are more cognizant than ever of creating content that's proven to resonate with their audience. So, make sure your story is relevant to the journalists you're pitching, because even if you have the world's greatest press release, sending it to an irrelevant audience won't help your story get the engagement it deserves.

With all of this in mind, we hope these tips serve as a guide to help you write and distribute releases that stand out from the pack.



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# PR Newswire®

**Get Started**

## About PR Newswire

PR Newswire is the industry's leading press release distribution partner with an unparalleled global reach of more than 440,000 newsrooms, websites, direct feeds, journalists and influencers and is available in more than 170 countries and 40 languages. From our award-winning Content Services offerings, integrated media newsroom and microsite products, Investor Relations suite of services, paid placement and social sharing tools, PR Newswire has a comprehensive catalog of solutions to solve the modern-day challenges PR and communications teams face. For 70 years, PR Newswire has been the preferred destination for brands to share their most important news stories across the world.

