

Chicago, June 27, 2017

5 essentials for a successful newsroom

How to exceed the expectations of your visitors

Nowadays, an online newsroom is an essential part of a successful PR strategy. But how do you use your newsroom to its full potential? There are many tips and tricks to be found when you search for inspiration online. Luckily it boils down to just five essentials to keep in mind to create the best newsroom possible.



1. It starts with accessibility

It may seem a no-brainer, but make sure to check if your newsroom is easily accessible. Accessibility is not a straightforward subject to cover. Obviously, the newsroom should be live. Checking beforehand if the hosting company of your newsroom is able to cope with large amounts of traffic (during a crisis or event, for example), updates of servers and

way you make sure your newsroom stays online, whatever the circumstances may be.

Accessibility is not just a question of technical or hosting capabilities. Potential visitors of your newsroom should be able to easily find your newsroom, the information they are looking for and the person or team they would like to contact. By adding a link to your newsroom on the homepage, using best practices of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and giving your newsroom an obvious name, it will be easier for your visitors to reach the newsroom and information they are looking for. Include your PR officers' contact information in the newsroom and on every press release. Getting in touch with journalists and potential clients is usually the goal of a press release. Make it easy to reach this goal by adding contact information in logical and easy to find places in the newsroom and press releases.

2. Easy and intuitive navigation

Visitors may reach your newsroom from various places. Usually, the amount of visitors that type in the name of your website or newsroom url to visit it directly is minimal. Visitors may come from a social media platform, a newsletter, another article they have read on your website, an external link or another place where the link to your press release can be found. This means that most visitors have little or no context to the press release. They may not know where to find interesting pages on your website and other relevant articles. Make it easy for them to stay on your website longer by adding an obvious menu structure, a distinct search bar and links to relevant pages and articles.

Place yourself in the shoes of a potential visitor to your website. What do you expect to find when visiting your newsroom? What do you expect to find when reading a press release? Check out examples

internally or externally (perhaps a partner or friend could provide some helpful insights) to visit your newsroom and identify possible obstacles. At the end of the day, serving your newsroom's visitor supports the main goal of your newsroom and PR strategy. Evaluate your newsroom's navigation periodically to make sure it serves its purpose, and your newsroom is up-to-date and meeting today's standards.

3. Shareability is key

Living in an era in which social media is an essential part of daily life, there is no way to dismiss the potential and importance of social for your newsroom. Shareability is a key essential for a successful newsroom, visitors expect to find links to your social media channels and buttons to easily share content on their own social profiles easily. To make sure the visitor knows what to expect when navigating to your social media channels, include your social media content on your newsroom and press releases. Presenting social media content on your newsroom and press releases provides the opportunity to create a specific expectation on what to find on your social media channels, to show extra content that might be of interest to your visitor, and to present yourself as an organization that posts interesting content regularly.

Alongside including social media into every relevant aspect in your newsroom and press releases, there are other ways to make sure your content can be shared easily. Make sure the newsletters and mailings you send out include a working 'forward to a friend' link. Content that has been forwarded by an acquaintance is usually given higher value, so make it easy to forward your content to others. Adding embed codes and using file sharing sites like YouTube and SlideShare, make it easy for visitors to freely share your content. People who have not visited your site yet, may come across your content

potential leads.



4. Look and feel matters

Branding is important to make sure your visitors recognize your brand and brand story easily. That way you provide context and put your name out there. The look and feel of your newsroom should correspond with your main or corporate website to provide the visitors a consistent experience throughout the website and to communicate clearly where they have ended up after clicking a link. This enhances trust, provides clarity and creates relevant context for your visitor, which improves your bounce rates.

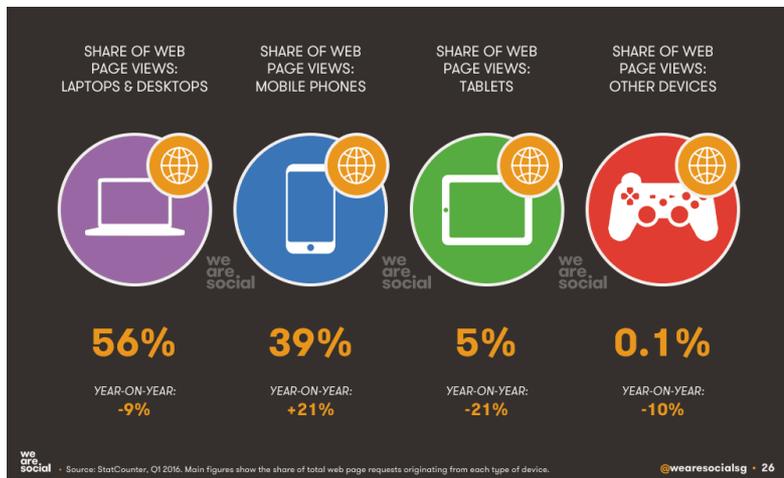
The look & feel of the newsroom should also provide a clear, pleasant and engaging way of consuming the content you provide. Publishing large amounts of text without any visuals and just a few paragraphs makes it very difficult to read the information you are sharing. Enrich your news release with images, infographics, slideshares and video to create a pleasurable experience for your visitors. Use a media gallery to group all visuals you have used so visitors can view those in a gallery module, and download and share these images on other platforms and websites. By using layout and design elements to place and highlight visuals, video, quotes and contact information, you make it easier to recognize and digest the different formats of content on your page. The use of link buttons

upon the information they have just consumed.

5. Spark the conversation

Having a certain amount of visitors on your website or newsroom doesn't say too much about the conversation you are having with them. In order to build lasting relationships with your audiences, make sure interactions flow in both directions. Is it easy for visitors to engage in a conversation with your organization and the relevant team members when they visit your newsroom? If not, you might lose the best (and sometimes only) possibility to connect with the newsroom visitor. Make sure any and every visitor of your newsroom is able to easily connect with you to keep the conversation going.

- Include contact information in the newsroom and in all press releases of the relevant team members and the general contact information of the organization, where applicable
- Make it easy for newsroom visitors to react to your press releases: add comment forms on press releases, link to social media channels where visitors can comment on posts, include a contact form or contact information to use when visitors would want to comment on a press release
- React to all comments on your press releases and social media channels timely and engage in conversations your visitors and followers start
- Focus on a responsive website also and make sure all functionalities are available on mobile devices



Think about who you are trying to communicate with

Using and improving your newsroom should always focus on the person you are trying to communicate with. The visitor of your newsroom is leading, what does he or she expect from your newsroom and press releases? By implementing best practices, you should be one step ahead of the game. Measuring the way visitors use and don't use your newsroom should provide valuable insight as well. Asking your visitors for feedback directly may also be a valuable way of gathering input to improve your newsroom, but be careful not to overcharge your visitors. If you focus on the visitors and potential visitors of your newsroom, you should be able to get the most out of it and successfully support your PR strategy with your user oriented online presence.

Are you curious to see how an online newsroom could support your PR strategy? Request a free 14-day trial to try it out.

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