
HOW-TO GUIDE

— *for* —

OPTIMIZING PRESS RELEASES

Step-by-step guide on how to transform your online press release into an SEO press release

PUBLIC RELATIONS HOW-TO GUIDE

Presented by NASDAQ OMX GlobeNewswire

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INTRODUCTION

Learning how to optimize a press release for SEO takes a little expertise but once you know the rules, it's fairly easy to use these tactics on all of your press releases. Follow our step-by-step process, outlined below, and watch your press release climb higher in the news search results.

SECTION 1: CONDUCTING KEYWORD RESEARCH

The first step in optimizing your press release involves the keyword research. You want your release to get top rankings in Google, Yahoo! and Bing news searches and using the most relevant keywords and placing them properly is key.

The word "keyword" is used rather loosely; it's really a "keyword phrase." When SEO for news releases first became popular, one- or two-word search terms worked most successfully, but as searchers got more experiences, this has changed to three- or four-word phrases.

BRAINSTORMING INITIAL KEYWORDS

Before diving into keyword research tools, it's best to brainstorm keyword categories that address what your customers want, as well as what journalists need. Think about words and phrases search engine users might type to find your product, company or financial news.

To make your final selection of keywords and phrases, you will want to consider such factors as competition for the word or phrase, and traffic potential.

USING FREE SEO KEYWORD TOOLS

There are several very good keyword research tools. Below are our recommendations:

- **Google News Autocomplete:**
As you type in the keyword phrase you want to get information about, Autocomplete returns search queries based on other users' search activities. These searches are algorithmically determined without human intervention based on the popularity of the search term. All of the queries shown in Autocomplete have been typed previously by other Google News users. The Autocomplete dataset is updated frequently to offer fresh and rising search queries.
- **Yahoo! News Search Assist:**
This tool provides near real-time suggestions in Yahoo! News Search. Although similar to Google News Autocomplete, Yahoo! News Search Assist will often make different suggestions. The best strategy is to use both tools and select any relevant terms that both suggest.
- **Google AdWords Keyword Tool:**
Use this tool for the newest and most popular keywords. Select either the option of entering a few descriptive words or phrases, or type in your website's URL. This tool works best if you start broad and then, based on those results, get more specific. There is a "Use Synonyms" box in the "Descriptive Words or Phrases" option that is checked by default. If you uncheck the box, the tool will suggest only keywords that contain at least one of the terms that you entered. You can

also find keywords based on your site content by using the Website Content option, which allows you to enter the URL of your business website or of a site related to your business. The tool will then scan your page and suggest relevant keywords.

- **Google Trends:**
This tool helps to compare the world's interest in different topics. You can enter up to five topics and see how often they've been searched on Google over time. Use commas to compare multiple search terms. Located beneath the "Search Volume Index" graph is Google's News reference volume graph. This graph shows you the number of times your topic appeared in Google News stories. When Google Trends detects a spike in the volume of news stories for a particular search term, it labels the graph and displays the headline of an automatically selected Google News story written near the time of that spike.
- **Google Insights for Search:**
This tool compares search volume patterns across specific regions, categories, time frames and Google properties. For example, Insights can be used to determine seasonality. A ski resort may want to find out when people search for ski-related terms most often to gain insight on when to advertise.

KEYWORD RESEARCH TIP

Keyword research includes a concept we call "Russian nesting dolls." If you find a relevant search term that is three or four words long, it may very well also contain a two or three word term. For example, the keyword phrase "Internet sales tax rules" contains the keyword phrase "Internet sales tax." If you use the longer phrase in your press release, the search engines can find your release for both terms.

HOW MANY KEYWORD TERMS DO YOU NEED FOR YOUR PRESS RELEASE?

The answer is "not many." Three to six long keyword phrases with several keywords embedded in the long phrases is optimal.

STEP 2: PLACING YOUR KEYWORDS

The news search engine algorithms are primarily interested in the headline, the subhead and the lead paragraph (or first 100 words). They give extra weight to words that appear in subheadings, bold, italics or anchor text links.

It's important to use your keywords strategically in the press release and not overdo it. Make sure the release is still readable and not overly repetitive. Additionally, news search engines are on the lookout for the use of too many keywords as it can harm your release's ranking.

HEADLINE GUIDELINES

Google News, the most popular news search engine, requires a minimum of 10 characters and can be between 2 and 22 words. It displays approximately 60 characters in its results, but your headline can be longer than 60 characters. Other search engine headline specs are similar, so if you follow Google's specs, you will be aligned with the others.

HEADLINE WITHOUT SEO:

["Make Student Life Easier with App that Provides Mobile Research"](#)

This headline contains two keyword terms, "student life" and "mobile research" but misses a big opportunity to use Apple-related keywords. "Student life" is too broad of a term. "Mobile research" has a small keyword volume and is considered to be a niche term. This is an acceptable keyword.

HEADLINE WITH SEO:

["Free iPad App for Mobile Research Available at Apple iTunes Store"](#)

In this optimized version of the headline, we take advantage of the Apple-related keywords terms. "Free iPad app" contains the term "iPad app." "Apple iTunes store" contains the term "iTunes Store." "Mobile research" remains the niche term. In total, there are five keyword terms in the release. Notice that there are few "wasted" or "filler" words in the headline. Except for the words "for" and "available at," every word in the headline contributes to achieving a good news search ranking.

SUBHEAD GUIDELINES

The subhead specs are similar to the headline specs outlined above. You will want to use the same or closely related terms in your subhead and even introduce one or two new terms.

SUBHEAD WITHOUT SEO:

["Discoveria's premier online research, which includes sources and tools, now available to students on the go"](#)

The subhead contains two keyword terms, the company name "Discoveria" and "online research." By putting the apostrophe after the company name, it will most likely not be found as a search term. However, "Online research" is a good search term.

SUBHEAD WITH SEO:

["Discoveria, the premier online research paper writing tool, includes thousands of information sources, writing tips and ability to save research"](#)

In this optimized subhead, the company name appears without the apostrophe ensuring that the release will be found for its name. The keywords "online research," "research paper," "research paper writing," "writing tool," and "writing tips" are placed so that they share some of the keywords.

LEAD PARAGRAPH GUIDELINES

Now that you have optimized the header and the subhead, it's time to insert the keywords into the lead paragraph. The news search engines closely examine approximately the first 100 words of a press release, the normal length of the lead paragraph. If your lead paragraph is quite short, you may need to optimize the second paragraph as well. Then it's a good idea to use some of the keywords throughout the release, but as stated earlier, not too frequently.

LEAD PARAGRAPH WITHOUT SEO:

["Baltimore, MD, January 19, 2012 – After successfully introducing an iPhone and iPod touch app, Discoveria has released an app for the](#)

[iPad, making Discoveria's vast online library and research tools universally accessible on all Apple devices. When Discoveria introduced the Discoveria Library app for iPhone and iPod touch last year, it received very positive feedback, but one question resonated loudly: What about the iPad? On an iPad, students enjoy a better reading experience with its larger screen; that's why Discoveria listened, and delivered the new iPad app by popular demand."](#)

What keywords in the SEO header and subhead are included in the lead paragraph?

The company name "Discoveria," "online research," and "iPad app." The Apple-product names (iPad, iTouch and iPhone) are included but are too broad to improve Discoveria's news search rankings.

LEAD PARAGRAPH WITH SEO:

["Chicago, IL, January 26, 2012 – Discoveria, a division of Encyclopeiate Inc, provides an online research paper writing tool with thousands of article and book sources and writing tips for students. With the launch of the Discoveria Library iPad app, mobile research becomes available anytime and anyplace. The free iPad app has been available for the iPod Touch and the iPhone but, with the enhanced screen size of the iPad version, students will have a better reading experience of the online research paper writing tool. The Discoveria Library iPad app is now available for download through the Apple iTunes store."](#)

In this optimized lead paragraph, what keywords are included?

The company name "Discoveria," "online research," "research paper," "research paper writing," "writing tool," "free iPad app," "iPad app," "Apple iTunes store," and "iTunes store." There are nine keywords or six long keyword phrases.

STEP 3: ADDING LINKS

In addition to including the most relevant and popular search terms and phrases about your company or product in your headline, subhead and lead paragraph, you also need to add links to your SEO press release.

WHY ADD LINKS?

One of the primary objectives for issuing a press release is to drive traffic to information on your website. By adding a link to a relevant landing page on your website, you are able to direct the reader to additional information about the content in the press release or capture their contact information for your lead database.

Additionally, adding external links to your press release increases ranking, and is a key a component that search engines consider. If you link to interesting content on your website from your press release, there is a possibility that reporters and bloggers will find it compelling for their audiences and link to it, thus creating an external link to your website.

HOW MANY LINKS TO ADD?

A standard for the number of links in a press release is one link per 100 words. More or less is acceptable, but an excessive number is not ideal. The search engines regard a press release with an excessive number of links as spam, deterring ranking.

WHERE TO PLACE YOUR LINKS?

It's perfectly fine to add links anywhere within the release, but generally you would want to add one in the first or second paragraph, another somewhere in the body of the release if that makes sense content-wise, and lastly, one just above your boilerplate. Though there are not any hard and fast rules – add links where it is relevant to the content – you may want to add an additional link to your company boilerplate as well.

It is acceptable to have two links go to the same landing page. For example, if you are driving people to an event registration, you might want to place a link in the first paragraph or the beginning of the second paragraph and then place that same link to the event just above the boilerplate.

KEYWORDS IN ANCHOR TEXT

Rather than placing bare URLs in your press release, best practices advise using anchor text which consists of your keywords. This reinforces the keywords that you used in your header, subhead and lead paragraph.

EXAMPLE OF ANCHOR TEXT LINKS:

Using the examples of the keywords in the optimized press release above, these are anchor text links that are appropriate for your iPad app press release:

[Discoveria](#), links to the company home page on the website

[Research paper writing](#), links to an article on research paper writing tips on your website

[Apple iTunes store](#), links to iTunes store

[Discoveria's blog](#), links to the company blog

CREATE HYPERLINKS

Now that you know which web pages you want to link to, as well as the anchor text, it's time to create the hyperlink. Highlight the anchor text. In "Word" pull down the "Insert" menu and choose "Hyperlink." The hyperlink box with the anchor text will be displayed. Add the URL to the "Address" box and click OK.

When you have finished creating all of your hyperlinks, it's a good idea to check each link to make sure it is directed to the correct page.

STEP 4: FINISHING UP

You have completed optimizing your press release and are now ready to distribute via wire service and measure the results of your efforts.

DISTRIBUTION

Why use a wire distribution service? Google News and Yahoo! News crawl scan news sources; the news source is the press release put online by a wire distribution service. These news search engines do not scan billions of websites to find press releases nor are they able to manually add press releases that are sent to them.

That is why it is necessary for you to use an SEO press release distribution service like GlobeNewswire, which is a news source for these news search engines. GlobeNewswire's SEO press release distribution service transforms online press

releases into SEO press releases complete with anchor text links. In addition to distributing SEO press releases to Google News and Yahoo! News, GlobeNewswire also distributes them to a global network of 3,500 websites, 1 million financial desktops and over 6,000 newspapers, wire services, community papers, news bureaus, trade publications, journals, television and radio stations.

MEASUREMENT

The most important step in the SEO for press releases process is measuring the results. What was the goal of your press release? Was it to drive website traffic, generate leads, or sell products?

GlobeNewswire provides Access and Traffic Reports that let you monitor page view traffic, collect actual user search terms, and track anchor text link click-throughs. GlobeNewswire also has a media monitoring service that uses proprietary technology to review over 8,000 online news outlets around the globe 24/7 and deliver customized news briefings on media coverage of your organization and your competitors to your desktop. We also recommend learning how to use Google Analytics, which is free. It will help you get a very detailed tracking of your press release results.