

“Social Media” Releases ... A Tool For Everyone

The social media release. The term is thrown around frequently, but few people understand what it means, or how to use it. For those left scratching their heads, here is an easy-to-understand guide to this new tool that everyone can use.

So, What Is It? First, what it isn't. Before the Internet, and even in the Web 1.0 world when the Internet was a “click and read” option, press releases were static presentations of information in standardized formats designed to make life easy for journalists. PR pros hoped the press release would generate interest, and then the real work began.

The social media release is an adaptation of a press release for the interactive, integrated, engaged Web 2.0 world. It is designed to provide the same basic information, but because it is online, it offers reporters, or anyone interested in your organization, direct and instantaneous access to more comprehensive information.

It can provide links to biographies of company executives, downloadable graphics, embedded videos, RSS feeds and other social media applications.

It can reference objective, third party expert sources such as other Web sites, blogs, wikis and more.

Think of the social media release as a single, online document that expedites

the critical research process for too-busy journalists on too-tight deadlines.

To see what comprises a social media release, check out the SHIFT Communications' free template(http://www.shiftcomm.com/downloads/smr_v1.5.pdf). SHIFT's Todd S. Defren was one of the first to create the social media release as we know it today.



A few of the more significant changes that the social media release brings to its traditional counterpart include:

- Bulleted lines of information rather than a body of copy
- A reference section (links) to other sites with relevance to your content
- Multimedia elements (pictures, graphics, video, audio, etc.)

How Do I Use it? It may seem daunting, with its many applications and upload features, but the social media release is really a simple concept to master.

When deciding the type of information to supplement your content, keep in mind the overall objective of the

release. For example, a new hire release could include a link back to the company Web site, an image of the new employee, a link to his/her accomplishments and contact information. A new product release could include links to different product photos, product testimonials or product reviews.

Don't feel like you have to use every social media tool out there because the choices are endless. Stick to a few that you know will either facilitate the news outlet's needs or reach the audience you desire to influence.

If learning the uses and purposes of social media applications seems too confusing or time consuming, consider hiring a PR firm to assist you. Professional communicators can also advise you on other important Web 2.0 matters for your organization.

At Vehr Communications, we understand that the changing landscape of communications can be intimidating, but we pride ourselves on being ahead of the curve when it comes to social media practices. Check out our [Web site](#) to learn more about us. We would love an opportunity to meet you.

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