



CISION®

HOW TO CHOOSE THE BEST

PRESS RELEASE DISTRIBUTION SERVICE



Content distribution and promotion can be intimidating. It's no surprise that one of marketing's biggest priorities is content distribution and amplification. Figuring out your brand's objectives, analyzing vendors and measuring success can be a complex job. That's where press release and content distribution providers come in. There are many marketplace options from which to choose, and they vary widely in what they offer and how well they can help achieve your objectives.

It's important to have a clear idea of what you need before you get too far into the buying process — and well before you start comparing vendors. Otherwise, you may focus on products and providers that miss the mark, instead of identifying avenues that will help you achieve your marketing and communications goals.

Let this be your guide to asking the right questions so that you can pick the best press release distribution and promotion provider that will work for your brand.



Q: What is the desired outcome of your communications campaign? Do you have a single goal in mind, or are you trying to accomplish a range of benchmarks?

PRE-PRODUCTION

- **Earned Media Pickup:** Third party coverage reinforces and authenticates the story your brand is trying to tell. Choose a content distribution service that has a proven track record with media and a history of providing valuable news and information. Make sure the provider offers direct, but credible, delivery into editorial systems and newsrooms of major media organizations and trade publications. In addition, the ability to target individual influencers via email is very important to a well-rounded media relations strategy. Ideally a service should also connect brands and industry experts together with journalists so they can write compelling stories together.
- **Online Visibility:** Your content distribution service should enable your brand to reach the websites that matter most to you. However, it's not just about the numbers, but rather, are you targeting the right placements? Big name sites such as Yahoo!, MarketWatch, Business Journals, etc., attract a large viewership and increase the chance that people will see your content, while niche sites reach highly engaged and targeted information seekers. Also consider who else you want to reach: blogs, broadcast media, news and information services, newspapers, portals, trade publications and investor sites.
- **Search Visibility:** You already know the importance of search visibility. According to [Salesforce research](#), 87 percent of consumers research online before making a major purchase. Choose a content distribution service that has high search engine authority to increase your opportunity to organically reach your target audience.
- **Conversion and New Audience Acquisition:** You probably have content promotion in your own channels — website, blog, social — well thought out, but is that enough when your goal is to acquire new prospects and contacts? Sharing your story across multiple channels — including press release distribution — can get your message in front of additional professionals and consumers. Your ideal content promotion partner will have a network, as well as content and targeting options that will help your story be discovered — and be acted on — by the audiences you seek. Premium providers will have tools that integrate with your marketing automation software (Marketo, Eloqua, HubSpot, etc.) so you can efficiently measure the inbound leads your content generates.
- **Brand Engagement:** How does your press release service enable you to share your content on social channels? Not only should there be social sharing tools built right into the pages hosting your news releases, but many services also offer brands an opportunity to engage with a broader audience through curated, industry-specific social media feeds.
- **Compliance & Shareholder Confidence:** Meet regulatory requirements by delivering to all disclosure points and financial terminals simultaneously and securely through your service. This is a must for publicly traded companies who need to deliver news directly to financial information institutions and systems. Your provider should also have a rigorous vetting process and maintain strict guidelines and security procedures.

According to a survey of nearly 2,000 journalists, when asked what type of content they want to receive from brands 71% said news announcements & press releases. Every press release receives distribution to Cision PR Newswire's exclusive digital newsroom, PR Newswire for Journalists, where over 20K journalists, bloggers, and influencers visit daily for story leads.



Q: Who is your intended audience?

Pinpoint your geographical, industry-specific and demographic goals

- **Local, regional and national markets:** Whether you want to gain targeted attention across a wide spectrum with a national audience or target your message through a narrow, local lens, your press release distribution service should offer a solution to match your requirements.
- **Target specific industries:** If you want to target a niche, industry-specific market, consider the targeting capabilities that a service provides. You should be able to specify that you want to reach journalists in a certain sector or send your press releases to online websites that cover industry-specific markets.
- **Increase search visibility, conversion rates and web traffic:** Boost your brand's discoverability and maximize results for your campaigns. The press release distribution service's own website is key to getting your content to show up in search engines. Make sure that the site has industry-leading search authority, is search-engine optimized and receives millions of visitors.



Q: What features are important to you?

- **Customizable, Interactive Content:** Customizable content options that wow — it's more than just rendering hyperlinks these days. Is your news release available in a web-ready HTML file that's easy for websites to read? Can you include subheadlines, bullets, anchor text, and bolding to make your message visually interesting?
- **Multimedia:** Can you embed photos and videos and reach distribution points to tell a highly compelling story in a visually engaging way? And does that multimedia content follow your press releases everywhere it goes? Make your story stand out and build deeper connections with your audiences by promoting multimedia content — videos, photos, infographics and audio clips — proven to increase views by 3X with the use of multimedia assets.
- **Additional Services:** From media monitoring to targeting platforms, video production, strategic media placement, media and IR websites and international distribution — make sure your vendor has the capabilities to support your brand's current marketing and communications programs and future strategic needs as you grow.



Q: What are your service level expectations?

- **Professional Editorial Guidance:** Consider the credentials of the team that will help you polish your press release. Are they degreed professionals with industry experience? Some questions to ask:
 - ◆ Do staff proofread and evaluate the content under standardized quality guidelines?
 - ◆ Do they offer advice on search optimization and best practices?
 - ◆ Can they provide in-depth content analysis and feedback?
 - ◆ How quickly can you turnaround my press release?
- **User Experience:** The service should offer a secure, online easy-to-use submission process. Consider whether a secure online portal and account management tools are offered to help you optimize the release process. For example, can you preview and approve a copy of your content before it goes out? Can you schedule your press release for a specific time?
- **Hours:** If your brand needs assistance outside of normal business hours, consider a service that stays open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Crisis communicators can attest to the value of having an always-available staff on hand.

Cision's expert Customer Content Specialists are available around the clock to offer editorial guidance and assistance – including during a crisis.



Q: How can you evaluate success?

- **Reporting:** You want a service that can help you measure the success of your brand's content promotion and distribution efforts. Analytics should be part of the package, providing actionable information and valuable ROI to help you gain insights and parse data by release and account performance. See where your content appeared online, how many views it received and what organizations are interested. Uncover the audience that viewed your content and track engagement with click-throughs, shares, tweets and downloads. Export data and analyze your success so that you can gain insights on current performance data and plan future campaigns. In addition, do you have a dedicated point of contact that can help you understand your results while providing consultative feedback to exceed your communication benchmarks.

As you enter the decision-making process, have a clear goal in mind when choosing between services. Determine what you want your desired outcome to be — it could be earned media pickup, online visibility, brand engagement, audience acquisition, or a combination. Articulating your goals at the start will provide a framework for evaluating press release and content distribution services.



IDENTIFY INFLUENCERS. CRAFT CAMPAIGNS. ATTRIBUTE VALUE.

Request a demo now to learn how to monitor your broadcast media and build better relationships with influencers who matter.

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