

the essential founder's guide to

PR

The communications,
press, and content
strategies that give
your company the
attention it needs
to **scale**.



built by

MANEUVRE

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Part I: Do you need PR?



Part I:

Do you need PR?

Learn when you should invest in PR, and how it differs from other departments like communications and marketing.

Perhaps you've just closed your first funding round for your startup, set out to build your own business as an entrepreneur, or decided to pursue a new nonprofit or initiative. Whatever your path, you are now a founder - perhaps not for the first time! And soon, you're going to have to decide if you should invest your valuable resources (your time, or your money) into PR. Do you really need it?

To answer this question simply, let's start by admitting what most PR agencies will never tell you:

You may not need PR right now.

PR is short for 'public relations', which is a broad term covering several different types of work. As a founder, what you need to understand is that PR should be putting you in front of the publics that you need to like you. That includes customers / clients / partners, but also governments and regulators, investors, event organisers, award committees, current employees, prospective employees, journalists, or even the company that may end up buying you one day. Despite its clear value to your success and bottom line, it isn't always the right time for your company to invest in PR.

Going through this exercise helps make sure you can afford PR, and that you have the initial wins for it to be worth doing. More on this later.

PR is worth investing in when:

Note: By investing, we mean both your time as a founder, and/or your funding to have assistance, like from a hire, freelancer, or agency.

You have a product that you can sell - even if it is customising a MVP. In other words: It doesn't have to be fully baked, but it does need to be available, live, and able to be used. It doesn't have to be a product in the strictest sense of the word, either - if you're a VC, it means you have funding to deploy into companies. If you're an NGO, you have the means to operate the services you promise. If you're a services provider, you have services that someone can utilise.

You have (or are!) a founder that is ready, interested and comfortable dedicating time to writing, interviews, and conferences.

You are starting to have a reputation (good or bad) in your important markets. If good, PR can help make it better so you are more than prepared for any down months; if bad, PR is a necessary investment so you can reset your course and avoid these issues following you in the future.

You've already established some preliminary milestones that make investing the money and time worthwhile - a funding round, paying customers, or at least enough room in your budget for things like traveling to conferences or paying for award applications.

PR is **not worth investing in if:**

You are not yet comfortable financially to either spend money on PR or to spend time away from landing customers and investors.

You do not yet have an executive or founder that wants to do interviews, start

writing, or spend time being present/representing the company.

You do not yet have wins to talk about - such as a minimum viable product, a funding round secured, or a team.

PR is **never worth investing in if it:**

Will not put you in front of your ideal customers or partners.

Will put you in a difficult place with your regulators, governing bodies, licensors.

Will cost you more than you are comfortable with. One of the ways you can kneecap your future PR efforts is by spending too much, too early - you may struggle to see returns you think are worth the investment, and/or you may end up overspending with a bad agency that doesn't deliver enough value for the money.

Invest in PR when you have products/services, a spokesperson, and some initial milestones completed

Don't invest in PR if you are cash-strapped, without a comfortable spokesperson, or do not yet have products, services, or at least an MVP

Never invest in PR if it doesn't put you in front of your buyers, if it will create reputational issues, or if the only way you can afford it is if it lands you in the New York Times (or similar)

Good PR should make you visible (in press, media, podcasts, events, awards, and other locations) to your ideal customer or partner. And because you're in the right place to find them, the journalists and investors you want will also find you, too. Unlike marketing and advertising, PR isn't 'bought', lending your company more legitimacy in front of these key audiences.

If an event organiser puts you on stage for free; or if a journalist writes about your company without being paid to do so, you must be doing something interesting.

How PR drives growth and revenue

PR can drive growth and revenue for your company in two ways: Legitimacy and visibility.

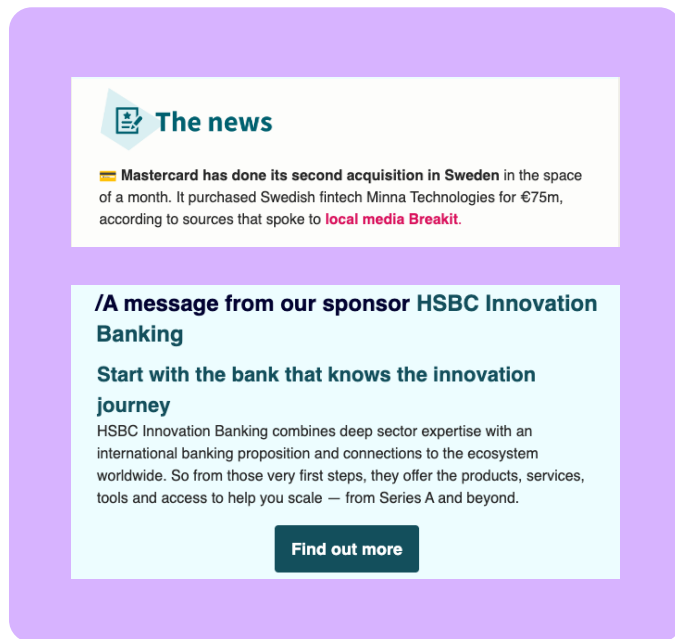
Unlike marketing and advertising, the opportunities you get through PR (like speaking at a conference without sponsoring it, or being interviewed in a media outlet without paying for a sponsored article) are understood to be the result of merit. The thinking goes, you have to be a successful company to get these publications, or you as a founder must be interesting or original enough to warrant that attention. That then proves to your customers (or investors) that someone else finds you impressive - and that someone isn't financially incentivised to do so. That's why you will see companies add logo walls to their homepages and investor decks - usually of the media outlets they've been quoted in (or the awards they've won). These external opportunities validate what you've built and are building.

That legitimacy only matters, however, if it is visible to the right people. And the right people are your customers. If you run a high-growth fintech that services businesses in Europe and your PR agency keeps getting you on the phone with US-focused outlets, you'll have plenty of credibility - but it will be in the wrong place, and it won't convert into revenue or growth.

There's a lot of PR like this that doesn't result in **legitimacy** or **visibility**. Sometimes it's because the PR strategy is bad, like in this example, and we'll cover later in this book about how to avoid that. But sometimes it's because what you think is "PR" is actually a different department entirely. PR is related to, but is entirely distinct from, marketing, advertising, communications, and content. Each of these workstreams delivers different wins. While they can and should work together for maximum success, what often happens in smaller companies and startups is that a founder thinks they have a PR agency or PR department, but really just has a marketing person who also writes executive LinkedIn posts.

Here's what you need to know to discern between the different types of work.

The difference between PR and marketing/advertising



Images 1 and 2: Both of these screenshots are from the same newsletter ([Sifted](#)). You can clearly see the difference between paid content (advertising/marketing) and a press mention.

These images are taken from a newsletter issued by the European technology media Sifted (owned by the Financial Times). The blue rectangle is quite clearly an advertisement (“a message from our sponsor” gives it away). The white rectangle is the result of PR - called “earned media.”

Earned media is when an external outlet recognises your work – such as being included in a newsletter, journalists writing about your product launch, bloggers sharing your latest innovation, or industry experts quoting you in their articles. It is unpaid - you’ve ‘earned’ it by being worth writing about. A large part of public relations is trying to get this kind of attention - and it succeeds when you (or your PR person) have made the case that your company is part of a larger (ideally positive) story that journalists think is relevant to their readers.

While getting this mention in Sifted would certainly help your marketing department in landing new customers, it is very much the result of PR. If it was the result of marketing, it would be the blue rectangle - a paid advertisement. Advertising is attractive because it can be achieved very quickly, if you have the budget.

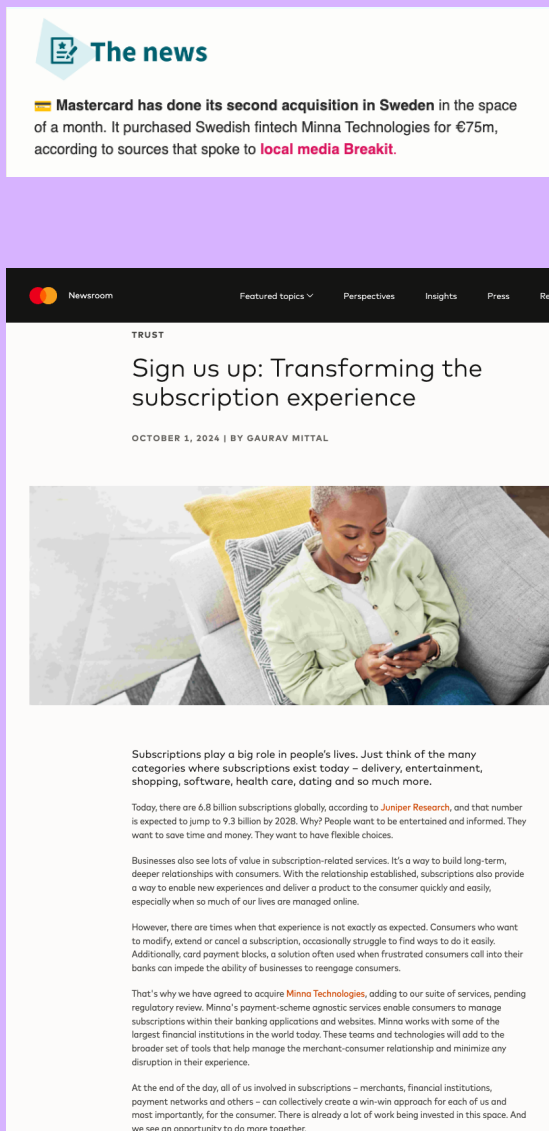
An ad can introduce your product to potential customers, but earned media coverage will provide the endorsement that persuades consumers to **trust and buy it**.

Paid advertisements are worth doing, especially if you want more attention from a specific media outlet. They get thousands of emails a day from founders who want to be covered for free. If you have some marketing or advertising budget to spend, and they’re the right outlet for your customers, you should consider reaching out to them. A reputable media outlet won’t accept money for articles, but you sponsoring their newsletter will get you on the radar of their journalists.

When you are reaching out to journalists with your recent fundraising news to get mention in their newsletter, it’s PR. When you are using your mention in the news as part of a revenue-oriented campaign (say, social media posts and emails to prospective customers), it’s marketing. When you are paying a news outlet to put a few sentences about your company on their website or newsletter, it’s advertising.

When **PR, marketing and advertising** are used together properly, they form the foundation for a strong brand.

The difference between PR and communications and content



Images 3 and 4: Media mention about Mastercard's acquisition in Sweden (source: [Sifted](#)) vs. Mastercard's press release about this acquisition (source: [Mastercard.com](#)).

If PR is what earns you the media mention, communications and content is the baseline of your 'submission.' Communications sets the overall message and strategy for your company; content delivers it. What communications and content provides does influence your PR strategy and marketing campaigns (as they should all be related), but it remains a distinct work stream.

We're going through the different types of work so you know what to do and hire for. Sometimes the PR department is called "communications." Sometimes the communications department is focused mainly on PR, with some content or communications work. Sometimes the communications and PR people sit within marketing. The more you know the difference (and similarities) between the fields, the better you'll be able to discern the 'real' services an agency can provide, or the work your first hire can take on.

From the same newsletter, we see again the white rectangle of PR ("earned media"). But now we're discussing the difference between PR and communications/content, which is why you can see as well the image of an article on the Mastercard newsroom. Here, they've written about their investment in the company - the investment that was included in the (unpaid) part of the newsletter.

Communications/content is the message a company tells about itself - such as in a blog in its newsroom. PR takes that message and packages it in a way that would be interesting to journalists for inclusion in the news. A good way to see the difference is to look at the numbers in each image.

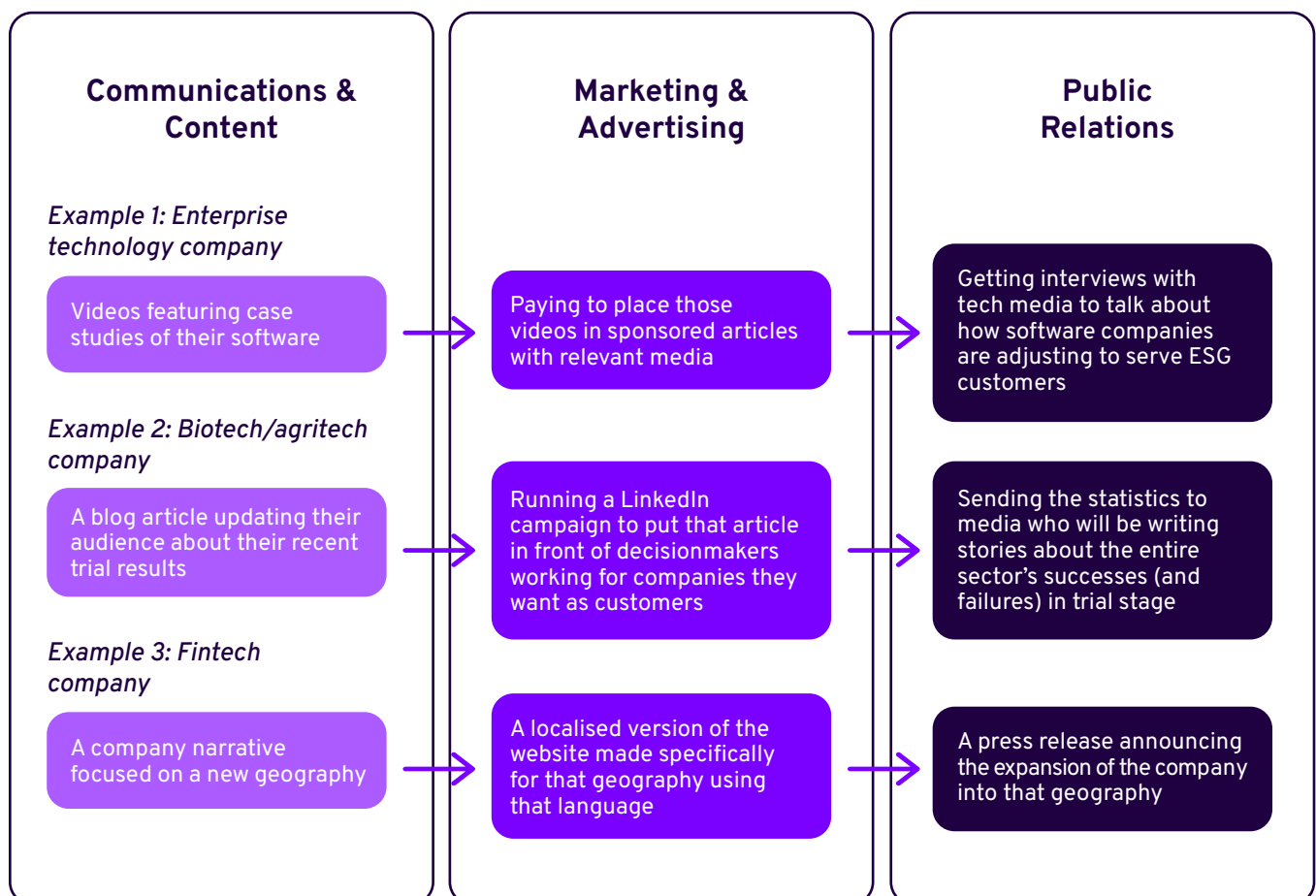
Earned media/PR focuses on the amount of the deal as it is the most newsworthy. Communications/content does not mention this number at all, but instead uses other statistics to tell a story about the demand

for subscriptions. Important however that both of these workstreams can drive revenue. Someone reading the newsletter may decide to sign up for a Mastercard because they're Swedish and like the fact they're supporting Swedish entrepreneurs; someone that follows Mastercard on LinkedIn may see their blog and decide to move their company's payments cards to Mastercard from Visa.

Why doesn't communications tell the same story as PR? Good question. PR is focused on the aspects of you and your company that are most interesting to outside parties, which can include but isn't limited to your customers (people who pay you). What your customers may

care to know is that you're expanding your subscriptions features, which will be great for them. But journalists don't care about how much more services you will be able to sell your customers - they are interested in the larger, macro story (which, in this case, is perhaps that Sweden is now a new hub of attractive startups). An event organiser will not give you a (free) microphone because you added a new feature to your product, but they may consider it if you can give advice on how to sell your company to a behemoth like Mastercard.

Other examples, anonymised from our work with emerging technology companies (of all team sizes and geographies):



What to know about press and media



Images 5-10: Logos of Euronews, TechCrunch, StrictlyVC, VentureBeat, CoinDesk and Forbes.

PR is synonymous with press and media. This is an audience that is hard to impress, and can't be bought (not in any way that retains maximum legitimacy, anyway). There are different types of media, which we cover in Part II. But the most important characteristic of press and media to remember is that they are **not to be sold to**. If you want news coverage, if you want to be on that podcast, you have to find a way to align your incentives with that of the journalist. And you can't use money. Every journalist and every media outlet is different, but as we go through the next several chapters, here's what you need to remember.

1. **Journalists do not work for you.** They have a boss and a remit of their own, which likely includes "deliver valuable information and insight to the readers who pay for our work." This is different from your remit, which is to

scale your company. They do not care if you scale your company - not unless their readers do. They will sleep fine if your announcement goes poorly. Will you?

2. **Journalists are humans with lives and commitments.** Do not get upset if they can't cover your news in a short period of time. Imagine someone showed up in your inbox asking for free work, delivered in 24 hours. What would you say?
3. **Journalists get hundreds, if not thousands, of propositions a day** from founders and PR people wanting them to cover their company. Be patient, but also be creative and personable, to increase your chances.

The best PR approach for new companies, startups & scaleups

Your company may be in a place where it needs PR - but it may not need external help (yet!) The rest of this book is written to give you, the founder, the tools with which to start a PR "engine" of your own. In brief, here's what that looks like.

It will take some time. You are not yet known, after all. That's why you need to start today.

Even a little bit of PR work now will save you hundreds of hours in the future when you feel more ready (and more capitalised) to bring on help.

Start to capture your company wins/stats/milestones/customers/testimonials/results



Founder starts writing and sharing opinions on trends important in your sector



Publish both on your website and executive profiles



Start doing early, often and consistent outreach to media, events, awards with this information as a baseline



Execute well on smaller opportunities, sharing them on your profiles



Continue doing so and watch as they turn into larger opportunities

Exercises

In Part II, we're going to cover how to use PR to get attention for your company. It will be more valuable to you if, as you read, you have an idea of the opportunities you want PR to bring to your company. In this exercise, you will start to identify these outlets and opportunities. In later sections, we will build on this exercise. By the end of this book, you will have good PR foundations with which to start reaching out to them.

Exercise 1: Identify your PR targets.

Earlier, you wrote down the media outlets that you want to target with your PR efforts. Read over that list, keeping your buyer audience in mind. Which outlets are more important? Less important? Are there customers/buyers that don't read any of these media? What do they read? Add these outlets to your list.

List out up to 10 media outlets you know your customers/clients read or listen to.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Then review the list. If you've listed mainly "major" or "mainstream" outlets like the BBC or the Financial Times or TechCrunch, go find some other media or podcasts that may have smaller readership but are much more targeted to your field or region. You can repeat this exercise for the events/conferences you'd like to be at, the awards and recognitions you'd like to win, and the outlets/places you'd like your opinions/writing to be published.

Examples:

Fintechs: The Financial Times vs. The Fintech Times

European startups: Sifted and EU-Startups

AI companies: TechCrunch vs. Tom's Hardware

Entrepreneurs/content creators: Business Insider vs. City AM

Part II: How to use PR to get attention for your company



Part II:

How to use PR to get attention for your company

Get to know some key definitions, start planning your PR strategy, and learn how to contact the media to share the news with them.

In this section, we're going to dive into how you, as a founder, can start doing some PR on your own. Soon, you may want to hire someone to help you - whether that's a freelancer or a full agency. If you've done some of this initial outreach yourself - or have familiarised yourself with these terms and processes - you will be well-suited to know if what they're doing is good PR.

The key terms to know before investing in PR

Paid vs. owned vs. earned media

These terms are thrown around quite often, so here's what to know.

Owned media includes the organisation's assets, like websites and social media profiles. These are the platforms where you have complete control over the content and can directly engage with your audience. It's your digital home base, where you can tell your story in your own words.

Earned media we covered in Part I - it is the third-party attention you win through PR efforts. This includes media coverage, guest articles, reviews, and even social media mentions you earn through your actions and your reputation. Earned media is often the most trusted form because it's third-party validation of your brand's value.

Paid media is the advertising space you purchase. This includes online ads, sponsored content, and traditional advertising methods. Paid media helps you reach a broader audience quickly and can effectively drive immediate action.

Strategically blending these channels will allow your message to reach a wider audience and reinforce your brand's narrative. For example, sharing a blog post on social media where it can be picked up by a journalist (**earned media**), and then promoted through an ad campaign (**paid media**).

Media, in general, can refer to print media (magazines and newspapers); online media (online news sources and blogs); radio and podcasts; TV and even social media video outlets.

Quotable vs. newsworthy

These are related terms as they both have to do with being interesting to journalists. Quotable usually relates to people (such as a founder); newsworthy usually relates to a piece of news by that founder or their company.

You are **quotable** if you share interesting, original and crisp opinions and insights on topics you have expertise in. You and your company are **newsworthy** if what you are sharing is interesting to the press. That usually requires it being 1) new (not before announced) and 2) relevant to a larger trend or story.

It is very impressive if your startup, say, creates a new AI product for health analysis, built on billions of unique and proprietary data points. It is **newsworthy** if you are the first to do so, or if you land a Fortune 50 customer as a result.

PR materials you create yourself

We will cover in the next section how you can create the key materials you will need for your PR outreach. Here are brief definitions that you can refer to at any time.

Announcement schedule: The schedule by which your content (press releases, blogs, emails to journalists) goes out. This schedule protects the newsworthiness and ensures you have all the material you need to make the announcement successful.

Biographies: Your founders and C-suite should have professional bios that can be shared with journalists and event organisers, as well as be included on the website. These should be no more than 300-400 words, although you can prepare longer versions to have at hand.

Boilerplate: This is the bio of your company. It should be maximum 5-6 sentences and it should explain what your company is (a startup? A firm? A VC?), what you do (your products/services/sector), and your vision (what sets you apart/makes you interesting vs. your competitors). It should also include key statistics/customer names, if you have them, and your geographies.

Newsroom: This is a page on your website where journalists can go to see media coverage and press releases, as well as information about the company they can use in their stories (media kit).

Media kit: This is information that journalists and other third parties can use about your company, such as your boilerplate, your logo, and the bios/photos of your founder or spokespeople. It can also include the contact details of the person responsible for media.

Pitches (including media advisory): This is the word used to describe outreach (emails, phone calls, Twitter DMs) to third parties like journalists. It is a 'pitch' because you are trying to convince them to open your email and write about you.

Pitching strategy: This term is used often by PR people and agencies to describe how they are conducting outreach to the media. **Embargo** pitching is when they send news to several journalists ahead of time, all at once. **Exclusive** pitching is when they offer the story to one journalist at a time, promising them exclusive interviews or access in return for a guaranteed story.

Press release: This is a factual accounting of the news you want to share. Its primary audience is journalists, so it should avoid

marketing/sales language and be focused on the newsworthiness of your announcement.

Spokespersons: Aside from the founder, these are the people who are approved and trained to represent the company. They may speak to the media, speak at conferences, publish on behalf of the company, or represent the company in awards and other external opportunities.

Sponsored articles: These are articles that are paid for and appear on media websites/in publications. They often will say “sponsored” or be clear they are advertising content. Oftentimes, PR/marketing/communications people write these articles which are then reviewed by the media outlet’s marketing/advertising team.

Earned media

Backgrounders & intros: These are meetings with press that are not related to a specific article or story in progress. Journalists will often do these meetings to figure out who could be a valuable source for the future.

Interviews: These are meeting with the press that are likely (but not always) to result in published news. Everything said is fair game, so be careful.

Op-eds & thought leadership: These are articles or insight pieces written by your leadership that are submitted for consideration to a news outlet for publication. They are ‘opinion editorials’, i.e., articles sharing personal insight on a topic of expertise. They often do not (or cannot) mention the company or its products. That would make it a sponsored article.

Other tools

Email validators: These are tools (many available at no cost online) with which you can ‘guess’ and verify an email address. This is good to use if a journalist’s email is not easily seen on their author page or social media.

Press email platforms like Muckrack, Prowly, Cision: These are subscription based platforms

that offer journalist contact details and lists of journalists by region, topic, etc. They can be expensive but make it easier to find contact details. Your PR freelancer or agency should have a subscription - as a new company, you will likely not need to invest in this yet as many journalists make their emails public. Another good way to find journalists is to read the outlets they write for regularly, set up alerts on Google News, or follow them on social media.

Email tracking: There are services you can use, like HubSpot, which allow you to see if your emails were opened. Some outlets and organisations block this feature, however.

Press opportunity platforms: There are plenty of online resources where journalists can request to hear from experts on specific topics (one well-known platform is Qwoted).

Newswires (Business Wire, PR Newswire): These are press release distribution platforms that send out releases to news agencies on your behalf, as well as publish them online. Their pricing differs based on geographies and word count.

Spelling and grammar tools (Grammarly, Google Spell check, Hemingway): When reaching out to journalists or doing your own writing, you will see better results if your writing is correct. Therefore, you should use some or all of these platforms to ensure what you’re pitching is good.

There are many other tools and platforms you can use in your PR efforts. If you use these terms, you will be able to search for the latest and greatest options.

Exercises

Exercise 2

Which of these materials or subscriptions does your company have already? Pull the documents (including rough drafts of any written op-eds or press releases) into a folder for easy access and sharing with your future PR person. List out the subscriptions as well so you have them on hand and know what each of them do.



Where your PR strategy should begin: Planning

If you've decided now is the time to start doing PR for yourself or your company, great. To make the investment of your time and resources worthwhile, follow this process.

Establish your company goal: What does PR need to do for you?

There are many, many outlets and journalists and events and awards and opportunities to go after. There's no one right answer. To know how to best use your time, you should decide now what the ideal business outcome of your PR would be. **What would getting interviewed by that outlet do for your bottom line?**

Here's what founders, CEOs and entrepreneurs have told us about their motivations to start PR, and what their business outcomes were:

"We need to attract more customers in Europe, and the advertising we're doing isn't working because the customers don't believe we're really 'present' there. We need our work to be more visible."

"We need to raise another round of fundraising, but we're having trouble getting meetings with the VCs we want. Having press clips and more recognition in our sector would help us make it clear we're a major player."

"Everyone always compares us to our major competitor, which makes it difficult for our customers to understand what sets us apart - and makes it near impossible to get mentioned or included if that competitor is already mentioned or included. Having a reputable third party confirm what makes us different would make it easier to explain it to customers and partners as they're not just hearing it from us."

"We need to attract more donors to our foundation, but most of them haven't heard of us. They've heard of our founder, but that isn't translating into more support. We need a way to raise money without just relying on her name."

In all of these examples, the underlying reason is revenue-related. That's common. PR is the engine that makes you more visible. If you're going to invest in it, it should deliver a return of some kind.

Establish your most important reader: The buyer audiences

In marketing, there is a concept of a 'persona' - a sample person that buys your product or service. With research, you can know their age, gender, geography, job role, educational history, even hobbies. This persona is important to get right, because you also want to figure out what they trust. Personas can get incredibly specific, because marketing can be very specific. Unlike marketing and advertising, though, it isn't good practice to be so granular with your PR outreach. Many different personas read different media and listen to different podcasts, so you should group them into 'buyer audiences' and go after the opportunities that resonate the best with them as a group.

Figure out where your personas have overlap in the media they read/listen to, the events they attend, the awards/platforms they trust, and even the topics they follow. That is your "buyer audience" and that's who you should have in mind when planning your PR.

Decide what makes you quotable and prepare to share it

Your company won't always have news to share. In between the newsy months and the quiet months, you can still land PR 'wins' if your spokespeople are quotable. You, the founder, are the main spokesperson. It is possible that now or in the future, some of your executives will be spokespeople too.

Choosing your 'source' areas & opinions

Looking at your buyer audience - what topics do they follow? What are they interested in learning more about? What kind of news, updates, or insights could convince them that you and your company are worth talking to? These are your 'source' areas - opinions and insights that you can offer to journalists, whether in the form of

interviews or thought leadership pieces. Once you have this list, you can determine who your spokespeople should be.

These areas and opinions are not about you or your company. Rather, they're about the field in which you operate (or your customers operate), informed by your work at your company. Here's an example.

Company A runs a hardware startup that provides components to several industries including space, defence, and climate.

Company B is a marketing and design agency specialising in newer technologies.

Not a source area/opinion for press:

We make the best and best-priced components for these corporations, saving them money while delivering better quality.

Source area/opinion for press: It is important for climate technology companies to keep technology costs low, because of the sheer number of sensors and instruments required to monitor climate change - otherwise they will never scale to have significant impact. Here's how some of the best startups do it.

Not a source area/opinion for

press: We deliver the most creative and original campaigns for tech companies.

Source area/opinion for press:

A reason 'normal' people don't understand crypto is because the marketing is bad - not only because it all sounds the same, but also because it promises vague improvements without clearly explaining how it works. Here's why this is holding back adoption.

Choosing your spokespeople

Here's how to choose your spokesperson wisely. In most cases, especially at the beginning, it should be you (the founder).

Expertise: They need to know the company and the related topics inside and out. They should be the go-to person for any detailed questions. They might have to do interviews, write opinion pieces, or speak at events, so they need to be prepared for every question that might come their way.

Your CTO might be the best fit for tech announcements because they can dive into the technical details. For financial news, your CEO should be the star. They can explain the numbers, economic impact, and what it means for the company's future.

Communication skills: Your spokesperson should be interesting to listen to - well-spoken and charismatic, ideally. At a minimum, they must be relatable and convincing. They should speak the language of your customers. They should have authority - through their title, but also through their career.

They should also have good instincts on what to avoid saying. Everyone can always benefit from more media and speaking training, but it is hard to train someone out of speaking out of turn.

Media training: One good reason to hire PR help is to run a media training. This can be done once or every couple months, or even just to prepare for a major interview. Media training helps the spokesperson avoid common pitfalls, handle tricky questions, and steer the conversation back to your key points. A well-trained spokesperson can turn even the most challenging interview into an opportunity to shine.

How to write a press-friendly bio

A bio is a short, professional summary of someone's career and achievements, used in press materials and on your company's website. You will also use this to explain to journalists why your spokespeople are credible and helpful to their work. They can vary in style and length, but they should include the following:

- **Title and role:** This should be part of every bio, ideally in the first sentence. If a journalist reads nothing else, they know who you are and what you do.
- **Professional background and achievements:** A summary of the person's career path, focusing on the expertise areas most relevant to their role now.
- **Recognition:** A sentence or two at maximum explaining the external recognition they have received, such as the awards they have won, books they've written, or organisations they have chaired.

- **Education:** A sentence about where they studied/what they majored in.

You can prepare an additional sentence that says where they have been interviewed or what conferences they have spoken at. Leave this out in the version for your website but keep it handy when pitching as someone may ask.

How to write your company boilerplate

Your company also needs a press-friendly bio. This is your boilerplate. A boilerplate is the standard paragraph at the end of a press release that gives an overview of your company. It should state clearly but briefly what your company does and include a link to your website where journalists can get more information. A well-crafted boilerplate helps journalists quickly understand **who you are** and **what you're about**.

Elements of a good boilerplate:

- **Company description:** A brief overview of what your company does
- **Mission statement:** Your company's mission or vision.
- **Key achievements:** Major milestones, awards, or recognitions.
- **Key clients:** Make sure the clients agree to being included.
- **Contact information:** How to contact a company for more information.

Keep boilerplates short but informative. Consider it the "about us" section for your press releases—and, again, always concise and to the point. Update it regularly to reflect the latest achievements and developments. For inspiration, look at the press releases of companies you admire (or your competitors).

Establish your targets

Finding your target press outlets and journalists

One of the best ways to check whether the outlets you're targeting with your PR are worthwhile is to ask yourself, "Does my buyer read this?" If yes, you should read it too. Subscribe to their newsletters, and follow the outlet or their journalists on social media. Even when you aren't actively reaching out, you should be familiarising yourself with what they write about so you can decide how best to approach them.

Not every household name newspaper or media outlet is a good fit for your buyer audience. Keep in mind too that, when you are a brand-new company, it is difficult to get into these kinds of global media without having major news to share. Get comfortable with the smaller, more specific outlets that cover just one area, and cover it really well. These are also called "trade media" and can often deliver even better ROI than, say, a tiny mention in TechCrunch.

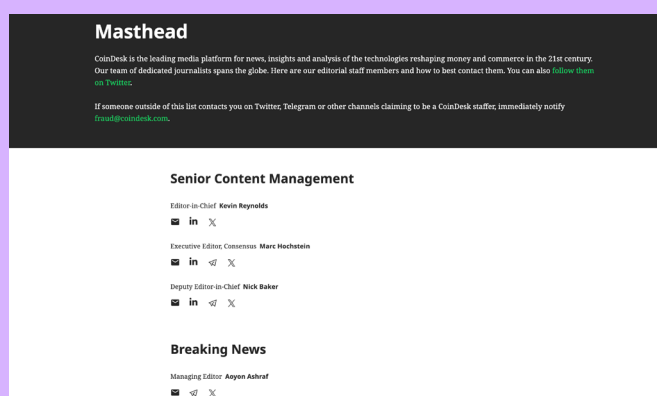
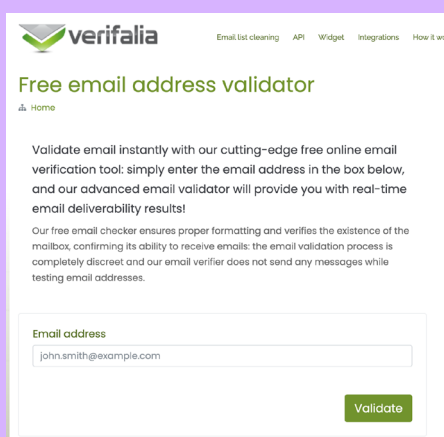
As for how to contact them, remember: Media do want to hear from you! They need stories,

they need scoops, they need quotes, they need interesting people to share opinions on the news of the day. Many journalists put their emails on their author page of the website (just click on their name) or on their social media handles. You can also check the Contact page of the news outlet (sometimes called Masthead), or use their contact form to ask to be connected to the person you've found. All else failing, you can use an email validator to guess at their email.

Most outlets use some form of these email types:

first.last@outletwebsite.com
firstinitiallastname@outletwebsite.com
firstnamelastinitial@outletwebsite.com
firstname@outletwebsite.com

The best way to find journalists is to read them. You can either look up topics by keyword in Google News, or set Google Alerts to get served news and links (this is a good way to find timely topics). Otherwise, you should read newsletters from media outlets (and Substack), especially those that share "good reads" from other writers. When you find these stories, save them and reference them in your pitches when you reach out. You should also set alerts for your competitors - if a journalist is interviewing them, they may well interview you, too!



Images 11 and 12: Screenshot from Verifalia, one of email validators and screenshot of the Masthead at CoinDesk.

Exercises

Exercise 3

Earlier, you wrote down the media outlets that you want to target with your PR efforts. Read over that list, keeping your buyer audience in mind. Which outlets are more important? Less important? Are there customers/buyers that don't read any of these media? What do they read? Add these outlets to your list.

Exercise 4

List out what you can be a source on for these outlets. If you're not sure, go read some of their articles. When they quote someone, what are they talking about (topic-wise)? Could you speak on that, or something related?

Exercise 5

Using the guidelines above, write your boilerplate. If you're stuck, go to the press release section/newsrooms of companies you admire and scroll to the bottom of their press releases to read their boilerplates.

1. Does your boilerplate clearly explain what your company does?
2. Is it concise and to the point?
3. Does it include a call to action or a link for more information?

Exercise 6

Now that you have your company boilerplate and your source areas, you can write your own founder bio. When you put your founder bio and your company boilerplate side by side, they should be complementary and go well together. In other words: Neither should contradict what the other says.

Exercise 7

You've already found some of your key outlets. Now find a journalist at each one that you want to build a relationship with. See if you can find, or reverse engineer, their email.

Starting your PR strategy: How to contact the media before you have news

In this section, we're going to show you how you can reach out to the media at any time - including (and especially) in between when you have your own announcements. This is also called "being a source" or "evergreen pitching" or "newsjacking."

There's more to PR than just press, so if you are more interested in getting other opportunities, these same guidelines can be used to reach out to other third parties, like event organisers, analysts/report authors, associations/organisations, etc. The cardinal rule remains the same: Don't sell yourself, sell what you can do for them!

First, make you and your company easy to vet

It is unlikely that a journalist will just happen across your website. You will need to do proactive outreach to them to be considered as a source. When they open your email, they may be interested in talking to you - but first, they're going to look you and your company up.

How to improve your personal profile: LinkedIn

As the person offering expertise, your profile needs to be ready for review. If someone - say, an editor - were to visit your page, would they understand in less than two seconds why you're worth talking to?

Make sure you have:

1. A professional photo
2. A descriptive headline that isn't too long or salesy (the more factual the better) that includes the areas you work in
3. A short, clear bio that includes how someone can get ahold of you
4. Up to date job roles and descriptions

Why LinkedIn? It is the best profile for showcasing career expertise, which is what you need for proving yourself as a source. Many journalists use other platforms including Blue Sky and X/Twitter, but LinkedIn is universal and can also be relied upon by others like event organisers. To see a more detailed checklist of what makes a good LinkedIn profile, see the [appendices](#).

The next stop in researching you as a source will be your company, usually your company's website. Companies that are ready for press interviews have media kits and newsrooms (see [page 14](#) for definitions).

Your newsroom is usually your "blog" section. It can be called Blog, Newsroom, Pressroom, Insights - the point is, it is the page where you will post press releases and share links to coverage of you and your company.

How to create a newsroom & media kit

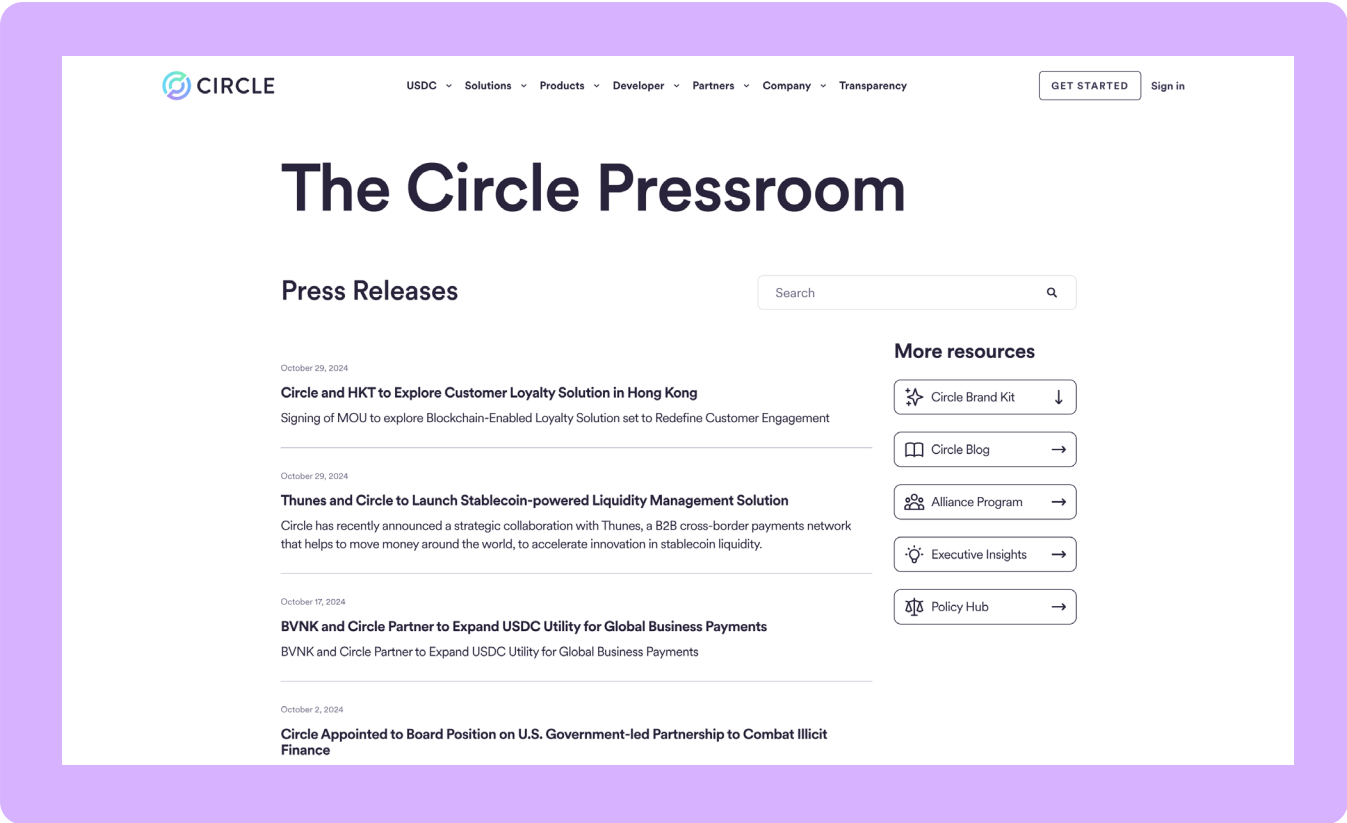


Image 13: Screenshot from Circle's pressroom (source).

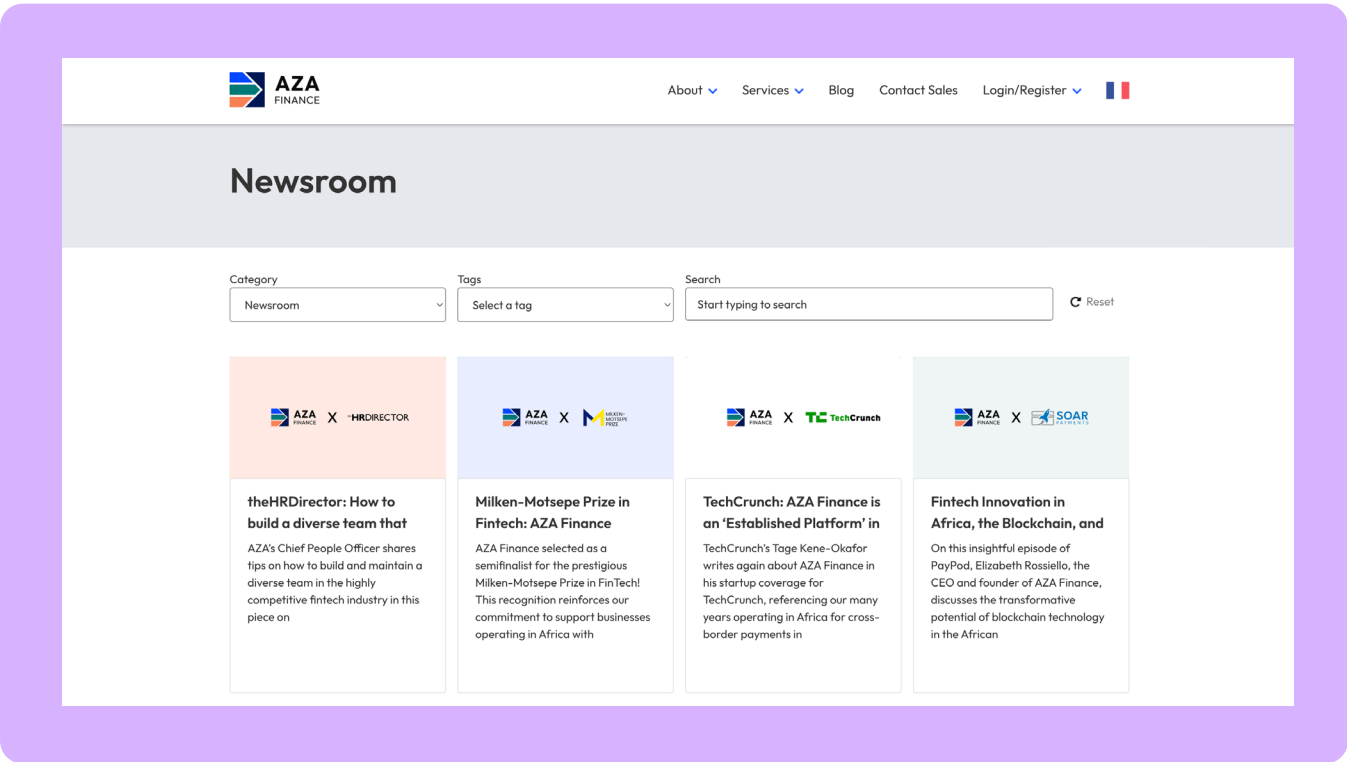


Image 14: Screenshot from AZA Finance's newsroom (source).

Important: Do not post the entire written article or interview of your press ‘win’ - this is copyright infringement and in effect ‘steals’ clicks from the media outlet. Instead, write a short summary of the article that tells your buyers why it’s interesting, then direct them to the story itself to read more. You can, however, embed podcast/audio interviews directly with their Spotify, Apple Podcast or YouTube episode, as this does not ‘steal’ views from the outlet.

Until you have those links, you should use this as a place to post company “wins” - something that you want a journalist to know about you that proves your success to date. You should aim to be posting one of these a month. It can be written as a press release, or as a simple blog announcement if you want it to be less formal. The idea is that if a journalist reviewed all your posts at once, they could easily put together a timeline of your growth to date.

What is a company “win”?

There will be many company wins, but you should focus on metrics, milestones or moments that show:

- **Customer confidence**, such as signing a well-known company, being used by a government agency or closing other partnerships.
- **Financial stability or growth**, such as attracting new funding, or adding senior hires.
- **Research or metrics** that your company is uniquely able to see/compile due to your product.
- **Product announcements, expansion of features/services**. Journalists usually aren’t as interested in these until you are more well known, but you should still capture for yourself (and your future feature articles) how your company’s product is progressing.

Examples below are from companies early on in their growth stage - while they are more 'household names' now, they were not at the time!

Customer confidence



OKCupid starts accepting Bitcoin using Coinbase!

[Company](#), 15 April 2013, 1 min read time



Heyzap Has Started Paying Game Developers In Bitcoin Using Coinbase

[Company](#), 19 April 2013, 1 min read time

Image 15: From Coinbase, a company that by 2024 has undergone a public listing (IPO) and has a market cap of 53.70 billion at time of writing in 2024.

Research/metrics



Image 16: From Chainalysis, a company that by 2024 had raised \$537M and was valued at over \$8 billion. This report was published in 2018, far before that.

Financial stability/growth



Image 17: From Circle, a company that by 2024 had raised more than \$1 billion. These company blog posts are from 2014.

Second, tell the press how you can help them out

There are three types of pitching you can do: **Proactive/day of pitching** (which you can do anytime), **embargo pitching** (sending news before it is public), and **exclusive pitching** (sending news before it is public to only one journalist). In this section, we'll discuss proactive pitching. In the next chapter, we'll go over embargo and exclusive pitching.

Proactive/day of pitching: In between having company news, you can also reach out to the journalists with proactive pitches, offering your C-level employees as future sources. When you find an article touching on a topic you could also share knowledge/opinion on, you can reach out to the journalist, offering yourself up as a resource for the next time. This requires patience - by starting now, they can add you to their sources list for the future.

Be on top of trending stories

Journalists often need to interview neutral third parties for articles. For example, if they're writing about another company in your field, they may need someone who doesn't work at that company to give them some more background or context. That could be you!

In the previous section, you listed out what topics you could be a source on and the media outlets/journalists you could target. Now you have to find out what's happening in the news that makes your expertise valuable - this is called 'trendspotting' or 'newsjacking.' You should be reading the news in your sector regularly, and when something occurs that you have an opinion about, that is a great time to reach out to those journalists. If a journalist has just written a story about that topic, they may not need you as a source right now - but it's a good time to get on their radar for next time. Otherwise, you should keep a list of journalists that often (or sometimes) write about your field. When a new 'trend' or story starts to break, reach out to them immediately offering yourself as a resource. Another good way to do this? Share that journalist's story on your LinkedIn, tagging

them and the outlet, and put your opinion right there in your post. The journalist gets some more traffic to their story and sees your name for the first time in the process!

Don't get discouraged if you don't get so many opens or responses in the beginning. You're a brand new entity to them, and it may take time for them to see you as a valid source. They may also be waiting to see if your company 'goes the distance' before giving you airtime.

Be where the journalists are

There are platforms and websites where journalists request sources and interviewees for their work. Keep in mind they don't have to use what you provide, but by being available and engaging with them, you make it more likely you will be included in the future. If you're going to use these platforms, here's what you need to know:

- **Be quick:** Journalists often work on tight deadlines. Speed counts! You want to be one of the first to respond.
- **Be clear:** Give them helpful, valuable information that directly addresses their request. Don't send thousands of words if they've asked for a short statement.
- **Be credible:** Share your expertise without the hard sell - don't overly push your company or products. Share advice/expertise, not a sales pitch.

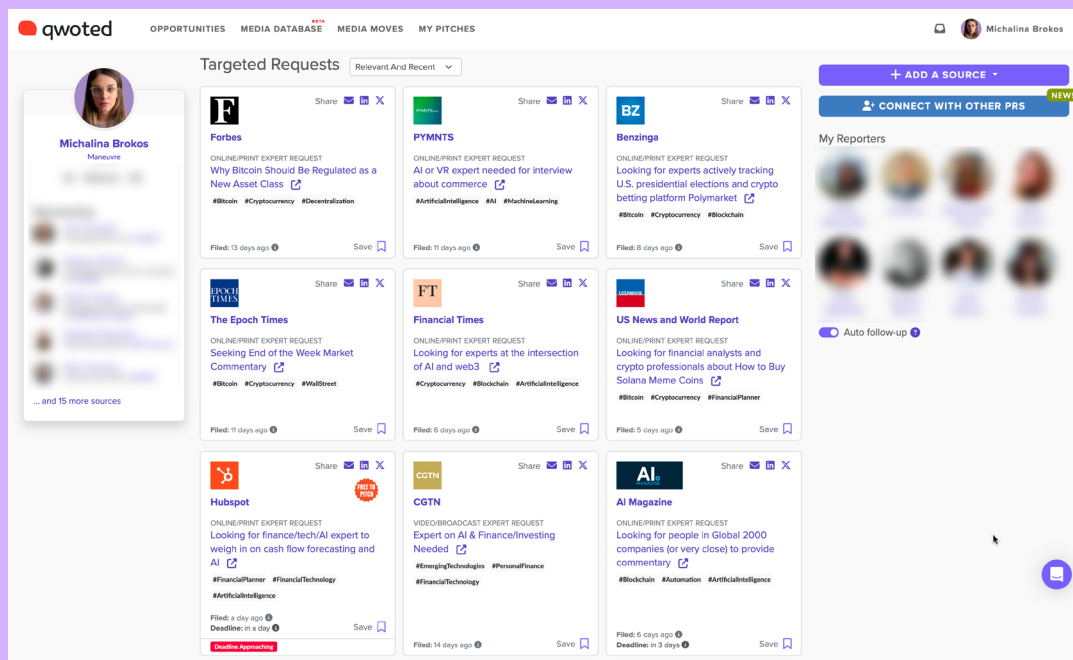


Image 18: Screenshot of Qwoted. Qwoted is (at time of writing) one of these sites where you can view requests by journalists and answer.

Reach out like a human

There's any number of ways you can reach out to a journalist. While you should embrace your own voice and write in a way that you're comfortable, here's what we know works after years of working with journalists around the world:

1. **Write to them like they're humans with jobs.** Press are people with bosses, deadlines, families, and bad days. Treat them as such - they're not being malicious when they don't respond.
2. **Journalists are suspicious people** (rightfully so - that's the job!) and have a low tolerance for anything that seems like sales or marketing. Keep your language human.
3. **Newsworthiness** should be at the heart of all pitches. Are you helping them report on the news? Or is your pitch all about you?
4. **Make the journalist's job easier.** Provide as much information as possible right there in the body of your email so they

have what they need.

5. **Journalists need time** to write a great article. Give them as much opportunity to do so by pitching yourself well in advance.
6. **Media moves quickly.** Be speedy with responses and ready to share details.
7. **Make it easy for the journalist to see why you would be a great source.** Establishing your voice through other published content is a must before proactive pitching. Are these pieces on your LinkedIn or somewhere else visible?

Keep the words "I" "me" "we" "Company Name" out of your subject line and first few sentences - this will train you to send emails that are focused on how you can help, not about how great you are.

Other best practices

1. **Location:** Are you pitching them a U.S. story if they write for an EU publication? Geography is something you should consider before reaching out.
2. **Title:** You should rarely, if ever, pitch someone with an editor-in-chief or executive editor title. They may read your email but they're at the top of the hierarchy - very busy. Reach out to one of their staff instead.
3. **Previous stories:** Will they care about a \$2 million start-up raise if they cover multi-billion corporate acquisitions?
4. **Activity:** Do they publish stories frequently? Have they at least posted something in the past month? If not, they may not be writing at that outlet anymore.
5. **Pitching preferences:** Do they have contact preferences listed on their author page? Be sure to respect these.

Probably not. You show you respect them and their time by only pitching journalists that cover stories like you.

Diagram of a good pitch and process

1. Find the journalist you want to pitch and their email.
2. Write a **subject line** that is likely to get them to open the email. Use numbers if you have them; otherwise focus on the expertise you bring. Don't use your name or your company's name unless you are well known or known to this journalist. We advise not to capitalise every word as it looks 'spammy'
– "source for future on AI in \$5 billion+ beauty market"
3. Read their previous articles, then write a **personalised opening** to your email that references their work. Use their name as well - "Hello Laura." You can compliment their recent articles (calmly!), or you can just refer to them as a jumping off point for why you're getting in touch. The point is to show you are not wasting their time.
4. Write a short paragraph explaining **what you can offer them** - expertise on a specific topic, introductions to other people they may want to interview, or an original/interesting opinion on a current trend or news story they could use. Remember anything you put in writing could end up in print.
5. Share **how they can get ahold of you** - phone or email. You can also hyperlink your LI or company website. Be sure not to use too many links as this can send your email to spam. Don't use any attachments, either!
6. Thank them for reading and invite them to contact you anytime.
7. Add them on LinkedIn and like their posts/articles as they share them.

You can reach out to them again, even if they don't respond, on other topics or news stories/trends. The only rule is if they ask you to stop emailing them, that you stop.

You can also reach out to journalists just to compliment their work or say that you enjoyed an article - you don't always have to be angling for an interview.

Example pitch

This is a pitch made up just for this book. In this example, an EV startup in Europe is trying to win over investors in the USA, so they are pitching a US outlet.

Good morning Jane,

I hope you're doing well. I know you are incredibly busy. Your stories are all over the Tech Innovation Network. I'm not sure how you do that AND host a national podcast.

I'm sure you're aware of the recent news regarding electric vehicle battery advancements in the EU. While your focus is stateside, the EU's new rules could cause several changes in America, such as:

- Increased demand for US-made batteries (and revenue for these companies)
- Potential price fluctuations in the EV market (including for US-based suppliers)
- Shifts in manufacturing strategies (possibly jobs leaving the US)
- Obstacles for U.S. tech companies to move into Europe

If you're looking for a source on this topic, I am more than happy to help - I'm leading an EV startup here in Europe and we often work with US suppliers, partners, etc., so always available to lend some thoughts on what Europe's changes mean for the US and vice versa. You can reach me at this email or my phone number below. Thank you for reading, looking forward to your next article.

Third, get your expertise published on its own

Also known as op-eds, guest pieces, insights, expert opinions, contributed articles. These are pieces written by industry experts (like you) and published in external media outlets.

Many media outlets accept authored pieces from industry experts. They do not pay for these, but if they publish you, it is a valuable platform and makes it easier to get interviewed by their press.

You should be looking at outlets that are publishing opinions from experts similar to you. You should start "small" as once you have been

published by a few media, it is more likely another, larger media outlet will want to platform you.

These pieces position you as a thought leader that provides valuable insights to the readers of that outlet - for that reason, these slots are competitive and almost always unpaid. So to land one, you need to align your incentives with that of the media outlet. What do their readers want to know? What can you tell them? How can you be original, interesting, and clickable?

You should have a relevant topic and good take

Come up with an idea - it should be timely (responding to something recent) and original (not an opinion that others have shared). To be accepted by a media outlet, it needs to be newsworthy, meaning it needs to fit in the current media cycle and/or trends. Decide on the outlet you want to send it to - as you will craft it according to their guidelines and target audience.

Other best practices:

- The topic should be relevant to that readership and timely in the news cycle. If you're writing about something that happened a few months ago, it's less likely to get accepted.
- Your opinion should be interesting and original - not a rehash of what other people have said. Offer actionable advice or new ideas to establish credibility.
- The piece should not be about you - this is not a place to namedrop your company or products. That would make it advertising.
- Be willing to take a contrary position, but be able to support it with facts. Be bold. Controversial or thought-provoking pieces often perform better.

Need inspiration? Go read some of the other contributed articles or op-eds that the outlet has published recently.

The piece itself should be concise and well-written

The best way to see the structure of a successful piece is to read the others that the outlet has published.

However, here's the structure of many successful pieces:

Intro: Start broad. Briefly refer to the current landscape. Introduce your idea/opinion/solution as a thesis statement, or main point of your piece. This sentence is the outline of your next several paragraphs.

Argument paragraph 1 that goes into detail on your opinion or observation. End each paragraph with a sentence that starts to introduce the topic of the next paragraph.

Argument paragraph 2 that goes into detail on your opinion or observation. Start by addressing the topic of the last paragraph. End each paragraph with a sentence that starts to introduce the topic of the next paragraph.

Argument paragraph 3 that goes into detail on your opinion or observation. Start by addressing the topic of the last paragraph. If this is your final paragraph/section, be ready to wrap it up in your conclusion, which is next.

Conclusion: Restate your thesis statement again (in a new way) that summarises the preceding paragraphs. Then go broad again - include a sentence about why this is important now, or paint a picture of what the future could look like when this change is made.

Keep it to **less than 1,000 words**. If you can, limit yourself to 800. Avoid using AI tools for writing this piece - they often add bloat in the word count and make your voice sound less 'your own.'

Remember: Do not mention your company and or products in these articles. The 'sell' is your expertise, nothing else.

You should send your article for consideration in the appropriate way

We're looking forward to reading your work.

Brooke Masters is the FT's opinion and analysis editor

How to be published in the FT

How to submit an opinion piece

The Financial Times accepts guest submissions on any topic for the opinion section of our website and newspaper. Only send original work; we do not reprint material that has been printed elsewhere or published on the internet.

Please send submissions to opinion@ft.com

Your message should include:

- the text of your article in the body of the email (not as an attachment)
- your contact details, including a telephone number
- confirmation that you are the sole author of the work
- confirmation that you are offering the FT exclusive publication rights

We have a firm rule against joint bylines on the opinion page. You must be able to take full credit for your piece.

How to submit a letter to the editor

We welcome letters to the editor so do share your opinions and experiences.

Here's how to increase your chances of having your letter published in the newspaper and online.

Please keep it short — it should be at most 400 words long, and has a better chance of success if it is even shorter.

Tell us what you know. Avoid jargon, keep the wording clear and remember that most readers will not share your inside knowledge.

We like wit and civility, but not abuse or tirades.

We accept only exclusives.

To submit a letter to the editor for publication, email letters.editor@ft.com Or post to: Letters Editor, Financial Times, Bracken House, 1 Friday Street, London EC4M 9BT, UK

Please include your address, daytime telephone number and email.

[Help](#) > [Newsroom and Editorial](#) > [Reader Submissions](#)

New York Times Opinion Guest Essays

Learn more about New York Times Opinion guest essays, including how to submit a guest essay for review and publication.

New York Times Opinion guest essays deliver an argument in the author's voice, based on fact and drawn from expertise or experience. Our goal is to offer readers a robust range of ideas on newsworthy events or issues of broad public concern from people outside The New York Times.

We welcome ideas for submissions in all media, including audio, illustration, data and visualization.

If you'd like to submit a **video guest essay**, please visit [New York Times Opinion Video guest essay](#) for more information on the submission process.

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What Makes a Guest Essay Great? ▾

How Do I Submit an Opinion Guest Essay? ▾

How Do I Contact Other Teams? ▾

[sifted](#) / 

[News](#) [Insights](#) [Newsletters](#) [Events](#) [Podcasts](#)

Have an opinion you'd like to share with Sifted's readers? Excellent! Please read on...

Here's what we're looking for.

A punchy opinion

We like starting conversations. There's nothing better than a somewhat controversial or unusual point of view to get people talking about a subject.

So, don't pitch us a piece about why it's a good idea to talk to your customers early on (everyone knows that!). Pitch us an idea about why customers are stupid and should be ignored at all costs. That is much more intriguing.

A few examples that gone against "received wisdom":

- **Don't believe the Web3 hype**
- **Founders, drop the NDAs — no one cares about your idea**
- **Female founders need money, not more mentoring**
- **VC scout programmes benefit VCs and the scouts... not founders**

Personality and/or humour

The best pieces come with a healthy dose of the author's character. You're writing this piece because of your experience — make sure you tell us about that. Don't be afraid to be personal. Also, we're not the FT; have a little fun. This is also not an academic essay; you're allowed to use "normal" words and expressions.

Here's a piece that made us laugh because it's so...on point: **Five things we didn't expect when we scaled our French business to London.**

How to submit a guest post

Thank you for your interest!

We welcome contributions to DataDecisionMakers, our guest post channel, from tech leaders and enterprise decision-makers who want to share cutting-edge ideas and up-to-date information with VentureBeat readers. We're looking for the highest quality original articles that give business leaders the information that they need to know.

VentureBeat helps business leaders make smart decisions, and we're recognized as the leading media authority in artificial intelligence and machine learning. Publishing your articles with us gives you the chance to get your ideas in front of the millions of readers that visit VentureBeat every month.

If you are a decision-maker with unique, actionable insights that can help business leaders, we want to hear from you!

You'll find everything you need to know to successfully submit a great article to VentureBeat right here. Please make sure to follow these guidelines carefully.

Be aware that our readers expect professional, high-quality articles. This means that if you decide not to follow our guidelines, we will not accept your article.

Submission Guidelines

The quick version

Do you have an informative and exciting headline, an attention-grabbing and to-the-point introduction, a clearly written and coherent body, and a solid conclusion that offers actionable insights to enterprise decision-makers? These are simple elements that will help readers discover and enjoy your article.

We're looking for articles that answer these questions:

- Why is it important to publish this article now?
- Why should business leaders care?
- What can enterprise decision-makers do with this information?

Updates: I'm currently looking for technical deep dives into new and evolving tools, techniques, and technologies like LLMs, LLM chains, vector databases, and even non-promotional explorations of new models and features like LLaMA and Code Interpreter. If you have a draft that digs deep into technical details and strategy, please be sure to note that on your submission.

Story: Make sure you have a great data-related story to tell — one our readers won't have heard before and one that doesn't (explicitly or implicitly) promote a product or approach that you or your company are marketing.

Headline: Your title should be a reflection of the content of the article. It should engage readers without being clickbait. Be aware that if we accept your article, our editors will revise your title as necessary. Titles and headings should be written in sentence case. This means that the first letter of the first word should be capitalized, and generally, the rest should be lowercase. We don't use all caps for titles, headings, subheadings, etc.

Images: If you want to include a featured image, the size of your featured image should be a 2:1 ratio (for example, 2000 x 1000) and not smaller than 1200 x 600. Make sure your image is licensed for commercial use! For all images, please make sure to correctly cite the sources and verify that you have the right to use them. If you don't have a featured image, we are happy to add one.

Note: Please be aware that we often alter or replace titles and featured images in order to appeal to our readers and help your ideas reach as many people as possible.

Conflicts of interest: Make sure you clearly disclose any conflicts of interest. Let readers know if your company or a company you're invested in stands to benefit from the messaging in the story. **If it appears that your article is biased, contains marketing or has the appearance of vested interest, we won't accept it.** Readers appreciate clarity, and no one wants to feel manipulated. If there is a small amount of promotional material in your article, we may accept your article, but we will remove text, images and links that appear to be marketing or promotion during the editing process.

To discuss sponsored post opportunities, please contact sales@venturebeat.com.

Images 19-22: Screenshots of the Financial Times ([source](#)), New York Times ([source](#)), Sifted ([source](#)) and VentureBeat ([source](#)) website pages on how to submit pieces for consideration. Always look to see if the outlet has published its requirements before writing a piece or reaching out - so as to not waste your or their time!

First, you should see what guidelines they have. To find this information, you can:

- Research “Outlet name opinion submission” in Google
- See if they share rules/guidance on their contact/FAQ page
- Read some opinion pieces they have published already - if they ask for other opinions or how to submit, it will most likely be at the bottom or the top of these pieces

The most important rule to follow is how to submit and what to submit. Do they want a full piece, or do they decidedly NOT want a full piece until they see your pitch? It is more likely they will accept you if you follow the instructions.

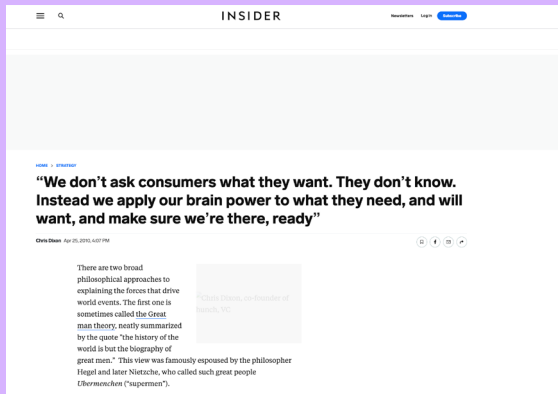
If they accept pieces by email, you can write an email to the editor or address you will send it to and put the outline (or full piece, depending on their requirements) in the body of the email **only** so it doesn't go to spam. Only send it to one person at a time - do not pitch it to multiple places. Wait a couple of days (2-3 days if the guidelines don't state otherwise). Optionally, you can use a CRM like HubSpot to track opens, and only if their rules don't forbid it can you consider sending a follow-up! If you got a positive answer, great! Send through the full piece and/or discuss edits and other details if you already sent the whole article. If you received a negative response (or no response at all), move on to the next media outlet within a few days (or based on the timing shared in their guidelines). If your op-ed doesn't get published after several rounds of pitching, don't get discouraged. Sometimes the

news cycle is just not right for it. You can always use the article to publish it on your LinkedIn or on your website's blog section. The more editors see what you write, the more they can consider your writing when you send another piece.

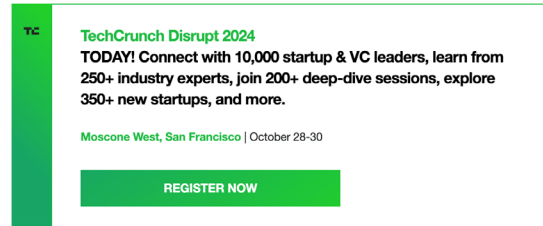
Ensure your social media profiles are up to date and your bio is ready and polished. Most media outlets will add your bio to the author's page and sometimes link to your social media profile (preferably LinkedIn). They may also go look at your profile when deciding if they should publish you.

Once you are published, you should also share the piece on your website, newsletter, and social channels—the more traffic they see from your piece, the more likely they are to host you again.

This post is reprinted from Chris Dixon's blog, cdixon.org.



Chris Dixon disagrees. Writing on his blog, he admits that 'I don't know if Malcolm Gladwell is right when he claims "the revolution will not be tweeted," but "I can say with certainty that the Twitter [Gladwell] describes is not the Twitter I know". He continues...



"I've made more strong ties through Twitter (and blogging) than I have through any communications medium I've ever used before. The relationships start off weak – a retweet, @ reply, or blog comment – but often strengthen through further discussions and eventually become new friendships and business relationships."

Images 23-25: Chris Dixon (partner at Andreessen Horowitz) is now a regular guest on shows like CNBC and interviewed by outlets like the Wall Street Journal - in 2024. In 2007, he founded a company called Hunch. If you look for them in Google News, the first results don't populate until 2010. One of them is a guest insight article on Insider; another, from TechCrunch, is quoting his insights article for their coverage. In 2011, the company gets bought, which is when you start seeing other news stories appear (Inc). In short: Build your company so you can get great news out there that's newsworthy when the time is right. Until then, share your thoughts and expertise 'for free.' In this case, Chris wrote something on his blog which was reprinted on Insider. This is less common now - media outlets will often only accept work that hasn't been published elsewhere - but shows the power of sharing strong opinions!

How to evaluate your success

When your company isn't so well known yet, and you (as a founder/executive) don't have so many interviews under your belt, it can be difficult to get requests for interviews when you don't have news of your own. Still, you can quantify whether your PR outreach is successful by reviewing:

- **Are journalists opening your emails?** Even if they don't respond, multiple opens can indicate they'd be interested for the future. Keep reading their work and reach out the next time you think you could be of service.
- **Are they accepting your connection requests online? Are they liking what you share (and are you liking what they share)?** Stay positive and keep posting.

- **Are you getting accepted for smaller opportunities than you would like?** It takes time to build up a presence where 'larger media' will care about you. If the outlet/podcast/journalist looks reputable, if they have an audience that includes your buyers, you should engage with them even if you don't like their follower count. Having clips (recordings or press stories) that can be found by other media creates the momentum you need to land bigger interviews. Plus: **Every interview is invaluable practice for the next one.**

Exercises

Exercise 8

Use a journalist you've found in the previous step, write a pitch to them based on their previous coverage. Remember: It's about what you bring to them, not about you alone. If you put your name, your company name, or too much "I" "me" "we" in the subject line and introduction, it's likely to get deleted.

Exercise 9

Explore if the outlets you named above accept guest opinions. If so, read a recent one. What topic could you write on that could follow this structure? Can you find their submissions guidelines or contact person? Write it down or save for later.

Exercise 10

Not sure you want to do a smaller interview opportunity? Think of someone in business that you admire (your field or otherwise) that has a similar background to you. Look them up on Google News or YouTube. Filter for several years ago, or sort the results from oldest to newest. You can start to see how even they 'began' with smaller interviews before getting more well known.



Starting your PR strategy: How to contact the media with news

How to make company announcements

Besides commenting on the news, sometimes you and your company ‘are’ the news! Here’s how to make company announcements that are optimised to attract press interest.

Deciding what’s newsworthy

Every milestone you reach should be recorded for your company history and newsroom. However, not every milestone is inherently **newsworthy**. If you constantly send press releases and ‘big announcement’ pitches that aren’t ‘newsy,’ journalists will quickly learn to block your emails. Here’s how to know if what you want to announce has **news value**:

1. **Significance:** Does your story involve a lot of money, a groundbreaking tech development, or an influential person/partner?
2. **Relevance:** Is this interesting to the readers of the media outlet you’re targeting? The more relatable it is to them, the better. If you pitch to the tech community, a new gadget might be

exciting, but a new gadget that solves a common problem is even better.

3. **Timeliness:** Fresh, current stories are more likely to be picked up. Old news is an oxymoron. Timing can be everything; if something big just happened in your industry, tie your announcement to that event.
4. **Fame:** If your story involves a well-known person, brand or partner, it’s more likely to be newsworthy. Imagine announcing that a celebrity has invested in your start-up. Instant news! Famous names add credibility and attract attention.
5. **Novelty:** Unique, groundbreaking stories attract attention. Be original! Novelty grabs headlines because it’s something people haven’t seen before.
6. **Human interest:** Stories that evoke an emotional response or relate to common human experiences will always be a hit. Share the story behind the story—why did you create your product? What impact does it have on people’s lives? Personal stories and emotional connections resonate well.

To see how newsy your news really is, look at the outlets you want to reach out to (or those in your sector). Are there articles about companies like yours hitting these kind of milestones (product launches, fundraising, etc.)? While what you’ve done is impressive, it only becomes ‘newsworthy’ when it is part of a larger story. A biotech company clearing a clinical trial could be newsworthy on its own; but it becomes really newsworthy when they emphasise it will be the first-ever drug to treat a certain condition to make it through clinical trials. The story is about how people with that condition will soon have more options and avenues for treatment (not that Company ABC has hit a milestone).

Keep this in mind: The story is bigger than you.

How to write a press release

There are many ways to write a press release - not all good! To get an idea of how they can look, go to the main page of Business Wire or PR Newswire to read some of the latest press releases to be published on their wire service. Keep in mind these are press releases - their placement on these sites was paid. There is often a large gap between what gets put on the wire and what makes news (as you saw when you looked at the news being covered by the outlets).

In the [previous chapter](#), we talked about capturing your company's wins. These blogs or announcements can be less formal, but when reaching out to journalists with major news, you will be better served by writing a press release. Press releases are more factual and give journalists the background information as well as the facts they need to write their own article, including quotes from your representatives. Think of this as a 'cheatsheet' to your news. You don't want them sifting through marketing-speak to get to the news - you want the news to be clear and easy to find. Therefore, write these as neutrally as possible.

Good press releases have the following:

- **Have a compelling headline:** Your headline should be concise and capture the essence of the announcement. For example, “*EV startup achieves milestone with the delivery of one-millionth vehicle*” is straightforward and newsworthy.
 - **Get to the point quickly:** Journalists receive numerous press releases daily. Ensure the first paragraph contains the most critical information—*who, what, when, where, and why*.
 - **Include quotes:** Adding quotes from key stakeholders, like your CEO or a new hire, provides a human element and makes your release more engaging. Ensure the quote conveys something more than a fact or a number that could be gotten from somewhere other than the person being quoted. For instance, “*Jane’s extensive experience and innovative approach make her a valuable addition to our team*”, says John Smith, CEO of
- Stripe. That is a much better quote than Smith saying, “*Jane came to us from XYZ Paycorp where she spent 12 years.*” Boring!
 - **Provide relevant details:** Include statistics, dates, and other specifics that add depth to your announcement. This could be sales numbers, event schedules, or technical specifications.
 - **Use clear and simple language:** Avoid jargon and make sure your release is easily understandable. It should be accessible to both media professionals and the general public.
 - **Add multimedia elements:** Improve your press release with images, videos, or infographics. For example, Apple often includes high-quality images of their new products to capture attention.
 - **Include your contact information:** Ensure journalists know how to reach you for more information. Include a press contact's name, phone number, and email address. Also, do NOT send out a press release and then go on vacation. Journalists hate that!
 - **Include your company boilerplate.** This goes at the very end of the release.

Deciding a realistic timeline and press strategy

Timing matters a lot. For choosing the date the news will go public, avoid holidays, major industry events, and weekends. Review and see if there are other major industry conferences or events happening around this time. You want your news to have the spotlight, not compete with other big stories.

Mid-week mornings are often a sweet spot for announcements. You should choose a date and time (including timezone) and communicate this to your team and to journalists as well.

Part of how you decide your timeline should be in relation to your pitching strategy. How are you going to tell journalists about your news - tell everyone at once, or give the news to someone exclusively? Either way, you want to give yourself at least 2-3 weeks to reach out to press. At the end of this chapter, we have provided an announcement timeline so you can see how good 'news' starts 4-6 weeks before it is public.

How to pitch

When you are pitching this press release, you should follow the good practices we shared in the previous chapter. In addition, you should make your news as easy to digest as possible - so use a good headline, and put the entire press release in the body of your email (no attachments!) Avoid having too much formatting as this can make your email look salesy (and send it to spam).

As for how to write your pitch, you first need to know: Are you pitching under embargo, or exclusively?

Remember: No matter whether you're trying for an exclusive or embargo pitching, do not send news the day of if you can avoid it - that gives them no time to do their job! Large companies can do this and still get coverage - small, unknown companies will struggle.

How to pitch under embargo

An **embargo** is when you provide information to several journalists in advance but specify that they can't publish it until a specific date (the 'embargo lift' date). This gives them time to prepare their stories properly, ensuring accurate and detailed coverage. You should prepare a list of at least twenty journalists that are a good fit for your news, and send them the press release and offer interviews for them to learn more information.

Example: If you're launching a new product, you can send details to journalists a week in advance with an embargo date that matches your official launch. This way, all the coverage comes out simultaneously, creating a bigger impact.

Example pitch

This is a pitch made up just for this book, but is based on several successful pitches. In this example, a CEO of a photonics startup reaches out directly to journalists to share news under embargo.

Subject: embargo: German photonics startup lands €12 million from US, EU investors

Text:

Hi (Journalist's name),

I hope this note finds you well - I know you're busy, so will be brief!

I saw you wrote earlier this year about a Swiss photonics startup that raised **€7 million from EU investors - and thought you may be interested in this news coming out in two weeks! The embargoed release is below but the topline is: A photonics startup in Germany is about to announce a 12 million round - and, interestingly, their funding also includes U.S. investors.

I thought you may want to know about this ahead of time because you write often about EU startups attracting funding from across the Atlantic - perhaps this is helpful as well as a data point for Europe's growing dominance in photonics.

I'm biased (as the CEO) but for what it is worth, I think we are on the threshold of a major European shift for photonics tech - not just for chip design as your previous story mentioned, but also for datacentre innovation. If you think you might be interested in writing about this fundraise, please do feel welcome to let me know - and of course, I am happy to jump on the phone to discuss more as well. You can reach me on WhatsApp at the number below - I'll also put the press release there.

Thank you for reading, and considering. At your disposal for any questions! I'll get in touch one more time to let you know when the news is public, too.

Best,

How to pitch an exclusive

This is offering a story exclusively to one journalist gives them the reassurance that they will get the story (and clicks) first. This can make your news more attractive because it gives the journalist a scoop - they don't have to compete with others for clicks. It also works in your favour because you can 'hold' the news until you get someone interested in writing about it. You should select up to five journalists to offer the exclusive to, and reach out to them one by one. If someone passes or doesn't respond, you can move along to the next name on the list. If

you make it through your whole list without any response, you can continue pitching it exclusively; or you can start to pitch it under embargo if you need the news to come out soon.

Example: Offering the exclusive access to the news and interview with your CEO for a fundraising announcement.

Example pitch

This is a pitch made up just for this book, but is based on several successful pitches. In this example, a CEO of a photonics startup reaches out directly to journalists to pitch an exclusive. She gives the journalist 48 hours to consider the exclusive (Monday - Wednesday).

Subject: exclusive: German photonics startup lands €12 million from US and EU investors

Text:

Hi (Journalist's name),

I hope this note finds you well - I know you're busy, so will be brief! I saw you wrote earlier this year about a Swiss photonics startup that raised **€7 million from EU investors** - and thought you may be interested in this exclusive. The topline is: A startup in Germany in this field is about to announce a 12 million round - interestingly, theirs also includes U.S. investors. I thought of you because I know you write often about EU startups attracting funding from across the Atlantic, and that this might specifically be intriguing to your readers as it could show Europe's growing dominance in photonics. I'm biased (as the CEO) but for what it is worth, I think we are on the threshold of a major European shift for photonics tech - not just for chip design as your previous story mentioned, but also for datacentre innovation. If you think you might be interested in this exclusive about our fundraise, please do feel welcome to let me know - happy to jump on the phone to discuss more as well. You can reach me on WhatsApp at the number below - I'll also put the press release there. As for timing, we can be flexible - were hoping to announce this later this month if that would work for you.

Thank you for reading, and considering. At your disposal for any questions! If I don't hear from you by Wednesday, I'll move along, but always happy to be a resource for you.

Best,

On confidentiality of press releases.

Technically, a journalist is not bound to keep your information confidential unless they agree to do so. So when you send an exclusive, or an embargoed press release, it is possible they will take the news and publish it without 1) letting you know or 2) respecting your requested date. This is why you should only ever send fully approved press releases to media - **never** drafts, and **never** versions that haven't been seen or approved by partners,

investors, etc. However, when you're a small company or startup, it would be a good problem to have if someone publishes your news at all, even if it early! So in most cases, you can feel confident sending press releases and announcement details out ahead of time. You're weighing the chance of it going public early against the chance a journalist won't take your news on because you didn't give them enough information.

How to announce your news

Here's the full picture of how to run your news announcement. You can use this as your PR checklist as well.

Preparation phase

1. Draft the press release and decide on timing

- Write a clear, concise press release covering the who, what, when, where, and why.
- Press releases should be very factual (even if you feel they are too “dry”), otherwise there is a chance they won't get picked up by journalists.
 - Your release on the Writers Room was nice to read but as a journalist that skims, it may have been seen as too salesy. The “what is the news” is lost until later on, and if I had looked you up as a journalist, I would not have understood what you were saying is “new” vs. what was already public.
- Get feedback and necessary approvals from your team and/or partners/investors.
- Decide on the ideal timing for the announcement (ideally give yourself a month for preparations and pitching.)

2. Create supporting materials

- Create or collect high-resolution images, videos, headshots and/or infographics.
- Prepare any additional documents, such as fact sheets or FAQs.
- Ensure all materials align with your brand's voice and message.
- Ensure they are all collected in one folder, easy to be shared with the press later on. If you share these in a file, they can't use them easily.

3. Decide on exclusive vs. embargo pitching

- If exclusive: Create a list of 4-6 journalists for exclusive and put them in the order of pitching.

4. Update your media list

- Compile a list of journalists who cover your industry and similar stories.
- Verify contact details and preferred communication channels.
- Personalise your media list to include relevant notes about each journalist's interests.

5. Develop a distribution plan

- Decide on the platforms you'll use to distribute your press release (e.g., your website).
- Plan for distribution across your owned channels, including your website, blog, and social media.
- Create a draft blog/entry on your website to make it easier and faster to publish when the news is out

Scheduling phase

1. Confirm the date

- Avoid holidays, major industry events, and weekends.
- Select a date that maximises your news's impact and visibility.
- If you decided you are doing the exclusive pitching, be flexible to slightly change the publication date according to the journalist's needs

2. Create a detailed timeline

- **Minimum of 4 weeks out:**
 - Finalise and approve your press release.
 - Pitch your exclusives or start embargo pitching at least 2-3 weeks out.
 - Then: Schedule and staff an interview with the journalist covering the exclusive or continue emailing and following up.
 - Draft and approve all supporting materials.
 - Website overview.
 - Social media posts for C-level executives.
 - Thank you notes to journalists.
 - Thank you notes or heads-up notes to investors/partners (if applies).
 - Messaging to your customers if applies.
- **One week out:**
 - Continue pitching under embargo and/or schedule pre-briefings or interviews with interested journalists.
 - Pre-load all materials to your website, platforms, etc.
- **Three days out:**
 - Conduct a final review of all materials.
 - Answer all journalists if it applies.
 - Confirm all logistical details for any events or interviews.

3. Announcement day

- **If exclusive:**
 - Wait for the exclusive article to be out.
 - Send a thank you note to the journalist.

- Publish all materials on your website and platforms. Distribute your press release via your chosen wire service (if applies).
- Publish all social media posts.
- Send pitches to all journalists from your media list informing them the news is out and offering interviews/commentary.
- Monitor immediate feedback and media coverage.
- **If embargo pitching:**
 - Distribute your press release via your chosen wire service.
 - Publish all materials on your website and platforms.
 - Distribute your press release via your chosen wire service (if applies).
 - Publish all social media posts.
 - Send pitches to all journalists from your media list informing them the news is out and offering interviews/commentary.
 - Monitor immediate feedback and media coverage.

Post-announcement phase

1. Monitor media coverage

- Track and gather media mentions, articles, and social media likes.
- Use media monitoring tools to capture all coverage and save it for the future.

2. Engage with your audience

- Respond to comments, questions, and feedback on social media.
- Share and amplify positive coverage through your channels.
- Publish the best media coverage in your press room.

3. Follow up with journalists

- Thank journalists for their coverage.
- Offer additional information or interviews if needed.
- Maintain the relationship for future stories.

Other actions you can take to make your news shine:

1. **Send the press release and social media content** (photos, etc) **to your key supporters**, like investors, ahead of time so they are ready to post and share to their networks! Remember, if you've named them, you should have already asked for their approval before sending to press. Once they've approved being named, or being on your website, they are 'fair game' for a journalist to mention.
2. **Post news stories that come out of your pitching** and tag the journalist and outlet thanking them for the coverage - this helps them remember you for the future.
3. **Post an accompanying 'piece' from your CEO**. Press releases are often dry and factual, yet news stories may not include all the details you'd like. A piece written by your CEO will have more of a personal touch and lets you share more information in an engaging way. For an example of these kinds of posts, check out the 'why we invested' posts from VCs like [Andreessen Horowitz](#). These are easy to read and tell a strong, captivating story.

Always follow up with journalists that responded to you to see if they need any more information. If they wrote about your news, thank them for their coverage to keep the relationship going for future stories. A little appreciation goes a long way.

Follow the **best practices** from [page 41](#) to ensure your announcement goes well. In addition, remember to check with everyone you're naming in the release ahead of time. Forgetting to coordinate with, say, investors before making a fundraising announcement, can lead to significant issues and relationship breakdown. You should get their sign-off on being named before sending to journalists, as journalists may not remove them from the story later.

If you want to use a wire service like Business Wire or PR Newswire, you need to set up an account before the day of your release! **Keep in mind that changing press releases that have gone out on newswires can cost more than the distribution itself.** Not all of them allow changes after the fact, either. So be careful.

If you want to use a wire service, we recommend using an agency or a PR professional who has experience with these.

Exercises

Exercise 11

Read through the headlines on the outlets you named above. What looks most like the news you want to release? If nothing looks similar to your news, beware: Your news may need to be ‘newsier.’

Exercise 12

Write your subject line (the one sentence about your news). What is it?

Exercise 13

What would business-relevant results look like to you if this announcement went well? You should give this to your team before beginning the announcement process. Example may be: “We land new US customers.”

Exercise 14

If you’re going to follow a good PR timeline, what are the dates you need to start preparing your announcement?



Exercises

Exercise 15

Using the press release outline structure, write out the five parts of your release. If you don't have any news in mind, visit a PR aggregator like PRNewswire or Business Wire and review press releases. Ignore financial releases like quarterly earnings reports or executive changes. Focus on product announcements or items similar to what you may announce in the future.

- **Headline:** Create a compelling and concise headline.
- **Lead Paragraph:** Write the who, what, when, where, and why.
- **Body:** Include quotes from key stakeholders and relevant details.
- **Boilerplate:** Add a short paragraph about your company.

Exercise 16

Write an exclusive vs. embargo pitch for your news based on your press release. For extra credit, do this for a journalist in particular from the previous chapter's exercises.



Part III: How to pitch yourself on every budget



Part III: How to pitch yourself on every budget

When it makes sense to use your resources to create an in-house PR team, when it's better to hire an agency and what are the average fees?

In Part I and Part II, we covered the basics of PR operations - how to create your fundamentals and how to start pitching yourself on an ongoing basis. This section is about your team - who you use to do your PR!

The do-it-yourself model: No tools, no team

You are completely capable of building these PR fundamentals yourself and starting to do some outreach on your own. If this is the model you want to follow, you as a founder should try to reserve 1 day a week for this kind of work (as well as building your own profile through posting on LinkedIn, reaching out to contacts, etc). PR falls under working 'on' (vs. 'in') your business. You should do some PR work every week (instead of doing it for an entire week then pausing for a month) because it takes time to build momentum. Not everyone will answer your pitches, not every story will land. By reaching out consistently every week, you have a much better chance of getting in with journalists.

The basic PR model: Low-cost tools and small staff (or fractional staff)

When you're too busy to do PR all on your own, you should call in reinforcements. At

this point, you can hire a PR freelancer or bring someone on staff full time. If you do that, be sure they can do PR, content, communications, and some marketing. When it comes to your first employee, it is better to hire a Jane of all Trades to begin with so you have support on all fronts. Many PR professionals also offer their services fractionally. In other words, they act like an employee, but they don't work full time. This is a great idea if you need strategic direction and guidance (not a junior person) but can't afford to hire someone at that level for 40 hours a week.

By hiring a professional, you also avoid the need to pay for PR programs like Muckrack or Cision (as they should have this). Otherwise, you can hire a more junior person, but be ready to shell out for at least an email-finding platform like Lusha so they don't spend too much time tracking down press.

When (and if) to hire an agency

Before hiring an agency, here's what you need to know about their pricing and abilities.

Pricing - typical fees

- **Monthly retainers:** Many PR agencies work on a retainer basis, charging a fixed monthly fee. Boutique agencies like Maneuvre can start as low as €2,000, but beware: Plenty of agencies with questionable results and small size still try to start in the five figures (think €20,000 a month or more).
- **Project-based fees:** You can hire help just for specific announcements or projects, too. This will be priced at the firm's hourly rate. Again, keep in mind that some agencies inflate this cost highly, so be careful and be sure to set a cap of hours they can charge you for.

Agency abilities

There's no way to know how good an agency will be for you until you work with them. However, here's what we at Maneuvre ask agencies before we partner with them on work for our clients. If there's any red flags, they usually show up in this line of questioning.

Who is our point of contact? Often agencies will bring on the founder or a senior person to sell the business, and then you'll **never** see them again. Get clear on the first call how involved they will be.

Can you give me an example of how you've built a relationship with a journalist for a client?

This is a better question to ask than "do you have journalist relationships," because in reality, you want the agency to build relationships for YOU. The answer to this question will tell you how open they are to sharing information, as well as if they are regularly meeting new press (or relying on their network only).

Have you worked with anyone doing this kind of work/technology/product before?

It's okay if the answer is no, but you need to know going in how much time you need to spend educating them on your company. If they've never done **any** kind of PR in your field or region, you should talk to other agencies that have before deciding.

Can you share some of the news clips you've gotten for your clients recently?

Important to see here is what kinds of outlets they are getting and for what size of company (are they smaller than you? Bigger?) so you can set your expectations. You should also see if they're sharing articles, or just reprints of press releases (which you get when you use a newswire or distribution service).

Use an agency to avoid costly mistakes

There are many reasons to use a professional PR person or firm - including when news is particularly sensitive or important - but also to avoid missteps that can cost money, time, or reputation. Here are the areas you and your team should watch out for if you're not going to use an agency yet.

Having to pull back provided info errors & inaccuracies

Spend the time to get your insights right, before they are out in the public domain. Journalists and news outlets are under no obligation to change their stories or remove them if you sent them a press release or a quote that you previously confirmed was accurate. Same goes for authored pieces - if you said it was okay, it will probably stay up. In short: You'll spend a lot of money and time and still not be successful in removing the bad information entirely.

Not giving press enough time to consider you as a source or option

Rushing to announce news without giving journalists sufficient lead time is another common error. Journalists need time to research, write, and publish their stories.

Unprepared journalists: Short lead times mean journalists might not have enough time to really vet you or your inputs, leading to incomplete or inaccurate coverage.

Missed opportunities: Tight deadlines can result in you being overlooked in favour of other, more prepared pitches.

Spending time pitching marketing/sales, not newsworthy, content

PR is about building relationships and credibility, not direct sales. Overly promotional content can turn off the person you're trying to convince to cover you. No one likes a blatant sales pitch, least of all media - it will harm your attempts to get coverage in the future. Not only that, but it won't work this time around either - so you'll have spent a lot of time and effort to get little to no results.

Don't use an agency if:

The one you've found is too expensive

It doesn't matter what results the agency gets. If you can't afford them comfortably, you will be less inclined to bring on PR help in the future. Even if you need it. This gets more 'expensive' when you realise that your company will actually be older and more established, too - i.e., even more eligible for good coverage. If in doubt, ask them to work on a project basis - or find an agency that is better priced for your budget.

There is an agency out there that knows your field and is in your budget - it just may take some time to find them. Keep looking, and ask your investors and network too. Recommendations go a long way in getting out of someone's 'cold emails' folder and onto an intro call.

Part IV: What else can I do?



Part IV: What else can I do?

This book has focused on how to create the fundamentals of PR, as well as how to start press and media outreach. Why? Well, these are the hardest to get right and, in our experience, the most overcharged for.

Many PR agencies are simply not interested in helping you create these assets for yourself, or in helping you build these relationships. Traditional agencies make their money by charging high retainers and constantly bringing in new business when their current business (you) leaves. When you leave, you may not have access any more to the bios they've written for you, the journalists they've pitched on your behalf, even some of your historical press releases and drafted pieces. By starting this yourself, you own - forever - the materials you

create today. Not only that, you will be well-equipped to hold your agencies to higher standards (when and if you hire one).

Of course, there's more to PR than press. Other important elements of PR that we've mentioned in this book are awards, event speaking, thought leadership, websites, even Wikipedia pages. All of these are great initiatives to undertake. But the best PR action you can take tomorrow is the one that your buyer audiences will care the most about. Do that first, and well. It will deliver the revenue-generating momentum you need to scale your efforts - and your company.

Need more help?

If you're ready to start your PR efforts, but find that you don't have the time to do the exercises in this book, reach out to us at Maneuvre. We can help run your announcement, provide ad-hoc advisory, or be your fractional PR department until you're ready to hire someone full-time.

Contact our founding team at founders@maneuvre.co or book one of our services [here](#).



Appendix

Below, you will find all exercises from throughout the book listed here in an easy to read/copy/print format.

Exercise 1: Identify your PR targets.

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Earlier, you wrote down the media outlets that you want to target with your PR efforts. Read over that list, keeping your buyer audience in mind. Which outlets are more important? Less important? Are there customers/buyers that don't read any of these media? What do they read? Add these outlets to your list.

List out up to 10 media outlets you know your customers/clients read or listen to.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Then review the list. If you've listed mainly "major" or "mainstream" outlets like the BBC or the Financial Times or TechCrunch, go find some other media or podcasts that may have smaller readership but are much more targeted to your field or region. You can repeat this exercise for the events/conferences you'd like to be at, the awards and recognitions you'd like to win, and the outlets/places you'd like your opinions/writing to be published.

Examples:

Fintechs: The Financial Times vs. The Fintech Times

European startups: Sifted and EU-Startups

AI companies: TechCrunch vs. Tom's Hardware

Entrepreneurs/content creators: Business Insider vs. City AM

Exercise 2

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Which of materials or subscriptions does your company have already? Pull the documents (including rough drafts of any written op-eds or press releases) into a folder for easy access and sharing with your future PR person. List out the subscriptions as well so you have them on hand and know what each of them do.

Exercise 3

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Earlier, you wrote down the media outlets that you want to target with your PR efforts. Read over that list, keeping your buyer audience in mind. Which outlets are more important? Less important? Are there customers/buyers that don't read any of these media? What do they read? Add these outlets to your list.

Exercise 4

[Go back to source chapter](#)

List out what you can be a source on for these outlets. If you're not sure, go read some of their articles. When they quote someone, what are they talking about (topic-wise)? Could you speak on that, or something related?

Exercise 5

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Using the guidelines above, write your boilerplate. If you're stuck, go to the press release section/newsrooms of companies you admire and scroll to the bottom of their press releases to read their boilerplates.

1. Does your boilerplate clearly explain what your company does?
2. Is it concise and to the point?
3. Does it include a call to action or a link for more information?

Your boilerplate:

Exercise 6

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Now that you have your company boilerplate and your source areas, you can write your own founder bio. When you put your founder bio and your company boilerplate side by side, they should be complementary and go well together. In other words: Neither should contradict what the other says.

Exercise 7

[Go back to source chapter](#)

You've already found some of your key outlets. Now find a journalist at each one that you want to build a relationship with. See if you can find, or reverse engineer, their email.

Journalist Name	Outlet	E-mail
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Exercise 8

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Use a journalist you've found in the previous step, write a pitch to them based on their previous coverage. Remember: It's about what you bring to them, not about you alone. If you put your name, your company name, or too much "I" "me" "we" in the subject line and introduction, it's likely to get deleted.

Exercise 9

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Explore if the outlets you named above accept guest opinions. If so, read a recent one. What topic could you write on that could follow this structure? Can you find their submissions guidelines or contact person? Write it down or save for later.

Exercise 10

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Not sure you want to do a smaller interview opportunity? Think of someone in business that you admire (your field or otherwise) that has a similar background to you. Look them up on Google News or YouTube. Filter for several years ago, or sort the results from oldest to newest. You can start to see how even they ‘began’ with smaller interviews before getting more well known.

Exercise 11

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Read through the headlines on the outlets you named above. What looks most like the news you want to release? If nothing looks similar to your news, beware: Your news may need to be ‘newsier.’

Exercise 12

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Write your subject line (the one sentence about your news). What is it?

Exercise 13

[Go back to source chapter](#)

What would business-relevant results look like to you if this announcement went well? You should give this to your team before beginning the announcement process. Example may be: “We land new US customers.”

Exercise 14

[Go back to source chapter](#)

If you’re going to follow a good PR timeline, what are the dates you need to start preparing your announcement?

Exercise 15

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Using the press release outline structure, write out the five parts of your release. If you don’t have any news in mind, visit a PR aggregator like PRNewswire or Business Wire and review press releases. Ignore financial releases like quarterly earnings reports or executive changes. Focus on product announcements or items similar to what you may announce in the future.

- **Headline:** Create a compelling and concise headline.
- **Lead Paragraph:** Write the who, what, when, where, and why.
- **Body:** Include quotes from key stakeholders and relevant details.
- **Boilerplate:** Add a short paragraph about your company.

Exercise 15

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Headline:

Lead Paragraph:

Body:

Exercise 15

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Boilerplate:

Exercise 16

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Write an exclusive vs. embargo pitch for your news based on your press release. For extra credit, do this for a journalist in particular from the previous chapter's exercises.

Exclusive pitch:

Exercise 16

[Go back to source chapter](#)

Write an exclusive vs. embargo pitch for your news based on your press release. For extra credit, do this for a journalist in particular from the previous chapter's exercises.

Embargo pitch:

Appendix

What makes a good LinkedIn profile: Checklist

1. Profile photo

- Is the profile photo professional and clear?

2. Background photo

- Is there a background photo? (Yes/No)
- Does it represent the individual's industry or personal brand? (Yes/No)

3. Headline

- Is the headline descriptive and engaging? (Yes/No)
- Does it include relevant keywords for the individual's industry? (Yes/No)

4. Summary

- Is the summary section filled out? (Yes/No)
- Does it provide a clear and compelling narrative about the individual's career and goals? (Yes/No)
- Does it include professional achievements and personal interests? (Yes/No)

5. Experience

- Are all current and past positions listed? (Yes/No)
- Do the descriptions highlight key responsibilities and achievements? (Yes/No)
- Are relevant keywords included in the job descriptions? (Yes/No)

6. Skills & endorsements

- Are relevant skills listed? (Yes/No)
- Have these skills been endorsed by connections? (Yes/No) If not, remove if there are more than 10 skills.

7. Accomplishments

- Are accomplishments such as certifications, publications, and awards listed? (Yes/No)
- Are these accomplishments relevant to the individual's career? (Yes/No) If not, consider removing.

8. Education

- Is the education section complete and up to date? (Yes/No)
- Does it include relevant courses or activities? (Yes/No)

9. Connections

- Does the individual have at least 500 connections? (Yes/No)
- Are the connections relevant to their industry? (Yes/No)

10. Activity

- Is the individual regularly engaging on LinkedIn (posting, sharing, commenting)? (Yes/No)
- Do their activities reflect their professional brand and expertise? (Yes/No)

11. Custom URL

- Has the LinkedIn profile URL been customized? (Yes/No)
- Custom URL:

Interested in bringing on PR support?

Contact us at

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