

RIP for the press release? – not so fast

We know media has undergone massive change in recent years. Print has been giving way to online; the blogosphere fostered an explosion of citizen journalists; and social media changed our notion of timeliness as Twitter brings global news in real time.

Along with that have been reports about the demise of the press release. News releases are definitely still with us, but require new thinking to be effective.

Today, releasing news is about sharing, creating conversation, and using links, keywords and multimedia, to engage your audience. Of course there are tools to help present your story in a more dynamic way. [PitchEngine](#) is one designed to create social media releases, and I asked founder Jason Kintzler for his thoughts.

1. What need was PitchEngine created to address and how has it evolved over time?

It was built as an alternative to the traditional press release and push distribution process. Instead of sending documents via email or news wires, for the first time, PR pros could easily package-up their own branded content into a single web page. Before PitchEngine, press releases were for journalists almost exclusively and pdfs and image email attachments were the norm. It has evolved into a tool for businesses and organizations of all sizes to get the word out to their customers, fans and other online influencers. It's one part content creation, two parts storytelling.

2. What do you think is most important in effective promotion today?

Authenticity. People are savvy to the traditional “push” marketing methods. People follow people, not businesses. Be real, be conversational and interact with consumers and fans in authentic ways. Then, when you do have the need to “pitch” it isn't unexpected or annoying to your audience. They follow YOU and realize YOU are your business. The saying holds true for social media as well: Do unto other as you would have done to you 😊

3. What tools do you recommend for authors and illustrators who may not have a big budget, but are willing to put in the time to promote their books?

Facebook is number one. It's where more than half of every internet user already is. Make sure you are there and interacting with your friends and fans.

YouTube, Vimeo and a Flip camera are priceless. It doesn't cost much to create a quick video. Again, people follow people, not businesses or books. Let people make a connection with you and they'll come back for more, again and again.

PitchEngine provides a great way to tell your story or summarize your book. Websites are good, but hard to create and even harder to optimize for search engine, etc., Social networks are great

for cultivating and sharing with your audience, but they aren't for storytelling. PitchEngine fills this role. Package up your content and share it on your site, social networks, search and more.

4. What emerging trends do you see as key for marketing?

Mobile and tablet devices are big. Other countries are somewhat ahead of us in this arena – mostly because they didn't have the PC adoption that we did in previous decades. The more relevant and easily accessible your content can be, the better. Look for ways to help your audience connect. (When I'm at a public place for dinner with my kids, there's nothing better for us than to find an interesting cartoon for our 2-year-old to watch on YouTube via iPhone for a distraction when things are getting a little crazy. Be a solution and a resource at the same time).

5. What about the press release specifically? Do you think that's still a key publicity tool, and what other formats do you think are effective?

Well, I think the days of the traditional press release are long gone. Black and white, AP format copy just isn't engaging anymore. Content consumers (which include journalists as well as consumers) like to be engaged. Images, video, illustrations, whatever. What IS still cool about the press release is the utility. Make your content accessible and sharable so that bloggers, journalists and fans can evangelize for you. That's when the word will get out.