



Managed Enterprise
Media Room™

The ultimate guide to managing a brand newsroom

Everything you need to build and manage a successful brand newsroom.

WHY A BRAND NEWSROOM?

Newsrooms are conversation starters. They are the window into company life and provide a unique opportunity to speak directly to your audiences; including the media, bloggers and influencers, investors and stakeholders, your customers, and sometimes the general public.

Gone are the days when the online newsroom simply hosted press releases, in this brave new world the communications team are multi-media creators; launching a weekly video, a monthly podcast, or a daily blog - all depending on what best suits your organization. Unlike other channels, your newsroom is an asset you own, where you can communicate how you want to. To take full advantage of this opportunity, your communication team needs to become journalists. Storytellers. Photographers. Bloggers. Videographers.

Establishing this kind of newsroom is an exciting step, so plan it well! A handbook serves as a guide for the newsroom team. If you've got a proactive team working hard to produce top-quality PR and Content in multiple formats, it's going to be great for your business - but is everyone on the same page? Consistency is important. Staying on-brand is crucial. Managing a busy, global newsroom can be a challenge, and setting up a newsroom handbook helps layout the important steps in setting up a PR page that can shine. In this guide, we'll walk you through key steps to take to develop a brand newsroom that helps you reach your PR goals:

1 PREPARE A NEWSROOM STRATEGY

As you develop your digital newsroom, preparation is key. Your team needs to think about short-term goals, a long-term strategy, and your overarching communications approach. Decide on your priorities and give them each a weighting. Read this handbook to guide you through the process and create your own to adapt it to your needs.

Set goals for your brand newsroom

Most PR teams develop their strategies yearly. Since a newsroom might be a crucial part of your PR activities, it makes sense to align it with the overall PR goals. Your newsroom strategy should document the newsroom team's 12-month goals, a plan for how you're going to achieve them, and metrics for success. You can start by looking at what has worked well in the past, identifying gaps, looking for new opportunities to get your message out, and conducting competitor research.

Identifying your target audiences and key messages

It's crucial to know which audience you're creating content for. The focus might be entirely different depending on whether you're writing primarily for investors or customers. Target audiences are the people you want to reach, and key messages are the 'take-aways' you want them to go away with after they engage with your content.



2 CREATE A CONTENT STRATEGY

Set quality standards for your newsroom content

To ensure quality and stories that match the mission, visions, and values of your company, don't forget to include journalistic/corporate communication standards in the handbook.

After the goals, strategy, approach, and phases have been defined you can start writing your first content pieces, creating or rebranding the newsroom to fit the new needs.

Define your tone of voice

A start-up tech company that is positioning itself as a challenger is likely to use an energetic, modern and less formal tone of voice, while a well-established financial institution might be more traditional and formal. What tone of voice suits your brand? And how will this be incorporated in the newsroom?

Topics for your newsroom

What kinds of content are you going to populate your newsroom with? We've talked about all the different ways you can communicate – from press releases to podcasts and videos to infographics, but what do you want to say?

3 SET UP A PUBLICATION PROCESS

Ideation and Storyboarding

At the earliest stages, set aside time for ideation. Brainstorm lots of different ideas, and when you've come up with one that's a good fit for this project or campaign, start storyboarding it.

When you're satisfied that this is the right piece of content to meet your goals, you can add it to your content calendar and move on to the next stage.

Create a content calendar

Instead of rushing off and creating a bunch of new content all at once, it's better to create a content calendar and spread all your great ideas out through the year.

Content creation

Now for the fun part - creating your content. If it's a press release you'll start contacting relevant people for quotes; if it's an article you'll start writing; if it's a podcast or a video you'll be scripting it.

Content creation

SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, is about writing your content in a way that makes it easy for Google to understand and index it. In fact, SEO is so important that we have a whole ebook dedicated to it - but here are some quick and dirty tips for now, which will come in handy if one of your newsroom goals is to increase traffic.

Edit your content pieces

The editing process is really important. Usually, it involves someone who's been outside of the process so far looking at the work to date and making recommendations on the language and style of the piece. This will include proof-reading to ensure it's error-free but also looking at the clarity and how the piece flows.

Thought Leadership

Communications professionals use the thought leadership tactic to build trust in a brand. Creating educational content, engaging with the right people and tapping into the industry community, brands can become recognized experts in a subject and go-to source in a particular field.

Prepare a crisis communications plan

Hopefully, your team will never have to deal with a crisis, but it's always best to be prepared. A newsroom is a handy tool to make use of in moments like those. Make sure you've outlined the role of your newsroom in the event of an emergency, and that all key stakeholders are aware of it. At that point, you can take steps such as drafting holding statements, preparing a dark site, and brief your team on your overall crisis communication strategy. If you plan to direct audiences to the newsroom during a crisis, make sure you have a newsroom setup that allows you to publish a statement quickly, and make instant changes as the situation unfolds.

Keep track of deadlines

Deadlines help you stick to publishing what's your content calendar. Establish clear ones for each content piece so all parties involved can work on a timely matter.

Distribute your content

For most of your content, you'll want to reach as many people as possible - so you'll distribute it in several different ways.

After publishing

After weeks and sometimes months of work, you've finally hit publish! But alas, your work is not over. Now it's time to make the most of it - sending it to the right journalists, creating email blasts to reach your customers, and sharing it on social media for maximum traction.

Repurposing content from – and for – other departments

PR teams work closely with departments across the entire company but work especially closely with related teams like Social Media, Marketing and Events. At some companies, these roles may all exist within one department, while in larger companies they will function separately.

Tracking your newsroom's content performance

Was your PR campaign a success? What was its impact? How do you know? Once your campaign has ended, it's crucial to track the metrics, see who engaged with your content and how they can be re-engaged again in the future.