



August 11 | San Francisco



Courtesy: Flickr/Andrew Home

Build Bridges



Getty

How to optimize your press releases

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@JoeSerwach #PRNews



Ongoing debate

Is SEO Dead? Are Press Releases Dead?

BOTH SEO and Press Releases have to be about good stories
Give people what they want, what they need, what's *relevant*.

JANUARY 28, 2014

The press release is dead (again)

The End Of The Press Release?

Why the press release is not dead

Is SEO Dead?

Google Confirms the Importance of PR in SEO

SEO By Mickie E Kennedy, Published June 29, 2014

1 Join the

SEO Isn't Dead, Never Has, Never Been and Never Will Be

Writing for your Readers

Google becoming human



Buyer Persona: Google the Cop

- **Beat:** Every online page
- **Likes:** Relevant, New, Interesting, Open Doors, passes closed doors.
- **Google is a Matchmaker** - your words answer someone's questions.
- **Google punishes** black hat SEO.



Page Rankings? Named after Larry Page. Don't write for robots - write for real people.



Are you being penalized?

Google the Cop looking for bad behavior

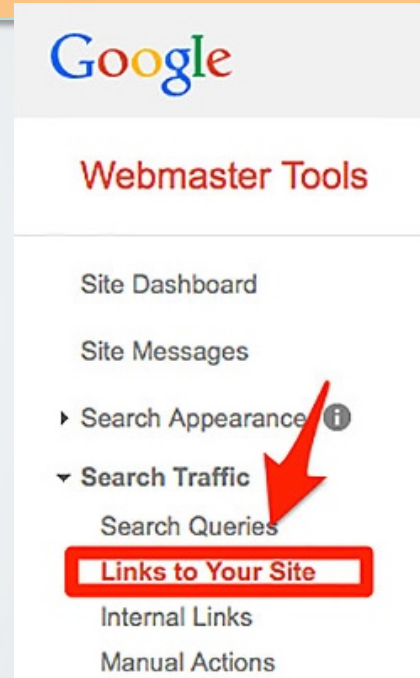
Duplicate content: Copying and pasting? Scraping?

Bad backlinks (from sites that have been banned or penalized by Google).

Spam-filled comments – Google doesn't like them either.

Press releases “written for SEO.”

Main rule: If you feel like you're cheating or taking shortcuts, the search engines probably will as well.





Why most news releases fail

5 things *killing* press releases

1. **Killed by Committee** (Too many cooks)
2. **Overstuffed** (Reporters/Readers/Google hate that)
3. **Wrong Style** (Fat, un-readable paragraphs)
4. **Patting yourself on the Back** (show, don't tell, be humble)
5. **Not written for real people** (Too many releases are “written for SEO” or to fill someone's quota).

The Grandma Test applies to SEO

Would your Grandma get it?



Grandmothers:

- Sharp, well-read.
- Common Sense.
- Never know your jargon.
- Fresh Eyes.
- See forest for the trees.

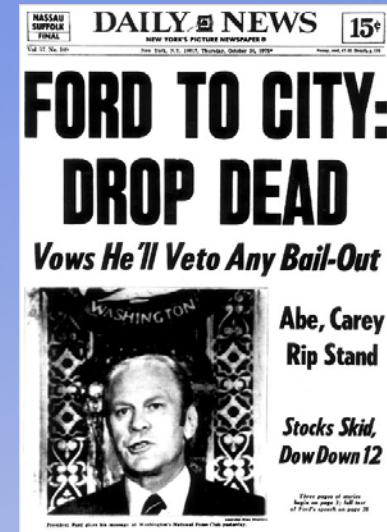
Headlines tell stories, memorable

How to write headlines

Rising son casts shadow

Great headlines are:

- Good Tweets.
- The Juice - not the Orange.
- Include keywords.
- Answer questions.



Lead with the lede

Leverage your lede

Research: The shorter a sentence, the more likely it will be remembered. Helps with SEO, video, interviews.

We remember:

“Ask not what your country can do for you” (9 words).

“Tear Down this Wall” (four words).

“Ugh, it’s New Coke.” (four words).

“I love you.” (three words).

Meta Descriptions: 150-160 characters.

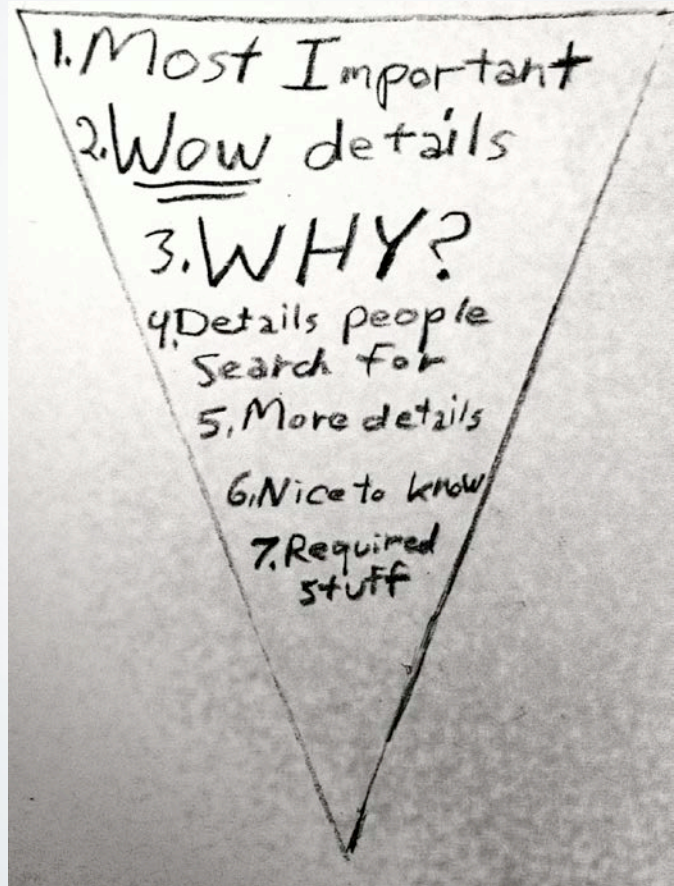


The Nut Graf

Nut Grafs reinforce keyword, content themes, give you 'value' of the story

Essential Question of Marketing (and nut grafs) is:

WHY?



Storytelling

Essential element of all stories?

Conflict: Essential part of all stories

1. Most PR people say “This is great” – not a story.
2. How you overcame a CONFLICT (solved a problem, came back, grew, did something unique) IS a story.





Good Linking Strategies

Link from important key phrases

Link from important phrases.

Link to great, relevant stories, references, trusted sources.

Inbound links to your own content.

Social shares of the new content.

Tagged images and embedded video with captions and alternate descriptions full of keywords.

Great Link Building: Lots of guest bloggers with lots of cross-linking.



Body content

More is better – but it has to be good

300 word minimum (Google ignores most common words, most short pages).

More is better: longer content, more SEO opportunities.

Readers are becoming scanners: Include lots of good subs, bullets and bolded phrases to draw readers to most important messages.

If someone only reads your headline, subheads and bolded words, will they “get” the essentials of the story?

Call to Actions at the end? Two-thirds of online engagement occurs “below the fold,” often near bottom of the content.



Good PR is good SEO

Google rewards good matchmaking, quality

Brand authority now being measured (Google recently filed a patent, calling non-linked brand citations an implied link).

An “implied link” any time your brand earns a mention – more mentions are good PR and good for SEO.

Solid PR work rewarded, shortcuts penalized.



Rules

7 Rules for maximizing new releases





Rule 1

Start with Strategy and Style

What's the story? Know what your story is and why it's a story

Follow AP style: Everyone wants you to speak THEIR language.

Social Strategy: Every social channel has a unique culture, audience and style. Personalize for each.





Rule 2

Communicate in target's language



Case studies: “Owning” targeted long tail searches

Serta: Michigan made, Pure Michigan mattress, top ranked brand

Online Tech: Encrypted cloud, HIPAA compliant



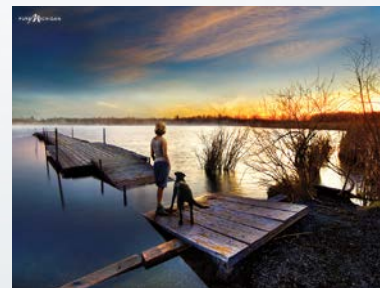
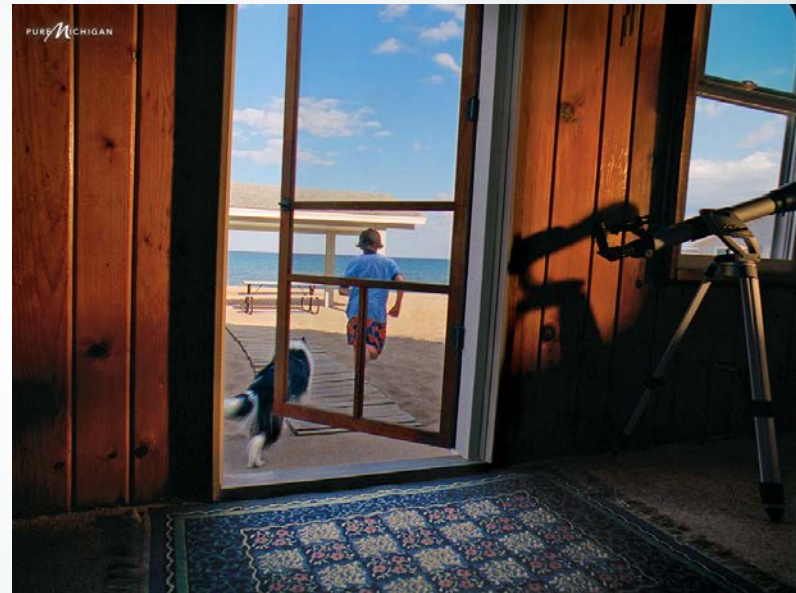
Rule 3: The 6 second Rule

Reporters, recruiters readers decide within seconds

Start with:

1. The Beautiful.
2. The Good
3. The True

Case Study:
Pure Michigan





Rule 4

Spend half your time crafting headline and lede

Most won't get past the headline or lede so make those the main message

Examples:

- What can you do with a spoon?
- Take a rival's quote, make it a headline and take over and "win" a search

Remember: under 70 characters for SEO.





Rule 5

Truth comes first, keep it real

The best place to hide a dead body is page 2 of Google search results.

If you over-promise and under-deliver, reporters, audiences (and Google) will penalize you.

We put up walls as soon as we feel someone is trying to “sell” us something.

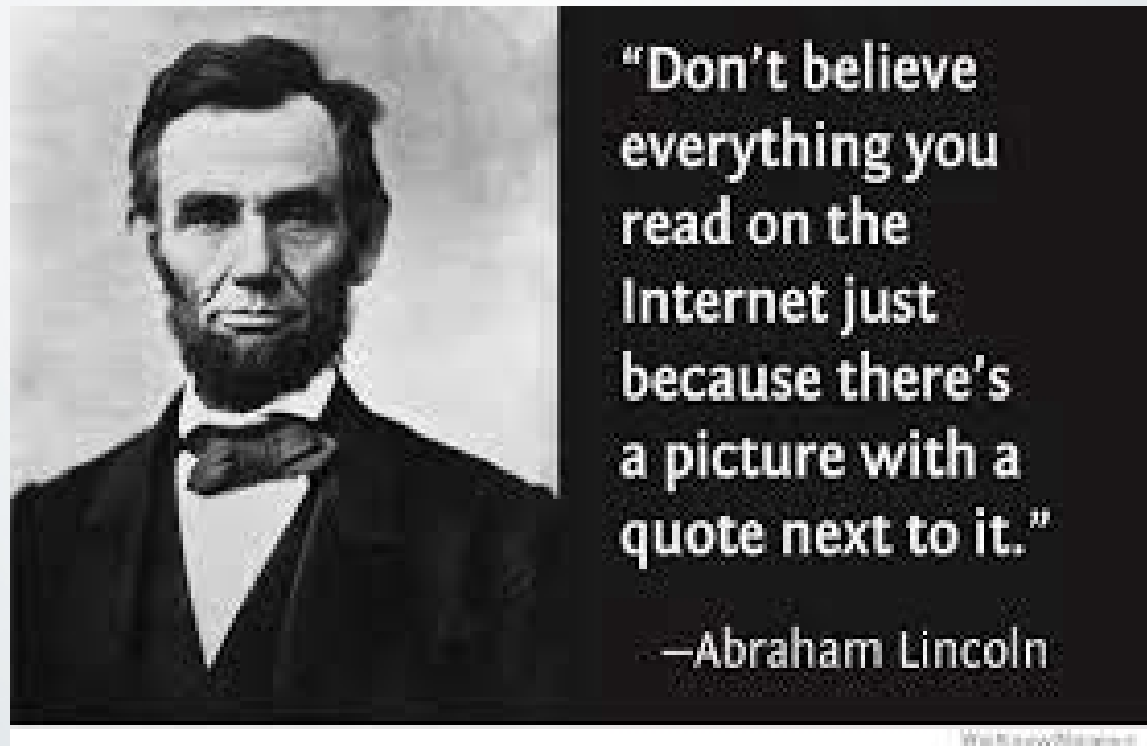
‘We’ beats ‘me’. Start by building the relationship and giving them what they need.

Desperation shows and rarely works: 80% of sales occur between the fifth and 12th time a brand connects with a target.



Rule 6

Kill the fake quotes: Lots of work, no ROI





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Rule 7

The Oprah Rule



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Key Takeaways

1. Write with a specific buyer persona – a real person – in mind and write for that person.
2. Treat Google like one of those real people and don't play tricks.
3. Good PR and SEO are about matchmaking, building bridges
4. Shorter sentences but longer press releases.
5. Keep it real and true, leading with beautiful, good and true.

Q&A



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