



How to Write News- & Share-Worthy Press Releases

Beth Monaghan, Principal & Co-Founder, InkHouse

9.8.14

Twitter: @bamonaghan, #prnews

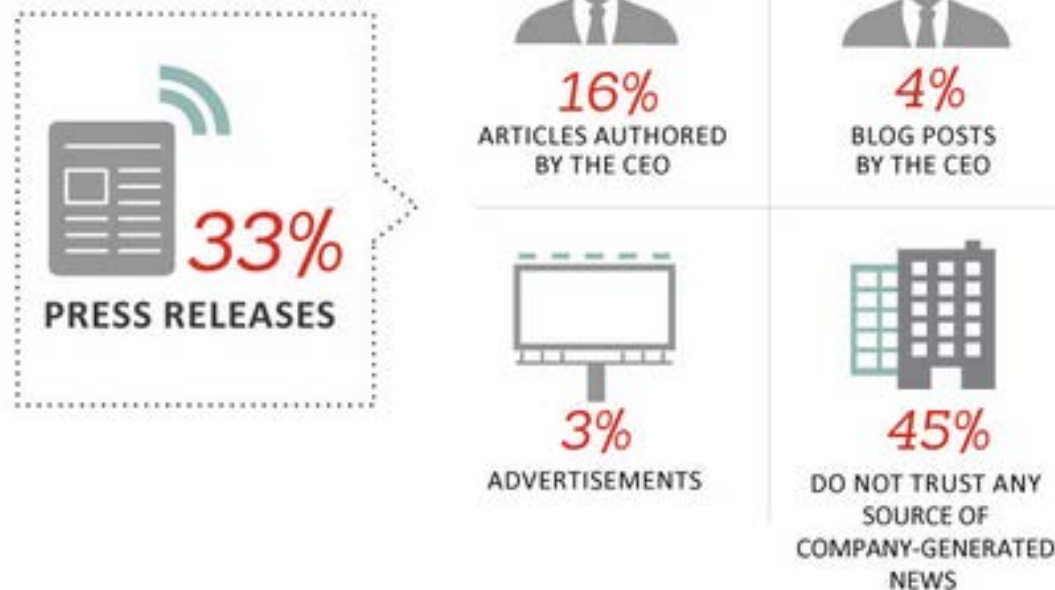
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Is the press release dead? No.

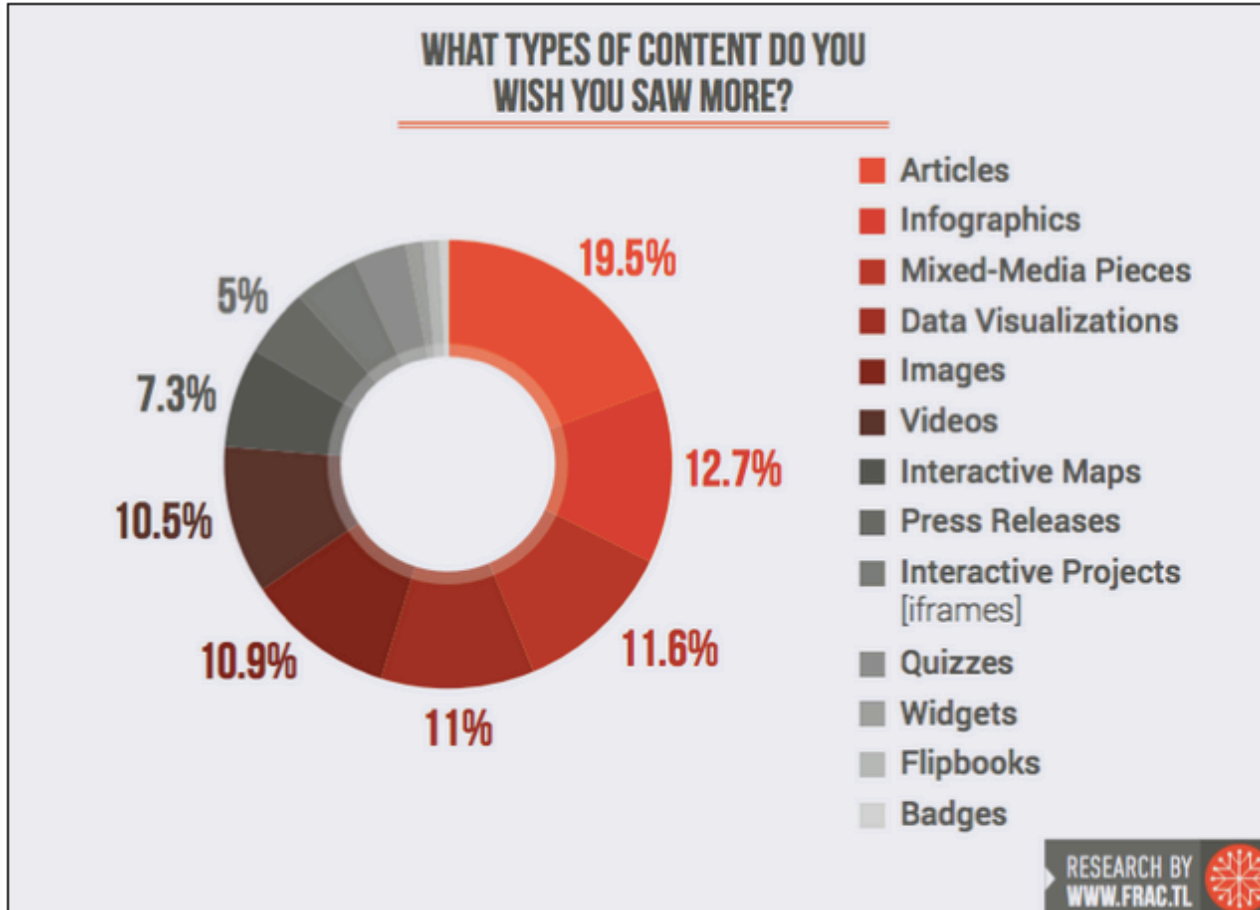
Long live press releases. The most trusted source of company generated news.

Company News and Trust

Which Sources Americans Trust

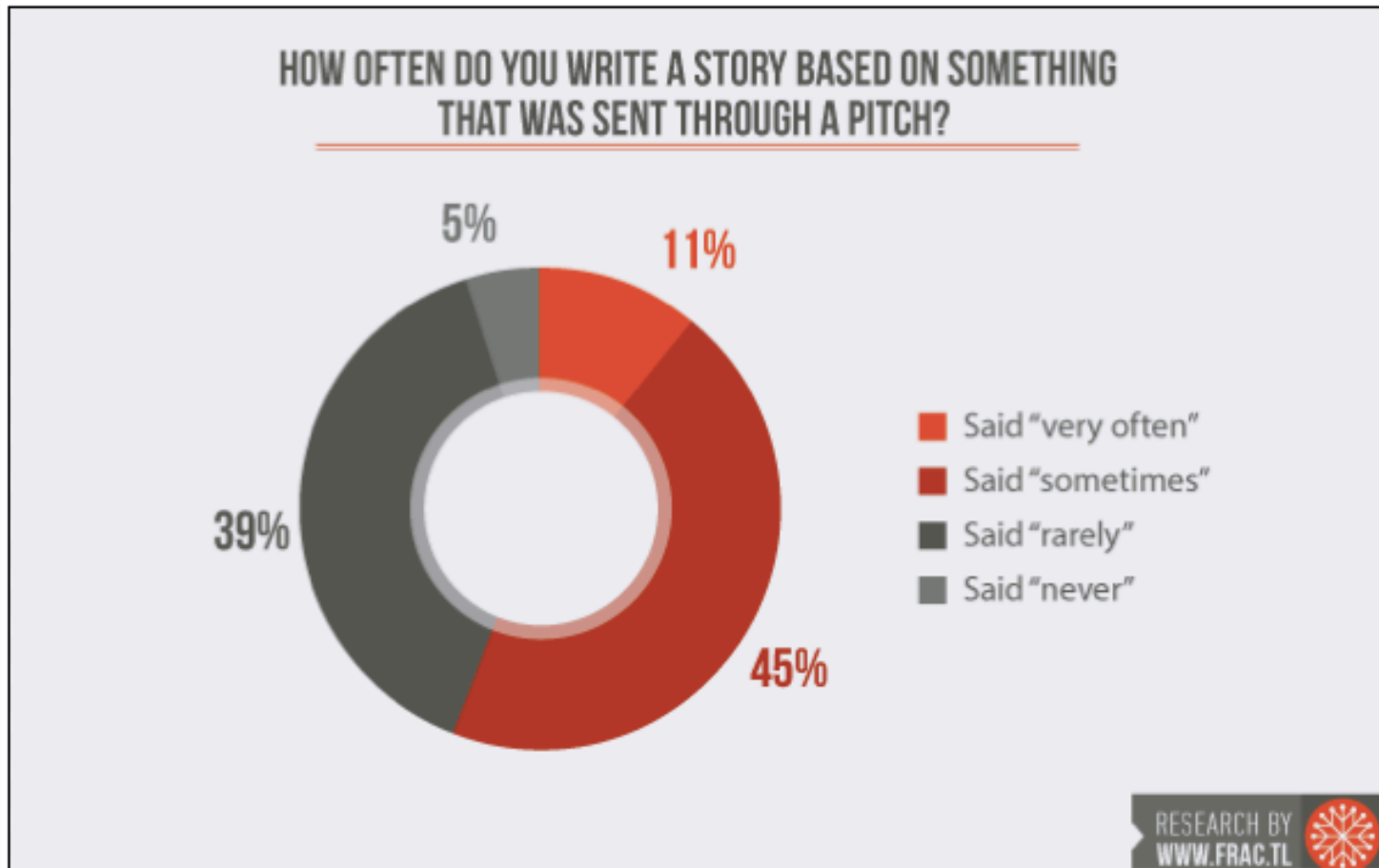


But reporters don't like press releases



Only 5% report
using press
releases

Yet, they do use info from PR people



A stack of several folded newspapers is shown, with the text overlaid in red. The newspapers are slightly out of focus, showing some legible words like "services", "ness, the Association of", "ars only complained", "cult", "we should be pursuing", "that would reduce our popula", and "tion to 20 million - a third of".

**The press release has
been co-opted as a
marketing & sales tool.
It is *supposed* to be a
ready-to-print news story.**

CHANGE

What needs to change?
Everything.

1. Headlines

- Clarity and simplicity beat buzzwords
- Attention grabbers beat tag lines
- Shorter is always better: 100 characters or fewer
- Context beats cuteness

00:47:05 UNTIL NEW YORK MARKETS CLOSE [After Hours Preview](#) [Winners and Losers](#)

MARKETWIRE [GET EMAIL ALERTS](#)

Doctors Take Note: 70 Percent of People Track Their Health and Fitness Daily With Mobile Apps

Published: Apr 17, 2014 9:01 a.m. ET

FORTUNE

Groupon raises, like, a billion dollars

by Dan Primack @danprimack JANUARY 10, 2011, 9:14 PM EDT     

Groupon, the online coupon company that recently spurned a \$6 billion takeover offer from Google (GOOG), announced today that it has



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New Survey: 'I'd Rather Take Out The Trash Than Take My Meds'

BY PR Newswire + Follow | 05/07/13 - 09:00 AM EDT   


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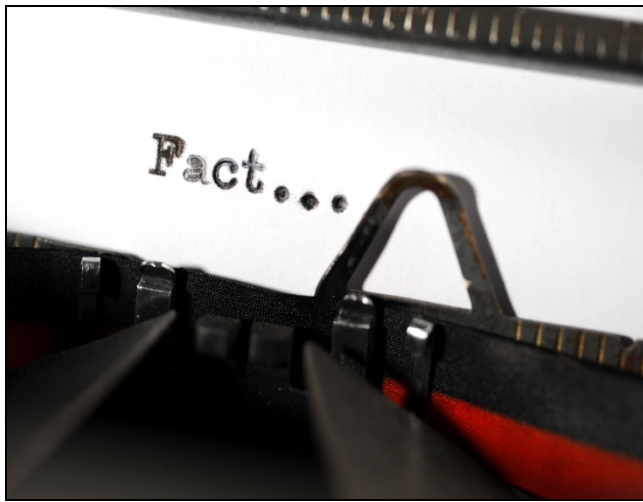
2. Ledes

What's a lede?

The part that draws you in – the first one to two sentences that communicate the **who, what, why, where** and **when**.

A man in a grey sweatshirt and a woman in a light blue blazer stand on a balcony, looking at each other against a city skyline at sunset. The man is on the left, looking towards the woman on the right. The background shows a city skyline with a red and orange sunset sky.

Let's learn from
screen writer Nora
Ephron's high
school journalism
class.



The facts
given in
Ephron's
class

Kenneth L. Peters, the principal of Beverly Hills High School made an announcement:

- The entire high school faculty will travel to Sacramento next Thursday.
- They will attend a colloquium in new teaching methods.
- Among the speakers will be anthropologist Margaret Mead, college President Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins, etc.

What is the lede?

“There will be no school on Thursday.”

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A good lede example

Norwalk, Conn. – May 7, 2013 – America has a serious drug problem, but it's not the one you think. A new survey commissioned by HealthPrize Technologies, a digital health company, found that 47 percent of people would rather take out the trash than take their prescribed medications.

Tips for good ledes

- Begin with a question
 - “What is the number one thing holding women back from upper management?”
- Eliminate the “XYZ company is the leading provider of blah blah blah today announced...”
 - *Demonstrate* that leadership through proof, not words.
- Begin with a strong statement that is contrarian
 - “In five years, people won’t drive cars anymore.”

3. The body

A good news story...

- Shows. It does not tell.
- Communicates the facts – think fewer adjectives, more proof.
- Is written at the third-grade reading level. Yes, really.
- Is short. Shoot for 400 words.



Lora Kolodny ✓

@lorakolodny



Following

Protip: you want people to know yr biz is a-ma-zing, growing like crazy? Give names, facts & numbers to back it up.

4. Quotes

A great quote reads like something a person would actually say. It's also the one place you get to get colorful and lean toward embellishment.

- Never write the words “**very excited**” in a quote. **Give it meaning!**
- **Don't be afraid of a little controversy.** A spokesperson doesn't have to disparage the competition, but a quote that is contrarian to others is a great way to spark interest.
- Write in succinct sound bites. Read quotes that appear in articles and replicate them.

Great quotes pop through

The New York Times

BUSINESS DAY

New Era in Safety When Cars Talk to One Another

By AARON M. KESSLER AUG. 20, 2014

“We’re not interested in this because it’s cool,” he said. “We think there’s a fundamental benefit where people can be safer if they have this technology.”

He added: “We believe, longer term, it will be part of the suite of technologies that will bring about a true driverless car.”

Great quotes pop through




Steven Bertoni
Forbes Staff

FORBES 8/20/2014 @ 10:44AM | 11,339 views

How Mixing Data And Fashion Can Make Rent The Runway Tech's Next Billion Dollar Star

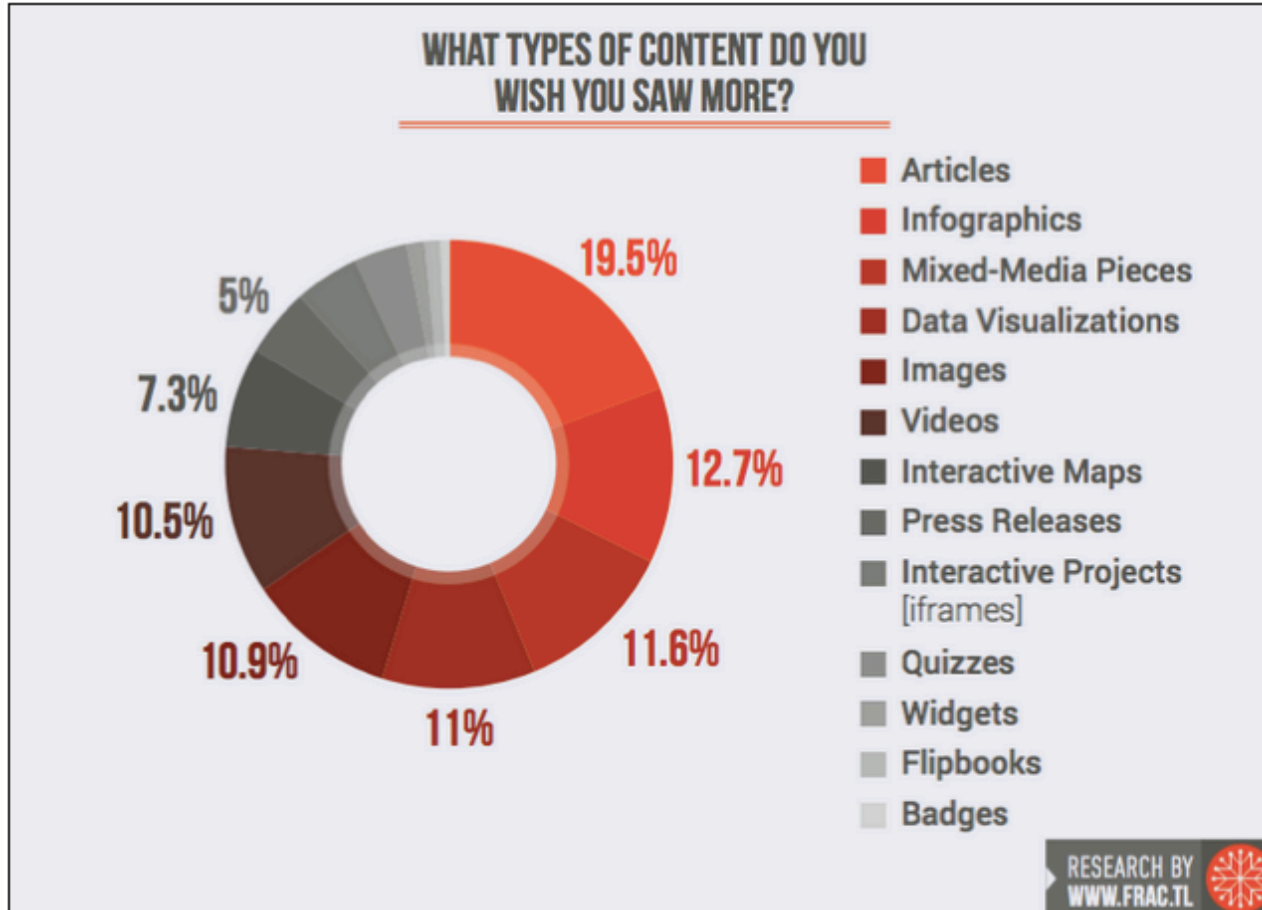
“Opposed to screaming and shouting about inherent sexism in this entrepreneurial world, I thought, let’s work it—let’s build the most kick-ass logistics company in the whole world, and then we’ll reveal what’s under the dress.”

A dandelion seed head on a tall stem in a field of green grass under a purple sky.

Press releases are important, but we should think beyond them.

Visual news vehicles can help stories pop through.

Reporters prefer visuals to releases



~45% use
visuals
compared to
the 5% who use
press releases

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October 30, 2012, 11:14 AM

How to Scare Away A Job Recruiter

Search At Work

SEARCH

By MELISSA KORN [CONNECT](#)

Want to scare away a new job this Halloween?

Apply to a job for which you are completely unqualified, then stalk the hiring manager with daily phone calls and emails to check on your application's status.

Forty-three percent of recruiters said they would "blacklist" a candidate for applying to irrelevant positions, according to a survey of 1,500 recruiters by Bullhorn, a recruiting software company.



Bullhorn



Bullhorn

Chances are someone isn't qualified for both a sales position and a PhD-level research job. "If you've seen a resume 20 times for 20 different jobs, you're never going to open the resume again," says Art Papas, CEO of Bullhorn. Recruiters will suppress an applicant's name from future searches if they pop up too many times for a wide variety of openings.

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10 Signs You're A Gen Y Patient

The doctors may be in...but are they ready for us?

posted on July 30, 2013, at 10:53 a.m.



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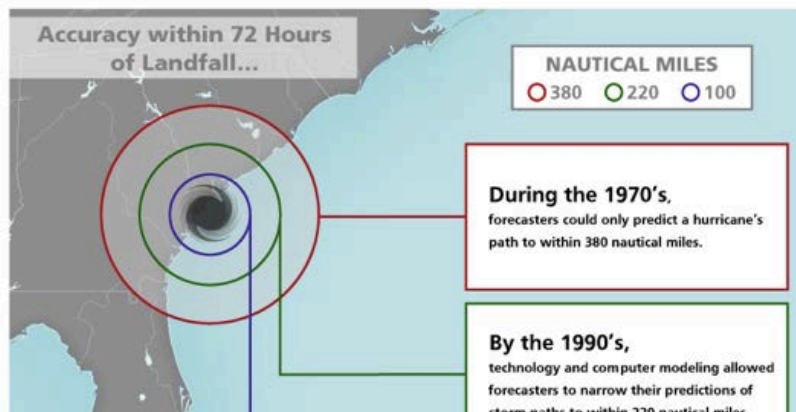
TECH | 6/13/2013 @ 10:00AM | 6,315 views

Forecasting The Weather With Big Data And The Fourth Dimension

3 comments, 2 called-out [+ Comment Now](#) [+ Follow Comments](#)

FORECASTING HURRICANES THEN AND NOW

More accurate prediction of severe weather can help substantially reduce the costs to society of weather-related disasters. Better information induces governments, businesses, and individuals to invest in loss-reduction activities; it can also reduce economic costs from unnecessary loss-reduction activities that derive from uncertainty about adverse weather.³



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Disrupt Finalist TalkTo Brings Its SMS-Based Communication Platform To The Web

Posted Nov 13, 2012 by [Jordan Crook](#)

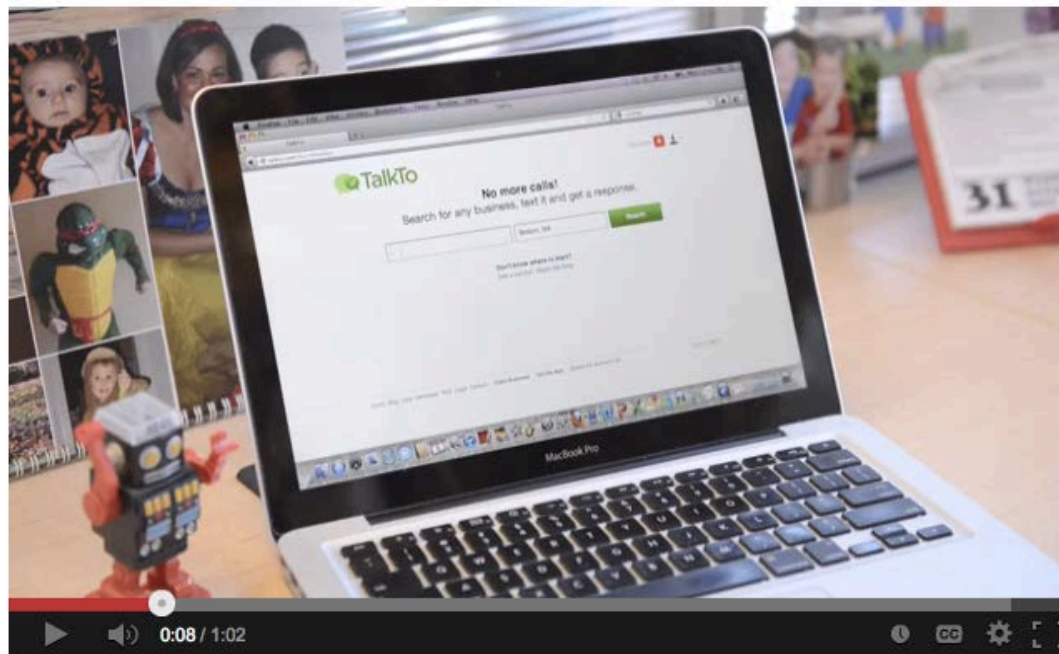
talkto +

Mobile -



Mobile Payments Startup Flint Raises \$6M

Posted 5 hours ago



TalkTo - text any business

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Key takeaways

1. Write for your intended audience, not for the marketing department or CEO
2. Write crisp, clear and short headlines
3. Nail the story and draw in your audience with the lede
4. Make the body easy to read -- show, don't tell
5. Write a quote someone would actually say
6. Think beyond the traditional press release to visual news vehicles -- they work well in combination too

Case Study & Resources

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A case study: the assets



New Survey: 'I'd Rather Take out the Trash than Take My Meds'

Research Highlights the Real Reasons Behind 'America's Other Drug Problem'

Norwalk, Conn. – May 7, 2013 – America has a serious drug problem, but it's not the one you think. A new survey commissioned by [HealthPrize Technologies](#), a digital health company, found that 47 percent of people would rather take out the trash than take their prescribed medications, demonstrating how strongly Americans dislike taking their meds. More than a quarter of people (27 percent) would rather get a shot than take their prescribed medication and 10 percent would rather have a cavity filled.

Each year, 125,000 deaths in the U.S. are linked to people who don't follow their medication prescriptions.¹ And at a time when medical costs are soaring, people's failure to take their medications as prescribed leads to \$290 billion in "otherwise avoidable medical spending" in the U.S. annually.² Ever people with serious conditions like cancer, heart disease and organ transplants often fail to take their medications as prescribed by their doctors – a phenomenon known as "medication non-adherence."



The results

FOX BUSINESS
THE POWER TO PROSPER™

Tough Choice: Take Out the Trash or Your Medicine?

By Donna Fuscaldo / Published May 07, 2013 / FOXBusiness



Many people hate taking their medicine, new survey finds

By [Chris Reidy](#) | GLOBE STAFF MAY 07, 2013



REPRINTS PRINT

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Many people hate to take their medicine --- and that's been and 125,000 deaths a year, according to [HealthPrize Tech](#)

That's also a potential problem for Massachusetts, a hotbed commercializing a great new drug if many patients don't want to take it?

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HUFF POST WOMEN



Catherine Pearson [Become a fan](#)
Catherine.Pearson@huffingtonpost.com

Medication Adherence: Are Women Worse Than Men At Taking Their Meds?

Posted: 05/24/2013 10:45 am EDT | Updated: 05/24/2013 10:49 am EDT



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The Boston Globe

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Resources

- PR Newswire takes a stand against bad content
 - <http://www.inkhouse.net/pr-newswire-takes-a-stand-against-bad-content/>
- The Facts Alone Do Not Make the Story
 - <http://www.inkhouse.net/the-facts-alone-do-not-make-a-story/>
- Retooling the Press Release to its Intended Audience: The Press
 - <http://www.inkhouse.net/retooling-the-press-release-to-its-intended-audience-the-press/>
- Do You Really Need a Press Release?
 - <http://www.inkhouse.net/do-you-really-need-a-press-release/>
- What's Fueling PR Growth in 2014? InkHouse Weighs in with 5 Trends
 - <http://www.inkhouse.net/whats-fueling-pr-growth-in-2014-inkhouse-weighs-in-with-5-trends/>
- Press Release Insights from NPR and the New York Times
 - <http://www.inkhouse.net/press-releases-insights-from-the-new-york-times-and-npr/>
- Survey Says: THIS is How to Pitch Media
 - <http://www.inkhouse.net/survey-says-this-is-how-to-pitch-media/>