



## What Does It Cost to Distribute a Press Release?

The cost of getting your press release in front of appropriate media contacts will depend on your level of expertise and participation. It could range anywhere from cost-free to well over \$2,000, though typically somewhere between those two extremes.

If you have all of the relevant media contacts you need and a proven strategy for manually distributing your news releases and following up through internal sources, your out-of-pocket investment could be small or even nothing.

In the old days, you'd, at the very least, be responsible for the postage and mailing expenses. Today, your entire distribution will be a digital endeavor, making that part of the job accessible.

Of course, this strategy is only a winner if you or an internal team member actually have the time, skill, and inclination to make the necessary media contacts and follow-through. That can always be a challenge—or an entire waste of time.

Keep in mind that today's media environment is more complex and expansive than ever. The outlet choices go far beyond traditional print, television, and radio. Today you must also be cognizant of the bloggers, vloggers, podcasters, web journalists, influencers, and others who might serve your audience.

Are you on top of that reality? After careful consideration, you might find that it could be more efficient and productive to invest in seasoned public relations professionals, a media database tool, or an automated press release distribution service, also known as a newswire, to fulfill your press release distribution needs.

Let's start by looking at what press release distribution entails and how it's generally done.

## The Basics of Press Release Distribution

By its most basic definition, press release distribution consists of the actions taken to get your written or produced press release in front of relevant journalists, reporters, editors,

bloggers, and anyone and everyone else who you hope will highlight your organization's news by writing a news story or at least picking up your release.

This distribution can be done manually or through electronic automation. Manual distribution involves individually sending reporters or other media decision-makers a press release or a story idea with a personal message.

Newswires automate that process for enhanced time efficiency, though without personal involvement. You might be motivated to manually distribute your press releases if you're in a niche industry with relatively little press, or your business is local, and you only want to attract the hometown media sources you already know. However, if you have a larger corporation or marketing area, or even an international market with hundreds or a thousand media outlets in mind, it might not be practical to run anything but a newswire distribution.

We'll proceed with the assumption that you've already developed a messaging strategy and have written appealing and relevant content that your market's media will want to pick up. With that as a given, we'll outline the cost of distributing that strategically sound message to pique media interest.

There can be several good reasons not to go the route of in-house manual distribution despite the cost savings, especially if...

- You don't know who the appropriate media contacts for your story are.
- You do have names and contact information, but you haven't established relationships with many (or any) of the media contacts who appeal to your target audience.
- You don't have the time, energy, or skilled internal resources to follow up with each and every media contact to gauge their level of interest and encourage a story or press release pickup.

Even in the best-case scenario, the manual strategy isn't actually cost-free. After all, the time spent on internal press release distribution is taken from other internal activities, some of which might have been more financially productive.

## So What Does it Cost to Use a Newswire?

An alternative strategy is to hire an automated press release service, or newswire, to distribute your communication to the appropriate media. Leading services of this nature include Newswire, Presswire, eReleases, EIN Presswire, Business Wire, and numerous others. To get an idea of the full selection, start your research with a search engine query of "press release services" or "newswire."

The cost of engaging a newswire can range from a couple of hundred dollars to low four figures. Some of the factors that can contribute to cost include:

- Geographic dissemination, with the cost escalating based on whether you're seeking local, regional, national, or international media outlets
- Word count, with a base price set usually for about 400 words

- Whether images or video clips are embedded, which typically boosts the price
- The total number of media outlets targeted
- Additional services performed, which can include proofreading; writing guidance, including search engine optimization (SEO); and advanced results reporting

Some newswires might be better with certain industries or for companies of varying sizes. You should be able to find most of this information on vendor websites or with an introductory chat with a customer service representative.

One potential downside to using a newswire is that it can look impersonal and mass-delivered to the media. It's sort of like when you get a "to addressee or current resident" letter in the mail instead of one written solely to your attention. How motivated are you to read on?

But there are definitely times when this is the only practical approach. Plus, today's nearly constant expectation of news updates on digital media vehicles could be in your favor. Media sites are unendingly starved for new content, and your press release can temporarily feed that hunger.

## **The Cost of Engaging a Public Relations Firm or Experienced Freelancer**

One key advantage to using a PR firm or an experienced PR freelancer for your company's distribution needs is that the person can take full responsibility or work with your team to handle the full scope of your press release campaign. This might include strategy development, the writing of the release, distribution, and follow-up with at least some individual media decision-makers.

Depending on the size and prominence of the public relations firm, the charge could be as much as \$500 an hour, though hourly rates are more likely to range from around \$150 to \$250.

A freelancer, maybe operating out of a home office with minimal overhead, might charge just \$50 or \$75 an hour. If the person has a relevant PR background, you might be able to get optimal results at much lower rates than you can expect from a much larger firm.

Whichever way you go, make sure that your prospective experts have access to all of the media contacts you need. Do they have significant networking experience in what could be a vast media landscape in your marketing area or industry? Do they have experience working with clients in your industry? Have they worked with key newswires? Can they give you a total cost estimate based on their prediction of project time commitment?

Be sure to have this serious conversation before coming to terms with any vendor.

## **Select a Media Database to Self-Distribute Your Press Releases**

Vendors, including Cision, Meltwater, Vuelio, and others, specialize in providing full contact information in real-time for as many as thousands of media outlets. This can include information as basic as the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of reporters and

other contacts to as expansive as also listing the sort of articles the reporter or editor favors.

You might pay at least \$3,000 a year for a single-user license for a basic service level, but the cost can escalate to \$12,000 or more with more advanced features. The possible advantage is that with this tool, you can create your own media distribution lists, cutting out the newswires and the cost of external PR experts.

A media database could be a savvy investment if you regularly distribute press releases. If it's an occasional pursuit, your business is probably better served by outside professionals or a newswire.

Whatever you spend, a smartly written press release can be a savvy investment in promoting your company and your brand. As long as your news is actually newsworthy to your targeted media and your public, the results could be worth many times more than an ad placement investment. That's because you end up with a highly credible and neutral third party rather than your own company promoting your good news.

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