



16 Public Relations Pitfalls

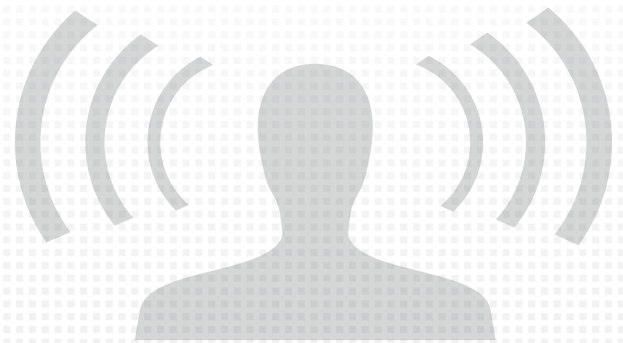
Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Section 1: Social Media Pitfalls	4
Stay Silent	5
Assail Followers With Promotions	5
Lose Control Of Your Social Media	5
Refuse To Share	6
Shun Social Media	6
Tweet Recklessly	6
Section 2: Online PR Pitfalls	7
Disregard PR Tools	8
Create Boring Content	8
Insult Your Critics and Competition	8
Avoid Spell Check	9
Argue Online	9
Keep Visitors In The Dark	9
Ignore Keywords	9
Section 3: Media Outreach Pitfalls	10
Think Press Releases Are Only For Print.....	11
Limit Your Outreach To Newspapers and Magazines.....	11
Have A Weak Pitch	11
Conclusion	12

Avoiding Public Relation Pitfalls

As the Internet has come to the forefront of public relations over the last decade, the strategies and tactics of the industry have begun a rapid, ongoing evolution. What used to be tried and true methods are now only some of the methods people are using to increase public awareness and manage their company's image. The arrival of the Internet, with its various social media and other channels, sometimes overwhelms companies and they can struggle to know how to effectively leverage those media to manage their brand and image.

Because businesses have options for marketing themselves online — social media, webinars, email marketing, press releases, infographics, YouTube, the blogosphere and more — it's sometimes hard to know what to do and where. Here are 16 tips for what not to do in online public relations.



Section 1: Social Media Pitfalls

Social Media Pitfalls

1) Stay Silent

Don't be the kid who sits in the corner by himself. Since online PR is often about whom you know, building relationships with thought leaders and bloggers in your industry can impact your company significantly.

As you jump in and come to the forefront of a discussion, be sure to produce interesting content — this both fuels the discussion and draws those involved to your company.

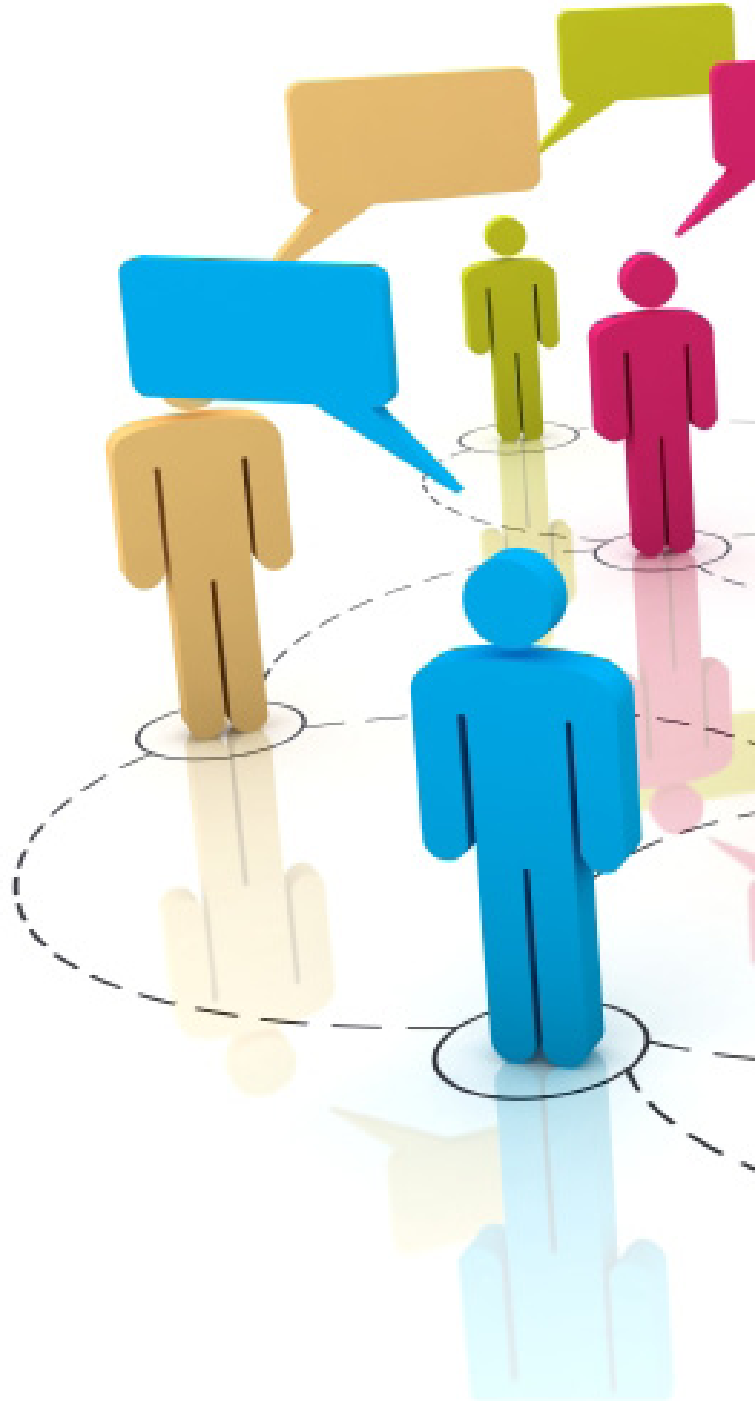
2) Assail Followers With Promotions

People do not follow products. One of the best ways to decrease your Facebook fans and Twitter followers is to bombard them with sales pitches. Only strong content will engage readers, and closing a deal shouldn't always be the top priority.

There is no magic pill for gaining exposure, but the first step is integrating social media into every aspect of your online public relations campaign. "Like" buttons should be easy to find on your company's website. Remember, social media is about engaging in a conversation with your followers not blasting them with ads or promotions.

3) Lose Control Of Your Social Media

Protecting your company's image means carefully monitoring your social media accounts. Consider banning applications like TweetDeck and HootSuite which integrate multiple social media streams. Sometimes employees sign into their personal accounts while tweeting and posting on Facebook for the company, which may cause embarrassment.

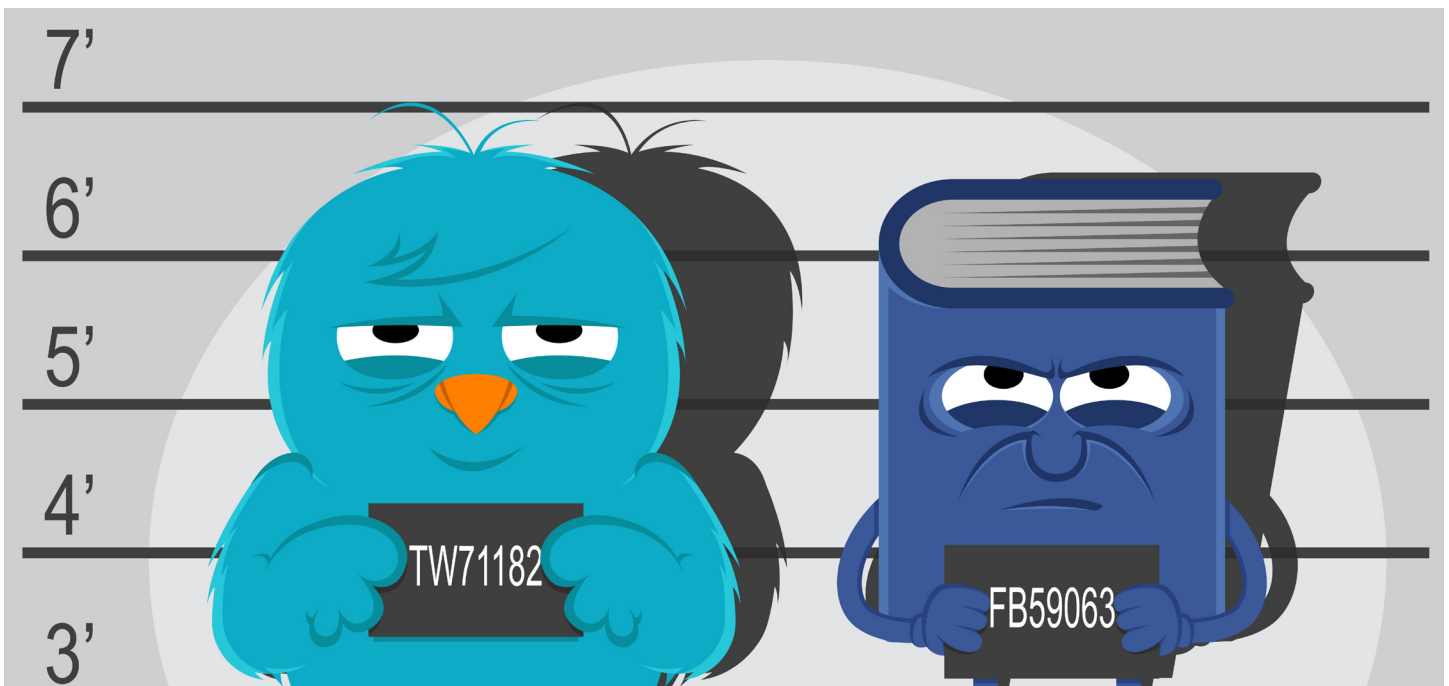


4) Refuse To Share

Businesses miss out when they don't include convenient ways for people to further distribute press releases, webinar invitations, newsletters and blog posts. Make it easy for your messages to be shared throughout Facebook, Twitter and the rest the Web.

5) Shun Social Media

Some businesses say social media doesn't benefit their public relations campaign. However, even a modest presence on Facebook and Twitter may help with online visibility, SEO, managing your company's reputation and engaging potential customers.



6) Tweet Recklessly

In spite of the challenge for businesses to create content that stands out, don't give in to the temptations to throw a bunch of stuff at the wall, hoping something will stick.

It's easy to go overboard with social media. Instead of tweeting many times a day, build momentum by engaging in online conversations with influencers in your industry.

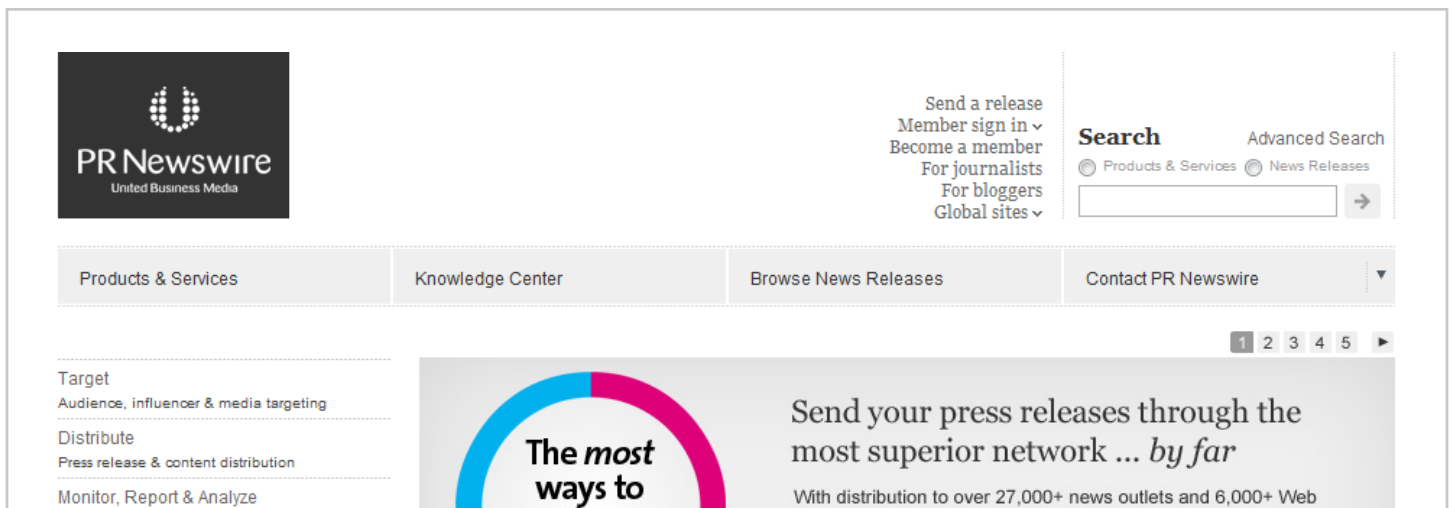
Section 2: Online PR Pitfalls

7) Disregard PR Tools

Various online public relations tools provide means to submit press releases, view editorial calendars and monitor what people are saying about your business. These are crucial to your online PR success; plan your budget accordingly.

Consider Vocus, PRNewswire, PRWeb, Free Press Index, PR.com, or PitchEngine for submitting press releases.

Check out HARO, Reporter Connection, MyMediaInfo, Cision, MatchPoint, or PressWiki for media contacts and editorial calendars. For monitoring online activity related to your company, try Social Mention, Viral Heat, and alerts from Google and Backtype.com.



8) Create Boring Content

Don't expect to increase your media exposure with relevant fans without producing entertaining content that connects consumers (and reporters) with the company.

9) Insult Your Critics and Competition

The Internet makes it easy to fire off rants about the competition or a disgruntled customer. A bit of advice: Don't.



10) Avoid Spell Check

Whether you are writing a press release or speaking to your Facebook fans, your company will not be viewed as an industry leader unless your content is well written and free of silly mistakes. Spelling and grammar are key.

11) Argue Online

Sometimes social media is not the most ideal place to address consumer concerns. Lessen backlash by sending an email rather than publicly engaging disgruntled customers online. That being said, publicly acknowledging that you will address their concern in private allows consumers who may happen upon the complaint to know that your company addressed the concern.

12) Keep Visitors In The Dark

Make it easy for potential customers to find your address and phone number online. If the information changes, update all the Web directories so customers can easily call or visit your brick-and-mortar location.

13) Ignore Keywords

If you're not optimizing your website for search engines, you won't be found online. Keyword research is the first step. Map out the search terms you would like to rank for on Google and then use key words in your content so the search engine notices your site.

Section 3: Media Outreach Pitfalls

14) Think Press Releases Are Only For Print

Press releases are picked up online more than they are published in print. This trend is a huge opportunity for you to increase your brand awareness and boost your SEO efforts. In order to accomplish both of these purposes make sure to include your company name and keywords specific to the press release.



15) Limit Your Outreach To Newspapers and Magazines

Too often businesses ignore the strong potential of online PR by concentrating too much on seeing their names in print. Traditional media like newspapers and magazines have taken a hit as consumers turn to the Internet. With an effective online public relations campaign, your website traffic will increase. Bloggers are important for spreading your message.

Nothing will get your pitch rejected more quickly than blanketing reporters and bloggers with the same email touting why this story is right for them. Establish yourself as a credible source in your industry by regularly emailing reporters and bloggers new and creative angles.

16) Have A Weak Pitch

Here are a few basics for getting journalists to cover your story:

- Don't attach anything to your email pitches. Either they will end up in spam folders, or editors who fear viruses won't open the emails. Cut and paste directly into the email.
- Don't pitch to the wrong editor. Personalize your pitch by targeting specific reporters by name.
- Explain why your story is important to their readers.
- Don't sound arrogant.

These tips could help keep your story from getting rejected by journalists the next time you have sizzling content or a hot scoop.

Move Forward

The online PR world may seem a bit like venturing out into the unknown, but with guidance, it can open wide the gates of increased public awareness and brand management for your company. Remember these bits of advice and put them into practice; you'll be surprised at what you can achieve with good online PR practices.