



## **Press Release Distribution Services (Mini) Review January 2010**

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## Introduction

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Press release distribution is a tried and tested SEO technique and can deliver excellent results when the strategy is used correctly.

In principle, the mechanics of issuing press releases are fairly straightforward, but there is a bewildering choice of different suppliers who claim to offer the best solution.

Comparing press release distribution companies is not an exact science as each press release is different and issued on days with varying degrees of competition from other sources. We could not find an up to date review, comparing the strengths and merits of each option, so we decided to do our own mystery shop.

This review is intended to provide an overview of the services and results offered by some of the main UK players – we've tried to trial the equivalent service in each case.

This review is **not** intended as a thorough breakdown of all press release distribution companies and services but merely a starting point for anyone not sure about which one to choose – it is based exclusively on our own recent experiences and we do not claim to have applied an exact science to the process.

If you offer press release distribution services and would like to be added to the review (which we may well update and maintain as a 'live' document), then please [contact Browser Media](#).

## Press Release Distribution Services

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The following section summarises our experiences with selected UK press release distribution services (presented in no particular order). There are a few general points to consider:

- Most services offer a 'pay as you go' debit/credit card payment facility.
- Discounts are generally available if you sign up to a specific number of releases.
- You may need to set up a user account and password several days prior to distribution even if you opt for the 'pay as you go' service.

**PR Newswire (<http://prnewswire.co.uk>)**

PR Newswire offers two types of service – the UK Newswire or an ‘online visibility package’. The following comments are based on the UK Newswire.

- + Great pick up from local newspapers and radio (the press release did play to this audience) – some of which then converted to online coverage with links.
  - + Good for large corporates where budget is less of an issue or for selected press releases.
  - + They claim to be the biggest press release distribution company with the highest trafficked website in the industry and the coverage bore that out.
  - + They part own the Press Association (PA) so have intelligence about how the media search and tag industry news and are therefore a trusted source.
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- Expensive: £285 for 400 words on the wire and a further £75 per 100 words after that (contact information and notes to eds included in word count!)
  - No links: the UK wire does distribute online but doesn’t include embedded links so no SEO value. (Their online visibility package is £250 although can be discounted if used in conjunction with the wire.)

**Marketwire (<http://www.marketwire.com/>)**

Marketwire is similar to PR Newswire in that they are a wire service which distributes to media outlets and online. They do also offer a ‘social media release’ but we didn’t have any particularly amazing video footage or images so chose to go with the standard wire distribution.

- + £260 for 400 words which was a good middle of the road service.
  - + Great for link bait - lots of the coverage was replicated in full and included three or four back links.
  - + Price includes one ‘trade list’ i.e. a list of traditional journalist/media contacts operating within your sector i.e. motoring, health, personal finance etc.
  - + Media dashboard included in price to track most coverage. (Although they list ‘search engines’ as coverage so a little misleading.)
  - + Account staff were really friendly even after a barrage of questions.
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- +/- Based in the US so UK clients currently submit press releases by email. It was actually refreshing to have an account handler to process the release rather than trawling through a system of tick boxes to get it uploaded.
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- Additional ‘trade lists’ are £50 each.

- Coverage was very US focussed and lots of duplication in terms of the sites that covered it i.e. lots of 'sister' publications/sites.
- No journalists contacted us on the back of issuing to the 'trade' lists.

#### **PR Web (<http://uk.prweb.com/>)**

As it says on the tin, this service is very web focussed – with (supposedly) a total of 30,000 outlets.

- + £110 for distribution (no word count) – they offer cheaper options which don't include anchor text or links but we didn't really see the point. They do offer a social media release but again our content wasn't appropriate.
- + You can choose up to 10 industry categories and 5 regional categories (and one media digest.)
- + The industry categories are quite specific so good for reaching people who will really be interested in your news.
  
- +/- They don't track your coverage but they do feedback how many headline and full page reads you've achieved so at least you could compare one release against another over time.
  
- The media digest is a slightly spurious list and smacked of a US company not understanding the UK media very well.
- Caveat: at the time of trial the UK version of the site wasn't working so we had to pay in dollars and work out timings based on Pacific Standard Time – bit disappointing.
- Although they do have a UK helpline we are pretty sure it diverts to the US – more could be done to convince us that they are really serious about the UK market.

#### **Realwire (<http://www.realwire.com/>)**

Realwire is a smaller operation than some of the above but good value and excellent customer service.

- + Distribution starts at £125 and has various increments up to £300 if you want to include tracking. They also offer a social news release which we didn't trial.
- + We did trial the tracking service and it was really good – broken down by selective editorial sites, blogs and sites that just duplicate coverage.
- + They are very UK focussed in terms of the customer support – really helpful staff prepared to talk you through the process.
- + Coverage was good although a little techy but with lots of links.
- + Really simple system to use.

+ In the sectors they know well they have really detailed lists i.e. within HR they have 6 sub categories.

+/- However, they don't have a list for every sector but were prepared to put one together. This honestly was appreciated but it would probably be prudent to use a different service if they don't have experience in your sector.

+/- They also offer a PA distribution service for an extra £100 which we didn't trial.