

# SURVIVAL OF THE FRESHEST:

Creating PR buzz through photos in social media



# HOW TO USE IMAGES MORE EFFECTIVELY

**Images are not** only among the most eye-catching forms of PR and social media news content – they are also one of the most effective. Easy to consume, reproduce and share, photos allow busy readers to absorb a great deal of information about your company, simply at a glance. This is especially true online, where users browse quickly, and where bloggers without budgets are eager for media content. Give them images they can use, republish and share, and watch your publicity grow exponentially.

The first step, of course, is deciding which types of photos to publish. The following guidelines can help to get you started:

## Stay original

Your company is not generic, and neither is your audience. Original content, after all, should be at the heart of any good PR program – a fact that applies as much to photography as it does to writing. Fresh, iconic images have always been instrumental in feeding the public's constant hunger for news – perhaps now more than ever.

As with all content, every image tells a story. And to whatever extent possible, that story should be unique to you. Whether it's a photo of busy co-workers in a high-rise office or a casual snapshot from a local event, each impression speaks volumes. Are you wearing a suit? Shaking hands? Or holding a drink? Of course there is no right or wrong way to do this, but keep in mind that every choice you make, no matter how small it may seem, says a great deal about your company.



## Publish smart, and publish often

The sheer speed of news production and consumption on the Web has far-reaching implications for the way effective PR content should be produced. It is a flat world, where bloggers, journalists, marketers and everyday social media users share the same playing field. Where anyone and everyone can produce quality images and create buzz overnight. Sometimes quality isn't even an issue – as long as the photo tells the intended story. Here, shaping your brand is less about flexing corporate muscles through painstakingly packaged news content than about gaining foothold in an ongoing conversation. And doing so takes hard work. It takes creativity and experience that can't be gained by watching and planning from afar. In short, you need to learn by doing. Only later can you refine the images and other content you produce to better align with your objectives – to give your audience what really matters to them.

## Outshine your competitors

Before you spend too much time planning and listening to self-pronounced PR and social media experts, take a good look at your competitors. Consider the effects their photos produce and reflect on how you might differentiate yourself. Most likely, you'll probably notice that their content is outdated and published irregularly. Often, it will be predictable, even boring. Overcome these common mistakes and you might just surprise yourself with how easy it is to succeed and get your story told.

**“SOCIAL WEB USERS WANT WHAT'S FRESH. THEY SEEK THE UNEXPECTED.”**

# 4 TIPS FOR INCREASED EXPOSURE:

## 1 Optimize your photo captions

Give your photo a relevant caption, and be sure to include keywords that journalists or customers might search for. For even better search engine optimization, use this caption as the image's file name.

## 2 Tag your photos

Depending on where you publish your images, there's a good chance you'll be able to add tags that help categorize content for search engines. Don't miss this opportunity to fine-tune your tag clouds for just the right target audience.

## 3 Link up with other media

Whenever possible, make your photos link to related articles, videos, your homepage or other content, and vice versa. Guide your readers' interest while it lasts, and keep them in all the relevant loops. Remember that the tags and file names of your images should bear relevant names.

## 4 Go social

Create a system for posting your photos on sites like Flickr, Facebook and Twitter. The more your content is discovered and shared via social media, the more you'll find yourself gaining publicity in some of the most unexpected places.

## Surprise your audience

As the tastes of media consumers adapt to viewing almost endless streams of imagery, stock images and generic photography are likely to do more damage than good. A pair of smiling models concluding a business deal, a photoshopped group pose or a generic cityscape are sure-fire ways to trigger negative reactions from today's viewers, who may instinctively shuffle your brand into the growing pile of sterile and forgettable corporate brands. Instead of predictable headshots, try photographing your staff in unexpected environments. Rather than an isolated product photo, show it being used in surprising real-life situations. After all, the easiest way to connect with your customers is through an image that puts a smile on their face.

## Tell a compelling story

Of course, standing out in the crowd of social media demands more than just good content. You need content that generates a compelling story that attracts links and postings on news sites. When it comes to photos, this requires strategic thinking that goes well beyond the more conventional realm of PR. Where will your photos be seen, and in what format? Will they be high-resolution images destined for Flickr or news sites, or simply thumbnails posted on Facebook? Each media channel has its own style and needs, so be sure to have a broad collection images in your image bank to tell the right story to each particular audience.

## Rethink the old rules

Unlike in the past, where a great deal of time and money would be spent driving traffic to a company's website with a carefully targeted newsletter or press release, the pace of social media has changed the game dramatically. Social web users want what's fresh. They seek the unexpected. Any news or content that seems dated is far less likely to get passed on to new channels. This is a challenge that simply cannot be overcome by a PR program weighed down by over-consideration and approval processes. Instead, consider the images you publish as an experiment. Make changes and adjustments in real time. And above all, track your results to see what works.

MyNewsdesk makes it faster and easier for companies, journalists, bloggers and opinion leaders to gain relevant exposure on their own terms. For more tips and advice on how to make better use of photos, visit [www.mynewsdesk.com](http://www.mynewsdesk.com)



The News Exchange Site is a place where company content can be exchanged on users' terms – guaranteeing that interested readers are seeing your story.