

INSIGHT

Make PR work for your small business

PR

**DRESS
THE PART**
AND STRIKE A POSE
IN PHOTOCALLS!

**TELL
YOUR
STORY**
IN 5 STEPS

**GET THE
BEST**
FROM YOUR PR
PICTURES

**SPREAD
YOUR
MESSAGE
ONLINE**

**“HOW PR
WORKED
FOR ME”**

Tom Keogh, Keogh's Crisps

+
MAKE YOUR
PRESS RELEASE
STAND OUT!



WELCOME

“Don't be afraid of PR. You have a good story, so be brave and tell it!”

— Sheelagh Daly, Local Enterprise Offices

FEATURES

Welcome to the first issue of Insight, developed as a training tool by the Local Enterprise Offices [www.localenterprise.ie].

Good PR is something that you and your team can do for yourselves. Every small-business owner and sole trader can generate positive coverage, whether creating a press release or notifying the media with a simple phone call or e-mail. And it won't cost the earth. However, it does require careful planning.

Remember, you have a unique story to tell. You are running your own business, providing services and producing goods that people want and need.

Don't be afraid of PR. You have a good story – so be brave and tell it! Effective PR can give your small business a competitive edge and credibility. It can build your reputation and help you stand out from the crowd.

PR is not a substitute for other aspects of marketing and communications. But it is an important part of the overall marketing communications mix, alongside other tools such as digital, advertising, direct marketing and sales promotion. In this magazine, we bring you through the five important steps to help you get noticed and promote your business. Plus, we have top tips from the experts.

I hope you find this training magazine insightful, and I wish you good luck with your PR campaigns!

Sheelagh Daly
Chair of Network of Local Enterprise Offices



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◀ Tom Keogh,
Managing
Director
of Keogh's
Crisps.

THE POWER OF PR

Good public relations can be very powerful. It is an affordable and effective way of raising awareness of your business and communicating with your customers, the media, and the general public.

PR is about telling your story. It is about reputation, something which is important for business survival and success.

If managed effectively, public relations can:

- Increase visibility for your business
- Tell the story of your company, its services and products
- Connect you with current and potential customers
- Help your business grow and prosper
- Help you build a relationship with the media
- Give you a competitive edge and help you stand out from the crowd



5 SIMPLE STEPS TO PR

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR STORY

What is your story? A PR story is anything about your business, product or service that you want the public to know. The first step in any PR campaign is to identify what your story is, what is newsworthy, and what is likely to attract media attention and get you noticed.

PR Top Tips from Small-Business Owners

“**Doing your own PR can be daunting, but do not to be scared off – have confidence in what you can achieve. You don’t have to spend a lot of money with a large PR agency to get results. Be clear about what your story is. Ask yourself how are you different? What service are you offering that nobody else is? Then build your story around that.**”

— Brian O’Rourke, *City Swifter*, Longford



The story test

You should put your story ideas through the “relevance test”. A journalist’s newsworthy test tells them if the story is right for their publication and audience. The relevance test tells you if you will pass that test.

For example:

- Are you offering a new service or product that is likely to grab attention?
- Are you signing any deals or winning contracts with international clients?
- Have you invented or patented something?
- Are you growing your business, expanding operations or taking on new staff in the future?
- Have you or your business been nominated for, or won, an award?
- Are you hitting a milestone (for example: number of clients helped or products made)?

Anything that can be identified as a “first” helps makes the news. Or the “biggest”, “best”, “tallest”, “smallest”, or “most unique” will likely strike a chord.

The best stories have people at the centre. Try to put yourself, some of your team, or a happy client in your story. Look for the quirky or interesting angles that will make people stop and say: “That’s different.”

Knowing what a journalist is looking for in a story is a good start.

STEP 2: WRITE A PRESS RELEASE

Now that you have identified a relevant story, it is time to write it in the form of a press or media release. Close to 80% of stories that appear in the media are triggered by a press release. Newsdesks receive hundreds of press releases every day, so it is important that yours stands out from the crowd, is newsworthy and has impact.

To increase your chances of success:

- Keep it short.
- Make sure it answers these questions: Who, why, what, where, when and how?
- Write in the inverted pyramid style. Put the most important and interesting news at the top, followed by supporting details in later paragraphs. Make sure your intro is compelling!
- Write a short, snappy headline.
- Make sure the subject line on the email will encourage the recipient to read it.
- Always try to include a quote on behalf of your company.
- Be sure to include a website address, if available.
- Include a contact name and all possible phone numbers at the end.

THE INVERTED PYRAMID

Writing your press release

Who, what, when, where, why, how



THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD HEADLINE

- Your headline is your shop window. It's what will draw the media in.
- Keep it short.
- Use clear, simple language.
- Use active verbs.
- Keep it in the present tense.

Examples of good headlines:

- ✓ Galway firm announces 8 jobs
- ✓ Cork event company signs €100k deal
- ✓ Donegal food business wins international award
- ✓ IT company announces expansion plans

Example of a poor headline:

- ✗ The country's best coffee company won a contract last week to supply new range to several supermarkets and restaurants



INSIGHT: HOW PR WORKED FOR ME

Keogh's Crisps is one of the fastest-growing crisp brands on the Irish market, and a household name. But the company had humble beginnings, starting small in 2011. Managing director Tom Keogh shares his start-up experiences, and tells how the company boxed clever when it came to PR – on a small budget!

What advice would you give to start-ups on PR and how to stand out in the market?

The first thing you need when you set up a business is to establish "What is my story?" Your story is all-important. When we started our business, I was aware we were in a highly competitive market, and therefore the brand needed to have very clear, marketable USPs.

So we came up with 'Crop to Crisp', a phrase which reflected our heritage and the field-to-customer journey. That simple message was the platform for us to tell the story of our family farming the lands of North County Dublin for over 200 years and how, using that expertise and experience, we started to grow, harvest and hand-cook all the potatoes that inevitably become Keogh's crisps. Our story captured imaginations and resonated with the media and in turn the public.

What next, once you have established your story?

You need to package your story and get it out there! That involves branding and PR. Most start-ups, like ourselves, do not have big PR and marketing budgets.

A PR agency can help bring your ideas to life, but the ideas need to come from within. Set clear budgets and briefs. Share your vision with them. And keep your brand message simple and on track. Utilise the assets you have to hand. And be brave and don't be afraid of the direct approach, of contacting journalists yourself with your story.

What will connect with the media and consumers?

Again it goes back to your story. Use your branding and packaging to reflect your story and connect with your customers and media. Nowadays consumers and writers – especially in the area of food – want to know the origin of what is being produced. They want to be educated about what they are eating, or what goes into the product they are using. At Keogh's Crisps we created 'SpudNav'.

On the back of our packaging, you can see the name of the person who cooked the crisps, the field from which the potatoes were harvested and the variety of potato used to create that crisp. But this concept can apply to any sector. For example, if you are a craft maker, tell the story of where the materials you use have been sourced. »



» **How has Keogh's Crisps continued to communicate its Irish and local credentials?**

We did a rebrand, with Ireland and our local area in North County Dublin at the core. As part of our newly designed packaging, we had illustrator Peter Donnelly design a new Keogh's provenance map which shows, for example, that our Atlantic Sea Salt comes from the O'Neills on the Beara Peninsula in West Cork, and that our vinegar suppliers are the Llewellyns who have an orchard in Lusk, Co. Dublin.

The new designs feature elements relative to our family and childhood. Home is where the heart is for us, and so we gave that a very literal meaning, replacing the heart shape that was on the front of all old packaging with elements of home and family which now sit front and centre on the new packaging. The reaction has been incredible. We were overwhelmed by all the well-wishes from customers, suppliers, media, retailers and other Irish food brands and producers.

Are there other ways for communicating with the public and media?

Absolutely. Getting around Ireland and connecting with customers is another great way of communicating your brand. The places and faces of Ireland are hugely important to us, so we make sure to reach out to our customers at trade shows and festivals throughout the year, such as Bloom and Taste and SpudFest, which is a celebration of all things potato-related which happens on National Potato Day each year.

A few years ago, we started our Perfect Picnic campaign, which encourages people to celebrate family and share special moments by filling up a picnic basket with their favourite foods, drinks and snacks, and finding a space outdoors to enjoy some quality time with family and friends.

Is social media important for marketing and PR?

In this day and age social media is vital. We use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to great effect. This is something that does not have to cost the earth either – you can learn it yourself.

So as a deserving winner of the Marketer of the Year national title in 2015, what 'top tips' would you share around PR?

Firstly ask the question, what does PR mean to you, and how is it going to add value to your business? For us, in the beginning we needed a partner when it came to communicating our core messages to the public and media. However, this partnership has changed and grown over the years. For us it's now about relationships, maintaining loyalty and being front of mind.

And finally, "the key to successful PR is..."

Staying true to the brand's core values. We are so lucky to have a business built on heritage and people. Recognising that and owning this value is key for us.

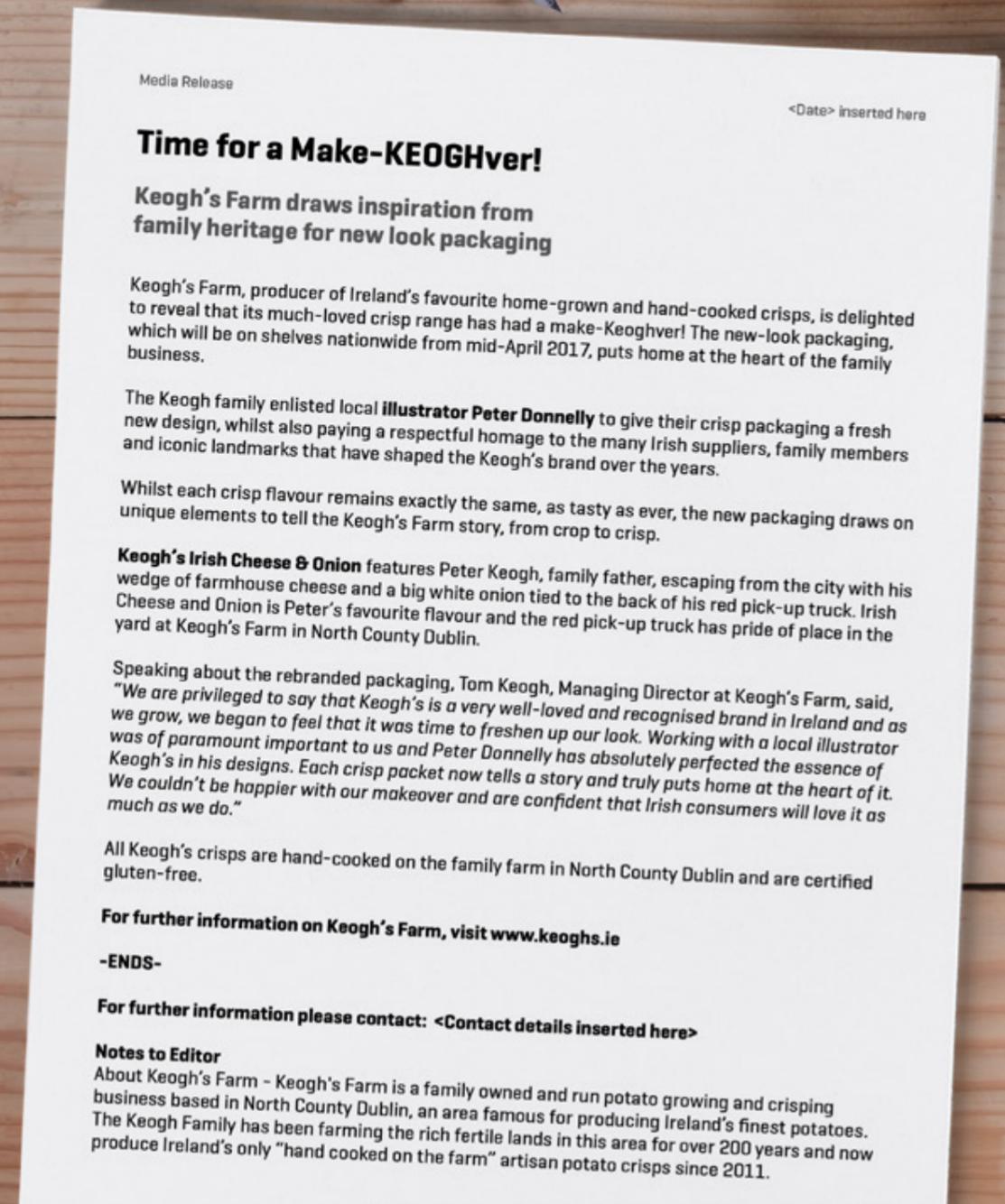
You'll find an extract of a press release from Keogh's Crisps on the next page.



» Extract of a press release from Keogh's Crisps

REAL PRESS RELEASE

EXTRACT REPRODUCTION FROM A KEOGH'S CRISPS PRESS RELEASE



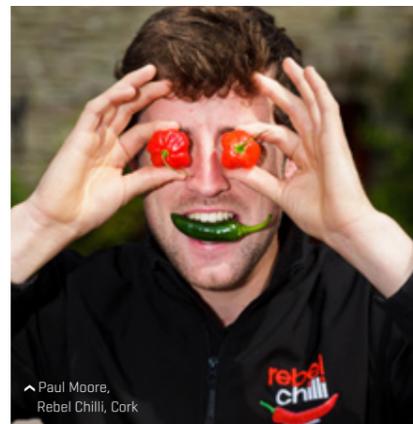
STEP 3: SNAP! A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

A picture really is worth a thousand words. Having an impactful, creative picture to go with your press release improves its chance of being picked up by media.



Joe Keogh of Joe Keogh Photography

TIPS FOR PR PICTURES WITH JOE KEOGH



Paul Moore, Rebel Chilli, Cork



Christy Moran, Kite Sports, Galway



Clare Dolan, The Galway Food Company

Colour

This can be introduced by people's clothing, the natural environment or props. Bright colours are always preferable and attract attention. Be careful, though – don't go over the top!

Action

Try to have people in the photograph doing something rather than looking blankly into the camera. Get them interacting as much as possible with each other.

Props

Try to have a stand-out, colourful, visible prop that will illustrate your story and get your logo and branding in. (NB: National newspapers generally stay away from "in-your-face" logos in pictures.) Ask yourself, will they look well in a photo and are they large enough to stand out? If you're printing props, use a non-gloss finish to avoid a shine in your pictures. It is often worth getting props professionally made, as they can be used again.

Photo captions

The caption is a very important part of the photograph. Even if what is happening in a photo is obvious to the reader (for example, signing a contract with a new client), the location and name of the companies featured may not be obvious. Try to embed the caption into the photo, and only send high-resolution pictures to media.

Studies show that readers glance at a photo, and if it interests them they will read the caption and then go back to the photo, studying it in more detail. If the reader doesn't go on to read the full article, at least they will have read the main details and company references from the photo caption.

DRESS THE PART WITH NIAMH O'NEILL



How to dress appropriately for photo shoots

A slim-cut pantsuit, skirt and jacket combination or a structured (and modest) dress are appropriate for women. Similarly, a well-tailored suit, shirt and tie are appropriate for men.

Dress appropriately to reflect your business

Where possible, ensure that what you wear reflects your business or industry (for example, if you make baked goods, you may prefer to bring along an ironed apron).

Grooming is important

Small details like neat and tidy hair, polished shoes and well-pressed clothing all add to the overall image.

Crisp white shirts

White shirts work well in photos for both men and women. For women, a solid-colour dress or a suit with a solid-colour shirt or blouse can work well. Similarly, for men, a suit with a white or blue shirt with complementing tie is a good option. If in doubt, error on the side of being slightly overdressed, to present the best and most professional image for your business.

Colour should be solid

Avoid busy patterns. Bright colours work well in photographs, but take care to choose one colour and avoid clashing or contrast colours. If bright colour is not your style, consider adding colour with muted tones like navy blue, forest green and claret.



Fashion designer Niamh O'Neill of Niamh O'Neill

About Niamh O'Neill:

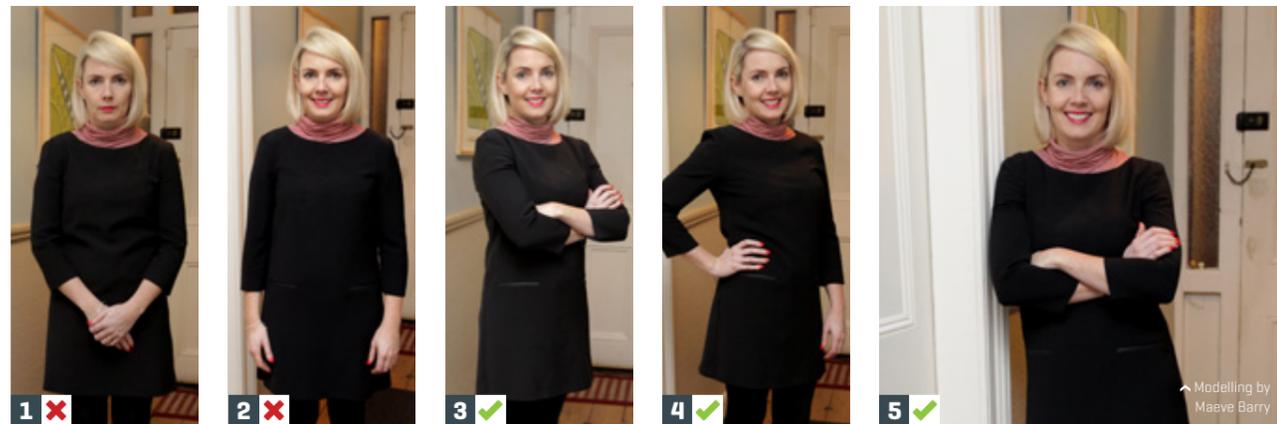
Niamh O'Neill graduated from the National College of Art and Design (NCAD), Dublin, with first-class honours. Having worked at some of the top international fashion houses in New York and Paris, she launched her eponymous womenswear label in winter 2012 and is now an established and multi-award-winning designer. Niamh's collections combine clean lines and contemporary cutting with luxurious fabrics, creating an instantly identifiable look of understated elegance.

STRIKE A POSE!

DOS AND DON'TS FOR PR PORTRAITS WITH MARK STEDMAN



► Mark Stedman of Stedman Photography



❌ **Don't** face directly towards the camera with shoulders slumped [see images 1 and 2 above]. Turn slightly either way. If it is an indoor, window-lit image, turn towards the window slightly, then bring your face back towards the lens.

❌ **Don't** fold your hands in front of your body, as it can make you look shy.

✅ **Do** turn to one side to narrow the space you will fill in the image. This will also help you look more relaxed [see images 3 and 4 above].

✅ **Do** consider putting your hand on your hip. This can give you a confident yet relaxed look. If there is more than one person in the picture, try to make sure each person does something different with their hands and arms.

✅ **Do** cross your arms naturally, otherwise you may look as though you are giving yourself a hug! This will help you exude confidence if you are smiling down the camera lens.

✅ **Do** rest or lean on an item if you are being photographed on your own or with one other person. It gives a less formal and casual feel to the picture [see image 5 above].

Top Tip: Try to relax. Trust that the photographer knows what looks good through the lens, even if it feels a little unnatural to you. Take a few deep breaths and smile!

STEP 4: BUILD A MEDIA DATABASE

Now that you've written a great press release and organised professional PR pictures, you need to know who to send them to, across TV, radio, press and online outlets. It is vital to build your own media database. This can be done cheaply and easily using an Excel spreadsheet.

Local media. Gather all your local print, online and broadcast media contacts. Call your local newspaper and radio station and ask for the main contacts and emails. Make yourself known.

National media. Read the national press, news websites and trade publications and find out what journalists in the different titles write about the sector you are in. Many newspapers and broadcasters publish key organisation contacts on their websites. If you can't find them, ring and ask.

Add to the database as you go along, and as you make new media contacts. Try to build a relationship with media who are interested in keeping up to date with your business and story.

Remember, it is important to maintain your list and keep it up to date. You can also purchase a list of Irish media contacts from organisations such as MediaHQ.com.



PR Top Tips from Small-Business Owners

“ I worked at developing media contacts and targeting journalists who I thought would be interested in my story. As I was in the food business, it made sense for me to target food writers and columnists. And always be available for any PR opportunity that comes your way.”

— Róisín Hogan, HIRO by Róisín, Louth



Top Tip: When your story gets picked up by a media outlet, don't forget to amplify that coverage by posting links to that media outlet's website on your social media channels.

STEP 5: RELEASE YOUR STORY!

You have your story, your press release written, your picture organised, and your contacts lined up. Then decide when to go public. You might have a launch event to celebrate a new product or service, or a new premises or business. This would be a perfect event to invite media to.

- Issue a media notice and invite media along if you are having a launch or an event.
- Try to gauge the best time of the day, or the week, to email a press release. For example, if a big story breaks on the day you are planning to issue a press release, try to hold off a day or two until the news agenda quiets down.
- It is always best to email a press release early in the day, ahead of deadlines.
- It is a good idea to follow up a press release with a phone call to a journalist or news desk – but try to have a new piece of information to give them.
- Don't get discouraged if the media doesn't pick up your story. Breaking news or major events will take priority over other coverage. If an editor or reporter says no once, that doesn't mean they'll say no to everything in the future.
- If you don't have a 'News desk' or 'Media' page on your company's website, set one up to start publishing your press releases and PR pictures online too.



PR Top Tips from Small-Business Owners

“ From the beginning, start to build a PR file that's ready to go, with high-quality photographs, logos, fonts and press releases. For example, we have a PR file for our beers with tasting notes, a photograph of the beer bottle and other professional imagery. This means we can quickly take advantage of any PR opportunities that come our way.”

— Jeanne Mahony, *Hope Beer, Fingal*



SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PR

You must also consider the role of social media and online when you are planning your PR campaign and strategy. Where once PR was based in print and broadcast, online is now the third element in the media trinity. All traditional print and broadcast organisations have online platforms.

SPREAD YOUR MESSAGE ONLINE WITH EILEEN McCABE



► Eileen McCabe of Content Plan

Find your target audience and build relationships online:

Create lists of the most valuable media outlets, journalists, influencers and customer advocates and find out where they are online. Connect and begin to engage in an unobtrusive way. Answer queries they may have, if it is your area of expertise, and you can gradually build up a reputation as an expert resource.

Use keywords in your content:

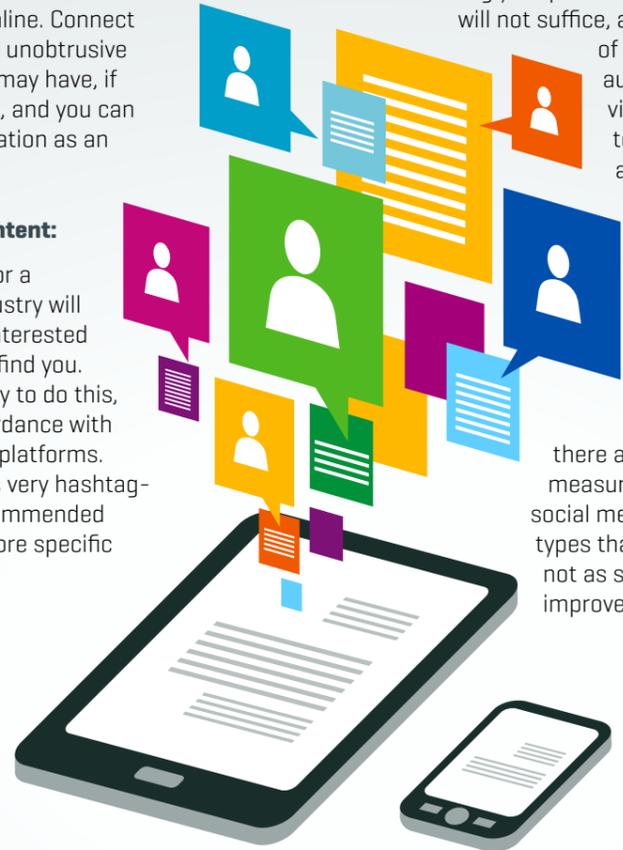
Using specific keywords for a subject, news item or industry will make it easier for those interested in that type of content to find you. Hashtag use is a great way to do this, but use hashtags in accordance with the relevant social media platforms. For example, Instagram is very hashtag-friendly, whereas it is recommended that you use fewer and more specific hashtags on Twitter.

Repurpose your content in relation to the social platform you publish on:

Publishing your press release directly across all platforms will not suffice, as social platforms vary in the type of content they push towards their audience. Facebook and Instagram are visual and video-friendly, so find ways to repurpose your press release into a visual content form, and link the post back to the full text on your website.

Measure success:

Use the metrics to measure how successful your PR campaign has been online. Set up Google Analytics for your website, and there are many free analytic tools to measure reach and engagement on each social media platform. Make notes of the post types that worked best and those that were not as successful, and use these metrics to improve your next campaign.





Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil Local Enterprise Office



Niall Mínnagh, Mimergy



Meave Sheridan, Western Herd Brewing Company



John Collier, Lifekitchen.ie

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