



Optimizing Your News: How to Attribute Economic Results to Your PR Campaigns



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With every press release you distribute, you want results. Whether you're looking for increased views or clicks, or a certain amount of media coverage, results are the goal of every campaign.

Optimizing your news releases with multimedia, writing a compelling headline, bolding copy to highlight specific messages, adding lists to improve readability – all of these elements help improve the likelihood that your release will catch a reporter's eye and keep readers' attention. And each of these plays a role in your results. But how can you track results like improved brand awareness, lead generation, or revenue?



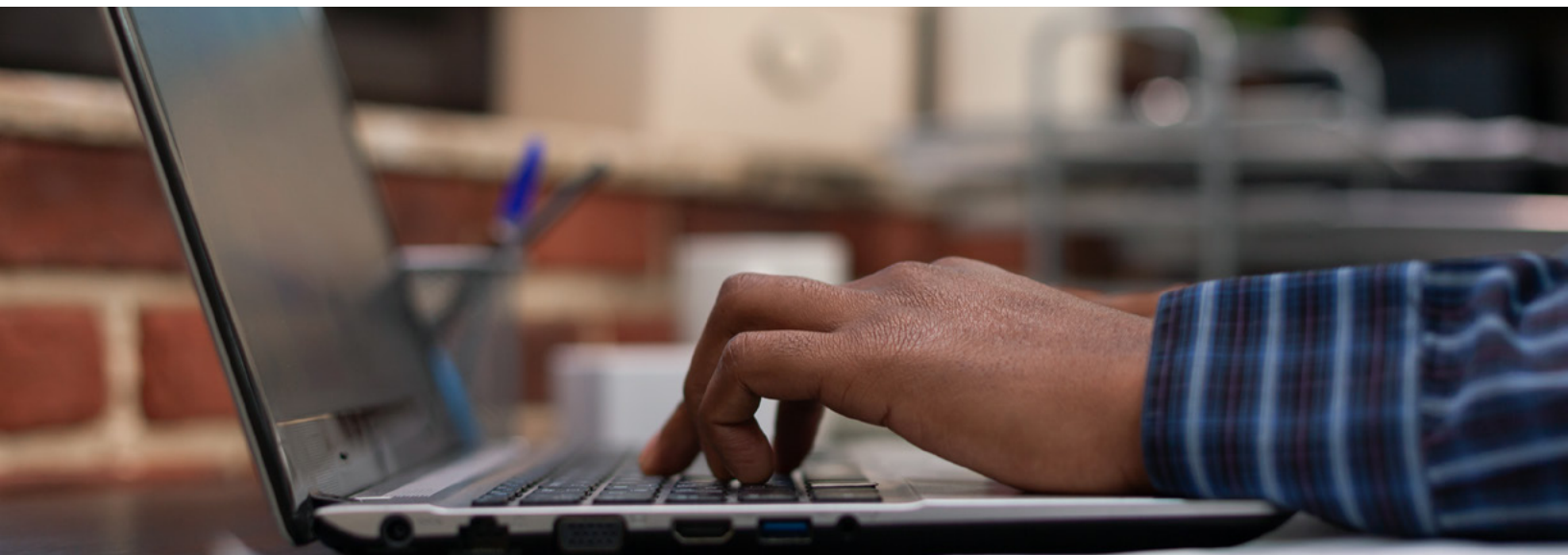
Greg Jarboe
President, SEO-PR

Greg Jarboe, president of [SEO-PR](#), started testing press release effectiveness in 2003 to show just that: economic results can be attributed to news releases.

In this guide, you'll learn how to:

- ➡ Research keywords
- ➡ Add keywords to new releases
- ➡ Create tracking links
- ➡ Monitor tracking links to evaluate campaign performance

Plus, we'll share two examples of how keyword research and tracking links were used to correlate the economic results of PR campaigns.



Are People Reading Your Release?

You have news to share. You've planned a campaign to amplify your announcement, and you've defined how to measure your results. Your news release has been drafted, [reviewed](#), and approved.

But then you think: What was the open rate of your releases in the past? How much media coverage did your news garner? How can you improve the open rate of this release?

What results will your organization view as a win?

Setting goals and outlining quantifiable measurements that will be used to evaluate your campaign's performance over time are essential.

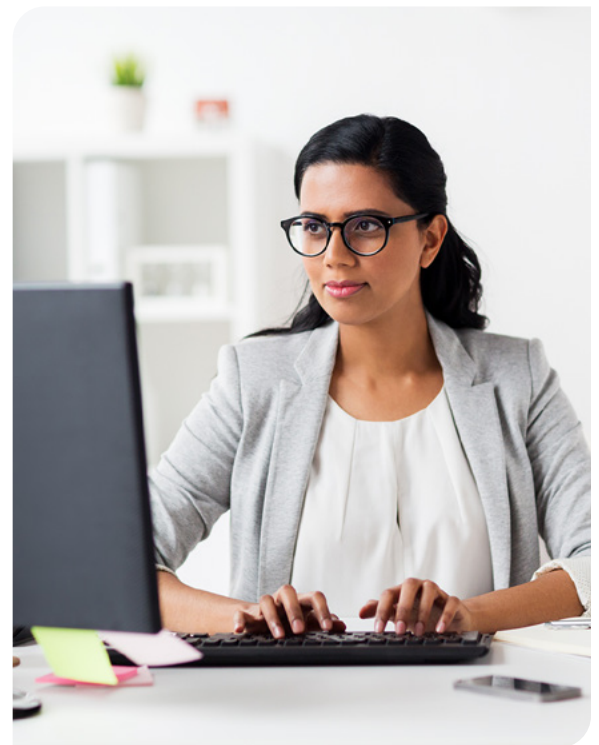
When determining your goals and defining metrics, Jarboe recommends discussing the specific needs to be measured for your organization or client. One size doesn't fit all; metrics used to evaluate success may work for one campaign but not another. Different actions lead to different outcomes. A goal helps measure what matters.

In addition to [optimizing the structure of your press release](#), optimizing the text with keywords can lead to more coverage and increased results.

Adding Keywords to Your Headline

[Keywords](#) are words or phrases that someone uses when searching for your organization, or when describing your offering. When relevant keywords are incorporated into a news release, they help people discover your information. Including [keywords in your headline](#) plays a role in the open rate performance of your release.

Generate a list of keywords for your news by doing some research. In addition to the headline, keywords can also be added throughout your release. Test the placement of keywords in your announcements to see how your results change over time. While your list of keywords may be long, you don't need to use every term. **Keep keywords relevant to your news.** Ask yourself: what is most relevant and valuable to potential readers? As you add keywords to your release, keep your voice on brand and the flow natural.



How to Use Google Trends

Tools like [Google Trends](#) can also help. A free service to help you understand what people are looking for within Google Search, Google Trends lets you search the words and phrases in your news release to see which term or terms may be the most useful.

01 Go to [google.com/trends](https://www.google.com/trends)

02 Set the location to match your country

03 Set the timeline to match the last 7 days

04 Identify the keywords in your news release that ladder up to your headline

05 Type in each of your keywords or phrases

06 Write down which keywords or phrases have the highest search terms

Add the most popular words to your headline and monitor your results after you distribute your news to help you make modifications as needed for your next release.

Additional Headline Tips for Success

Explain the importance of your news to your audience and highlight the effect of your news:

- Include the name of the issuing organization in the headline or sub-headline
- Use a strong, actionable verb
- Keep it short but provide key information; 8-15 words

Keep in mind: The URL string of the Business Wire version of your press release will showcase the first 5-8 words of your announcement. Make sure these are impactful!



Keywords in Action

In January 2019, Jarboe worked with Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations, utilizing [keyword research to generate leads and revenue](#).

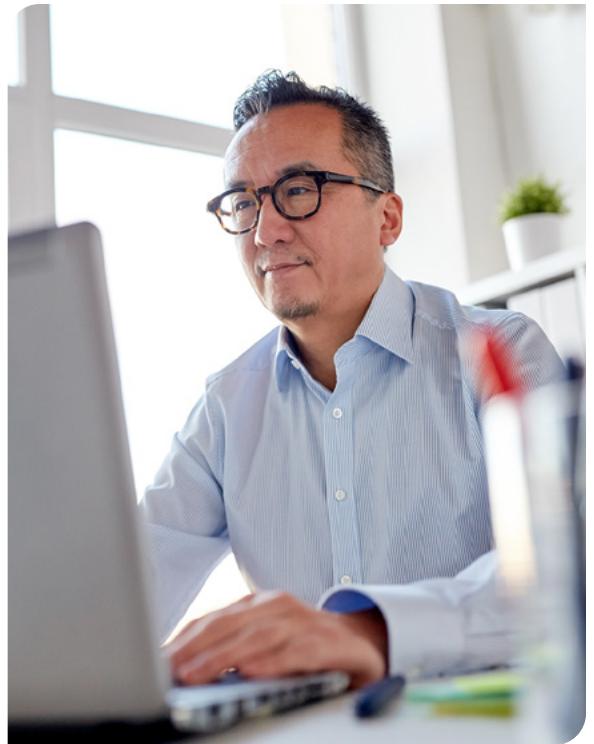
With a goal to generate 30 application submissions in seven months, Jarboe's first step was to identify the target audience: potential enrollees at the School of Management and Labor Relations. He asked: What are people searching and why are people searching? What leads people to Rutgers? These questions guided Jarboe's keyword research.

As part of this campaign, to help understand brand recognition and how this might change over time, Jarboe also conducted a series of surveys. Results showed that those with 4+ years of human resource experience felt that factors like no GRE or GMAT requirement, overall university ranking, and online courses were all top factors when selecting a university. Each of these "no GRE/GMAT required," "top-ranked university," and "fully 100% online program" led to keywords Jarboe incorporated into the releases he distributed.

By optimizing his releases with keywords and [adding tracking URLs](#) (which also incorporated keywords), Jarboe was able to share with Rutgers that the campaign:

- ➔ Drove 8,337 new users to the specified landing page
- ➔ Generated 694 leads
- ➔ Resulted in 38 completed applications

In addition to increased brand awareness, new users visiting the campaign landing page, and hundreds of leads, the 38 completed applications meant a **total revenue of nearly \$1.5 million** in tuition with students starting that fall or in 2020.



\$1.5MM

Total potential revenue



8,337

New users to the landing page



694

New leads generated



38

Completed applications

Are People Clicking Links in Your Release?

After researching and incorporating keywords into your news release, you've picked the optimal [circuit](#) to reach your audience, and your news has been distributed. You're not seeing a lot of action, though. People are opening your release, but they aren't clicking. When you check your site's analytics, there's only a minimal uptick in activity following the release of your announcement. What's going on?

Adding hyperlinks to your releases is important for multiple reasons. They help draw readers' eyes to different sections of your release, they lead viewers back to your website, and when you [create tracking URLs](#), you gain valuable information about your readers, their interests, and most importantly, if your landing page converts leads and supports your business goals.

What is a Tracking URL?

A tracking URL is a link that incorporates UTM codes or parameters – the lines of text added to the end of a URL – that allows your site's analytics program to track inbound traffic generated from that link. URLs with UTM codes help you connect the dots between your readers, your website, and any actions taken like clicks to specific areas of your site or form submissions.

Here's an example:



You write a blog post.



You share the blog post on Twitter using a link with a UTM code.



Reviewing your site's analytics, you see an increase in visitors originating from your Twitter.



You gain 18 new blog subscribers which you know originated from your Twitter post because you used a tracking URL.



Creating UTM Links

If your organization has an analytics team, ask for help with UTM links for your news releases. If you manage the analytics yourself, here are instructions for creating a Google Analytics UTM link. As you enter the different fields, you'll see some tips to help you select the right language.

01 Open the [UTM link creation page](#)

02 Enter the complete URL of the link you'd like to track

03 Enter the Campaign Source

04 Enter the Campaign Medium

05 Enter the Campaign Term

06 Enter the Campaign Content

07 Enter the Campaign Name

08 Click "Submit"

Now you have an expanded URL that contains all the analytics tracking data. Link this expanded URL within your document. Create a weekly report to receive the data these URLs are gathering so you can use this make to adjustments to your landing pages, conversion concepts, and more.

Adding Hyperlinks to Your Release

Hyperlinks in a news release not only help viewers easily click to see more information about you and your organization, they also are a tool to help keep readers' attention. Since many people typically scan the news instead of reading word for word, incorporating different [formatting tactics in your press releases can help catch and keep reader attention](#).

Keep these tips handy when adding links to your next announcement:

- ➔ Readers usually skip "Click here" or "Read more."
- ➔ Embed your link in text that can stand on its own, text that reiterates your news and explains what will be viewed when clicked.
- ➔ Keep the language you use for your links concise.
- ➔ Don't overdo it. Stick to 1-3 hyperlinks total in your release.

Tracking URLs in Action

In January 2022, Jarboe conducted [testing for SiteLogic](#), a marketing education consultancy launching a series of new online certification courses. Three releases were prepared, each with identical text but with different multimedia. Jarboe added tracking links to each to monitor which of the three releases drove the most visitors to SiteLogic's site.

The releases were shared in three different ways:

- Posted to SiteLogic's blog
- Distributed with Business Wire
- Distributed with EIN Presswire

Before launching the campaign, Jarboe recorded baseline metrics for SiteLogic's site so he could compare the difference in activity after the releases were distributed. He noted the baseline to be 262 views and six leads in 87 days.

About a month and a half after the releases were distributed, **99.6% of trackable views generated originated from the release distributed by Business Wire**. Jarboe also noted an increase of 403 views on SiteLogic's site and 33 leads in 41 days.

Taking baseline measurements before the campaign began allowed Jarboe to see the difference in website activity after the three press releases were distributed. Tracking links showed Jarboe that the release distributed by **Business Wire drove 16 visits to SiteLogic's site**, the posting on SiteLogic's blog drove 15 visits to the specified landing pages and the EIN Presswire release drove three visits. Visitors from the Business Wire release also spent an average of four minutes on SiteLogic's site, longer than any other visitors from other sources.

In the first six weeks of the campaign, SiteLogic had already converted three leads, **producing revenue of \$8,850**. The remaining 30 leads were yet to be converted, but, following the pattern of the first six weeks, if even 10% of these leads decided to enroll in SiteLogic's new certification course, there is **potential revenue of close to \$30,000**.



\$30,000

Total potential
revenue



\$8,850

Revenue
already earned



99.6%

Views from
Business Wire's
release



16

Site visits from
Business Wire's
release

Before your next PR campaign, take the time to determine your end goals, and as you prepare your press release, incorporate the steps of keyword research and tracking link creation to better evaluate the performance of your news. These tools not only provide you with insight into your campaign, but also valuable information about your audience, all of which can be used to improve brand awareness, lead generation, and monetary return for your organization.

About Greg Jarboe, SEO-PR

Greg Jarboe is president of [SEO-PR](#), which he co-founded in 2003 with Jamie O'Donnell. Their digital marketing agency has generated award-winning results for Southwest Airlines, Parents.com, the SES Conference & Expo, Get City Dealz, and Rutgers University. Jarboe is the author of YouTube and Video Marketing as well as co-author of Digital Marketing Fundamentals and The Communications Measurement Handbook for Higher Education. He's also one of the 25 successful gurus profiled in Online Marketing Heroes by Michael Miller.

Since 2003, Jarboe has written more than 1,600 articles for several online publications, including: Search Engine Watch, Tubular Insights, and Search Engine Journal. He's also an instructor at Rutgers Business School Executive Education and the New Media Academy. Since 2003, Jarboe has spoken at more than 80 industry conferences. He's also been a keynote speaker at the International Search Summit in London, the ÜberTube Brand Summit in New York City; and the Be-Wizard conference in Rimini, Italy.

About Business Wire

[Business Wire](#), a Berkshire Hathaway company, is the global leader in news release distribution and regulatory disclosure. Public relations, investor relations, public policy, and marketing professionals rely on Business Wire for secure and accurate distribution of market-moving news and multimedia. Founded in 1961, Business Wire is a trusted source for news organizations, journalists, investment professionals, and regulatory authorities, delivering news directly into editorial systems and leading online news sources via its multi-patented NX Network. Business Wire's global newsrooms teams are available to meet the needs of communications professionals and news media worldwide.

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