

# Six social PR tools that can make your job easier

By Jocelyn Brandeis

With so many different technologies at hand and such little time to spare, PR pros need to keep informational baggage at a minimum. I recently signed up for and tried six new PR tools designed to do just that, and discussed the products with their executives. All are Mac and PC friendly, and most are currently being used by major corporations. While none of these offer a be-all-end-all solution to the love-hate relationships that exist between PR people and journalists, each is efficacious in its own way.

## PitchEngine

Launching its beta in 2008, PitchEngine ([www.pitchengine.com](http://www.pitchengine.com)) is a social media network that allows users to post press releases, video and pictures, but is not a distribution site or a wire service. Rather, it's a destination site designed for users to post and receive information. There are no contact lists, just those who've signed up for the network. Content can be personalized and shared with others via email, Twitter, FriendFeed, Facebook and SocialMedian, and journalists don't have to subscribe in order to receive content. The interface is simple and easy to use, and press releases are posted in a social media format. Currently 3,500 brands use the network to connect with consumers and journalists.

In the free version, users can build a press release, which comes with its own URL and logo, and is available on the site for 30 days. Users can have their release posted to Google within hours and can create and manage as many clients (or brands) as they want. Information is searchable by keyword or category, and all news to PitchEngine can be received by RSS feed. It includes a neat

little feature called the "Quick Pitch," which, at 130 characters, is Twitter-like in design, giving journalists a brief introduction to what the release is about without forcing them to scan the entire document.

A paid version of PitchEngine allows users to create their branded newsroom and archive press releases. It costs \$400 annually if you just want to archive your press releases; \$550 annually allows you to customize a newsroom with archived releases, hi-res photos and videos.

"PitchEngine encourages and empowers people and brands to engage in social media," said CEO & Founder Jason Kintzler. A former journalist, Kintzler said the site is made to be instantaneous, packaging all newsroom needs on a single page. Since those in your network sign up to receive your information, there is little to no spam. PitchEngine also monitors and reviews all content after submission.

## MatchPoint

How many times have you called a journalist you found on a major list service, only to discover someone else is now covering the beat? Launched in February, MatchPoint ([www.prmatchpoint.com](http://www.prmatchpoint.com)) is a new search engine specifically created for PR pros to search for the cumulative and aggregated content of more than 100,000 journalists, offering a more precise list of what a journalist has produced in the last six months.

Run via a proprietary database, users can search through more than three million articles, 11,000 print journalists, 25,000 web journalists and 10,000 bloggers to obtain updated contact info for journalists. Users can directly email a journalist (group emails can't be sent), and there are added features, like being able to download an Excel file and merge it into Outlook.

According to Co-Founder Peter Himler, "No journalist's name should be on a list where you don't know what he/she writes about or what outlet they write for."

There are two versions, where users can adjust the search algorithm to suit their needs. The basic service is well-priced at \$65 per month, and allows a license for two separate computers and gives a list of headlines or article abstracts. The premium version, priced at \$130 per month, allows you to view entire arti-

cles written by a journalist. New functions and options are expected in the coming months.

MatchPoint is like the service I used to perform for my boss more than 15 years ago by hand. As such, it will definitely help PR pros better identify and target journalists based on what they've written. The company is currently offering a free 10-day trial.

## MyPRGenie

Founded in 2007 with a new platform launched in 2008, MyPRGenie ([www.myprgenie.com](http://www.myprgenie.com)) is a customized, centralized and open PR platform delivery service. Currently, the site has 3,000 users and more than 540,000 global media contacts, including 2,200 bloggers available for lists — which are updated three times each day and are licensed from various sources.

According to CEO & Co-Founder Miranda Tan, "MyPRGenie helps streamline the process for PR pros by delivering news to a targeted audience via your MyPRGenie social network."

MyPRGenie is integrated with PR Newswire — which MyPRGenie licenses and re-sells with ProfNet as well — and allows users to send news not only to your MyPRGenie social network but also via the wire for the same cost as using the wire service. You can also use html tags when you upload releases to your network. Take note, if you send a release out via PRNewswire, it will not automatically update your MyPRGenie newsroom; you'll need to update your newsroom manually (your newsroom will be updated if you send out the release via MyPRGenie's PRNewswire function).

After signing up and creating a personal profile, you can invite reporters to join your business profile and online newsroom. There are several subscriptions to MyPRGenie, all of which have real-time tracking, so you can

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find out who reads your releases. A free version allows you to upload your own private list and contacts and distribute them to your network at no charge. You can also upload and tag videos and pictures, and there's an area for journalists to post queries for PR people to respond to.

An optional pay-as-you-go version allows you to create a list from the MyPRGenie database of 25 names for \$49 — or \$2 per name if you want more than 25. You can't export this list to your files and you have to pay \$49 each time you want to distribute to the same list if it was created through MyPRGenie. Finally, there's the annual subscription service for \$3,000 (\$250 monthly), which allows for unlimited distribution and unlimited access to all pre-made media lists.

MyPRGenie is simply a destination and distribution site; there's no integration with Twitter, Digg, Facebook, FriendFeed, StumbleUpon or any other social networking site. There's a community portion where users can ask communicate with each other, and I'm told there are new features coming in the next few months.

While I like the idea of creating a full online newsroom (great for small businesses which can't afford to hire someone to update all the time), there didn't seem to be a way to directly target journalists unless they sign up for your network/company's news. I wasn't thrilled with the postings I saw, as I felt most of them were spam or sales related (not PR); but that may just be for now.

### BuzzGain

Launched at the beginning of February by Co-Founders Brian Solis and Mukund Mohan, BuzzGain ([www.buzzgain.com](http://www.buzzgain.com)) provides the tools to read and research, learn and reach out to influencers. It allows its 1,000+ users to look into multiple networks — Twitter, Yahoo blogs and Google news — to find out what's being said about a company.

According to Solis, "One-on-one engagement is facilitated. You can find out who links to whom and what they write, so you know who to speak to and target them (not spam them)."

While BuzzGain doesn't provide articles by beat, it is an easy, analytical intelligence gatherer which uses Boolean operators to identify who your clients' influentials are and if they're worth reaching out to. It provides a visual dashboard of analytics and their plausible strategies by monitoring con-

versations from more than 700,000 journalists and 1.4 million bloggers. And the results are clear and easy to read. It provides communication and detailed contact info for those available, even bloggers, who typically operate under far more anonymity than their print counterparts.

Features include demographic rankings for circulation, DMA, Alexa, Yahoo and Google, a "Favorites" button to help create lists (limited to 20 contacts to prevent spamming), and automatically-generated weekly summary of stories. BuzzGain also allows you to connect with journalists on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Because it's still in public beta, the company is offering a 15-day trial for new users. Otherwise, the cost is \$99 per month. The company donates 25% of its pre-tax profits to educate underprivileged children in India with student organization Asha

for Education.

### PitchRate

PitchRate ([www.pitchrate.com](http://www.pitchrate.com)), a free query service for journalists to post their requests for PR people and industry experts to answer, launched at the beginning of February by creator and Blue Kangaroo CEO L. Drew Gerber.

PitchRate aims to curtail spamming by having experts and PR people respond directly through their site, not directly to a journalist's email (unless he/she provides it). More than 100 journalists use PitchRate right now (with 900 experts on the site), and their contact info is cloaked so they can't be added to lists.

When a PR person responds to a request for information, their pitch gets rated by the system (based on keywords and your profile) and the journalist. A "1-5" rating scale helps eliminate non-targeted pitches, so be forewarned and always pitch on-topic.

Integrated using the technology and applications of PressKit247.com, PitchRate makes money when users (typically, small businesses) build an online newsroom via PressKit247.

As Gerber stated, "My philosophy is to make a difference; I'm all for having many services that allow journalists to post queries, but I saw a need in the marketplace for anonymity and to cut out the 'noise' of off-topic pitches."



### BuzzConnect

BuzzConnect, ([www.buzzconnect.com](http://www.buzzconnect.com)) the third service to launch in February, is a vertical company which has created a community of marketing and communications professionals who are job seekers and posters.

While accessing the community remains free, BuzzConnect charges \$20 per month to access targeted job listings or for users to contact each other. In addition, it's \$99 per month for the "BuzzHunter" concierge, which provides job seekers with one-on-one attention. All postings and profiles are screened by the BuzzConnect team before posting. BuzzHunters can also post unlimited jobs for the monthly fee.

BuzzConnect's main claim right now is their strength in the Technology and Enterprise arenas for PR people, although it does have listings in other areas of PR. Job listings are updated every three days. Unfortunately, there are no resume writing services here, so you'll have to look elsewhere if you need that type of help. Eventually, the service plans to offer similar communities for education, manufacturing and other verticals, and features including geographic searches.

According to Co-Founder and CEO Beth Trier, "BuzzConnect is a much simpler, friendlier and more targeted service than other job sites. BuzzConnect connects people to one another however they want (even if it's outside of BuzzConnect, like Facebook or Twitter) and helps them find jobs. This is a very transparent service."

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