HOW TO
NEWSJACK
YOUR WAY INTO THE MEDIA

NEWS JACKING

HOW TO INJECT YOUR IDEAS INTO A BREAKING NEWS STORY AND GENERATE TONS OF MEDIA COVERAGE

DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT
Bestselling author of *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*
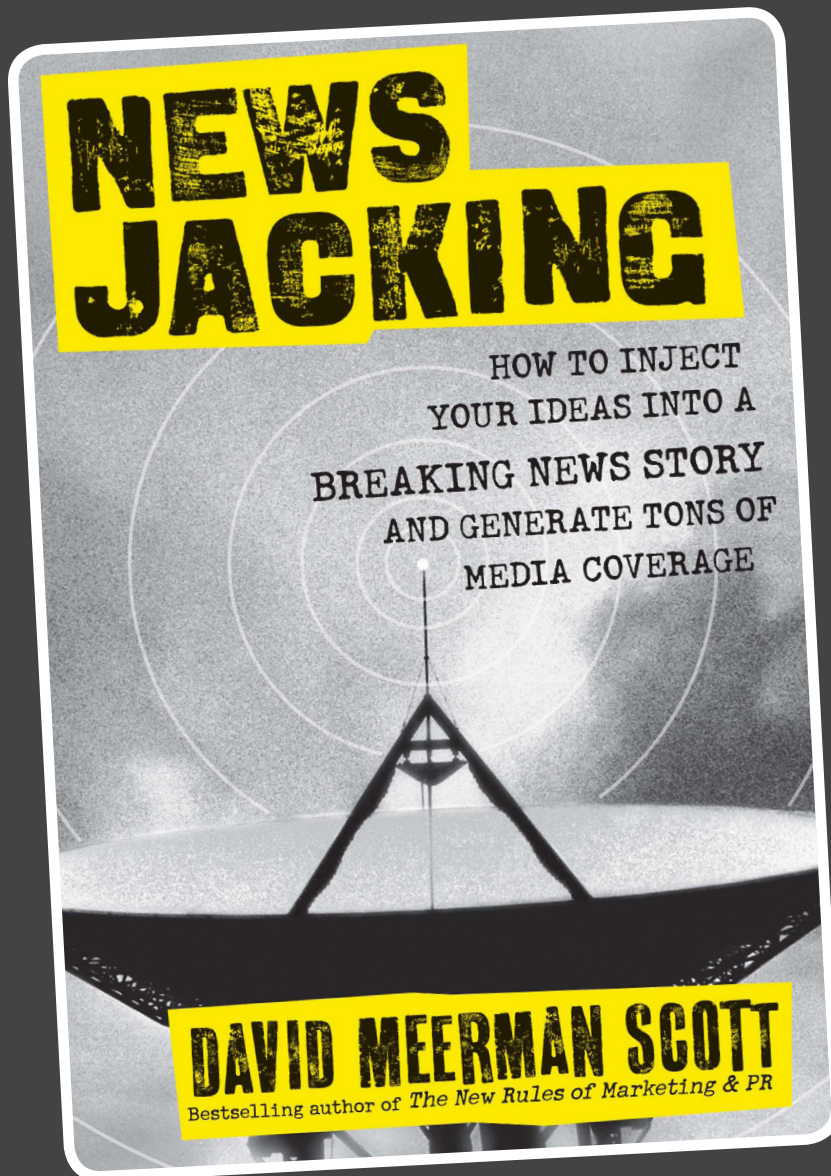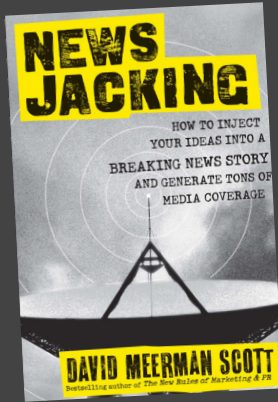
A Free Excerpt from Bestselling Author David Meerman Scott's Hit Book, "Newsjacking."

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ABOUT DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT

David Meerman Scott serves as Marketer in Residence at HubSpot and is on the HubSpot advisory board.

He is a marketing strategist, bestselling author of eight books including three international bestsellers, and a professional speaker on topics including marketing, leadership, and social media.

He is a recovering marketing VP for two U.S. publicly traded companies and was Asia marketing director for Knight-Ridder based in Tokyo and in Hong Kong, at the time one of the world's largest information companies.

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What's Newsjacking? Learn from Obama

On Tuesday January 3, 2012 President Obama joined the Instagram social photo sharing service using the @BarackObama ID.

The timing of Obama joining Instagram is fascinating because it was the exact same day as the Republican presidential candidates' Iowa Caucus.

President Obama Newsjacked the Republican candidates for president!

The Republican candidates had campaigned in Iowa for months, spending tons of money and loads of time because it was the first indication of who might emerge as the Republican challenger to the President in the general election that November. The media, eager to spot a Republican frontrunner in the 2012 U.S. presidential race, turned out in force.

But Obama joining Instagram became big news. By attracting the attention of the world's media to the new Presidential Instagram feed as they are intensely focused on the results of the Republican contest, the Obama campaign shines a bit of light away from the Republicans and onto the President and his campaign for reelection.

But it's not just U.S. Presidential candidates. Newsjacking is an ideal way for you to generate attention for your business too.

How to Newsjack

News breaks second-by-second 24 hours a day

1 Find news to jack

Real-Time To-Do List

- **Be open to serendipity** (happy accidents)
- **Monitor keywords, phrases & trending word clouds**
- **Track journalists & media outlets**
- **Follow Twitter hashtags**

SPEED

Quickness is essential

2 Formulate a strategy in real-time

Strategy Questions

- **?** Does your organization have the mindset to act in real time?
- **?** How are you related to the breaking news?
- **?** Why should the media care?

SPAM

Always use good judgement

3 Instantly get your take into the market

Possible Actions

- ✓ Blog your take on the news
- ✓ Tweet it using an established hashtag
- ✓ Send a real-time media alert
- ✓ Talk about it in a speech
- ✓ Hold a live or virtual news conference
- ✓ Directly contact a journalist who might be interested

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Journalists are looking for what you know

The real-time Web has opened an opportunity for anybody to inject ideas into a breaking news story and generate tons of media coverage. I've been a marketer for two decades, and I have never seen a technique as powerful. But newsjacking requires speed to market that most organizations reserve only for crisis communications.

As journalists scramble to cover breaking news, the basic facts of the story are often easy to find. That's what goes in the first paragraph of any news story. The challenge for reporters is to get background information that rounds out the basic facts in subsequent paragraphs. If they're lucky, journalists also find unique story angles that competitive media are not yet reporting.

That's what makes newsjacking possible.

If you have a legitimate tie to a breaking news story and you react in real-time by providing additional content in a blog post, tweet, video, or media alert, journalists may find you as they use search engines to research their story as they write it.

Newsjacking opportunities can turn up in unlikely places. But you've got to be quick when the opportunity arises.

Remember the naked Prince Harry in Vegas tabloid item, one of the most searched and discussed cell phone photos of all time? Lots of people tried to newsjack the stories of the Vegas romp. While most attempts went unnoticed, several were highly successful.

The location of the photos was the luxurious Encore Wynn Hotel. The owner of the hotel, Steve Wynn, publicly waived the tens of thousands of dollars hotel bill, which got the Wynn into a stunning 3,657 stories (by my Google News count). This example from the UK's Daily Mail Living like a king: Prince Harry's £30,000 hotel bill 'waived' by Vegas billionaire is essentially a huge, free advertisement for the luxury Wynn, complete with descriptions and photos of the property and royal suite. How cool is that?

This is a perfect example of newsjacking success. For the price of waiving a few hotel nights, the Wynn gets mentioned in thousands of stories. This isn't the first time Wynn has done this successfully – they also did this when he banned the famous party girl Paris Hilton from his properties.

How to Find Your Own News, Jack

To successfully inject your ideas into a breaking news story, you've got to follow the new rules of speed. The traditional marketing and PR model—creating "campaigns" with long lead times—just doesn't work when a story breaks quickly. Now doesn't mean tomorrow. It means now.

Newsjacking is amazingly powerful, but only when executed in real time.

You may find newsjacking opportunities on two levels: (1) your immediate sphere of business activities and local or personal interests; and (2) in the wider sphere of national or global news. The trick is to devise news-monitoring strategies that keep you instantly informed on both levels.

To cover the immediate sphere, you will want to monitor media and journalists you may already know, including influential blogs and trade publications that cover your marketplace. If you run a local business, —a restaurant perhaps, —then your hometown paper is a perfect place to start. We'll take a look at how to monitor this news first, then turn our attention to news you don't yet see coming from outlets you may not yet

TRACKING PEOPLE YOU KNOW

The first priority is to follow bloggers, analysts, journalists, and others who cover your business. Start by identifying as many voices as you can. List all the relevant trade journals. Find securities analysts who cover your sector. Look overseas to find content on your industry in distant markets. Search for relevant online forums or chat rooms. Pinpoint bloggers who have discussed issues relating to your business. Keep searching continuously for new sources.

To find these voices, start by checking the search engines (Google, Yahoo!, Bing, etc.) for relevant keywords and phrases: your company, customers, competitors, prospects, product categories, buzzwords, and whatever else you can think of.
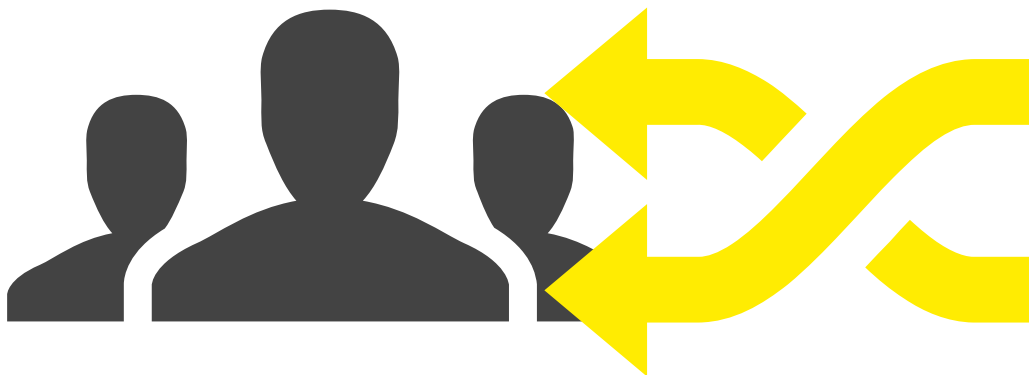
The next step is to begin monitoring what your sources say in real -time.
As its name suggests, the really simple way to do this is to use RSS
(really simple syndication), a tool that allows you to harvest content from
hundreds of blogs and news feeds without having to visit each one.
RSS feeds update each time a site changes, alerting you to relevant
information on topics that you specify. I use Google Reader and NewsFire
for this, but there are many RSS readers to choose from.

The goal here is to know what people say immediately, so you can
comment in real -time when appropriate. And that becomes much easier
once you have identified people likely to talk about the subjects that you
can comment on with authority.
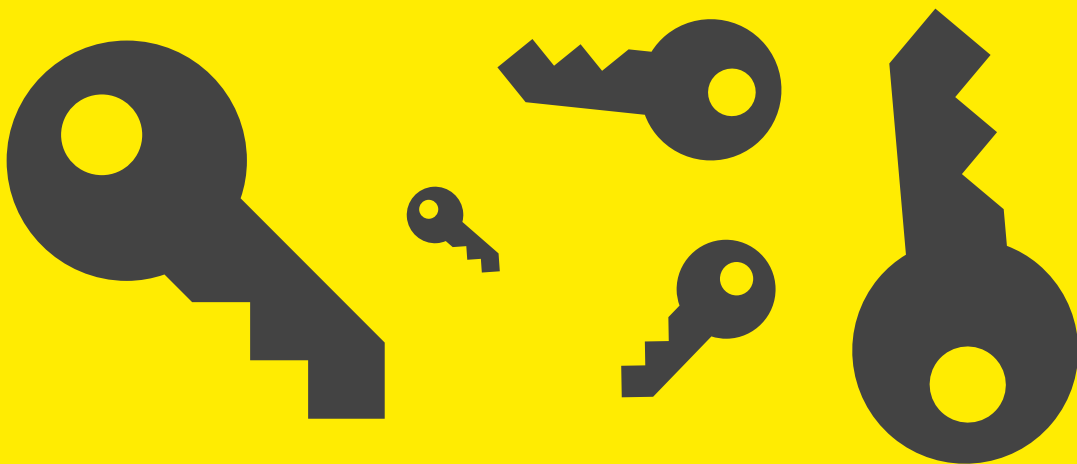
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MONITORING KEYWORDS AND PHRASES

Today's online tools can notify you instantly when something is said about your industry or marketplace. By monitoring keywords and phrases on the web and Twitter, you will instantly see the stories that you might be able to contribute to.

Create a comprehensive list of search terms relevant to your business or interests. Include anything that you might want to see become the second paragraph of a story related to your interests. Again, search for anything relevant: industry terms, competitors, customers, prospects, and products; plus any relevant buzzwords or phrases—every term you can think of.

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Set up news alerts on Google News or another platform using those search terms. This will automatically inform you in real -time when any of your search terms crop up. Set up alerts on blog search engines, too. Note that if you choose Google Alerts, you can set the alert to let you know when a phrase appears in multiple content types, so one set of alerts can help you monitor blogs, news feeds, websites, and more.

Once you start monitoring you will soon find a need to modify your search terms, as some may yield a flood of "false hits" and others nothing. Some services offer advanced features that allow you to refine your searches. For instance, you can make your searches more specific by using "Boolean operators" like and, but, and not.

Any large organization should definitely consider retaining a consultant with a background in library science to craft and refine search strategies. Even smaller outfits would be well -advised to have a professional help get you them started. But however you go about it, you can't just set your search terms and forget about them. You need to tweak the list frequently.

TWITTER: THE NEWSJACKER'S ESSENTIAL TOOL

For serious newsjackers, there is no tool more essential than Twitter. It is both a primary source of newsjacking feedstock and a powerful channel to get your message out to the media in real -time.

Twitter is a great way to stay on top of breaking news, as many media outlets now use the service to drive traffic to fresh content as it appears. So as you identify key sources, be sure to follow them on Twitter. Monitor your search terms on Twitter, too. Use a Twitter monitoring tool like TweetDeck or HootSuite to catch your key phrases. You can also use Twitter's own search function for one-off searches.
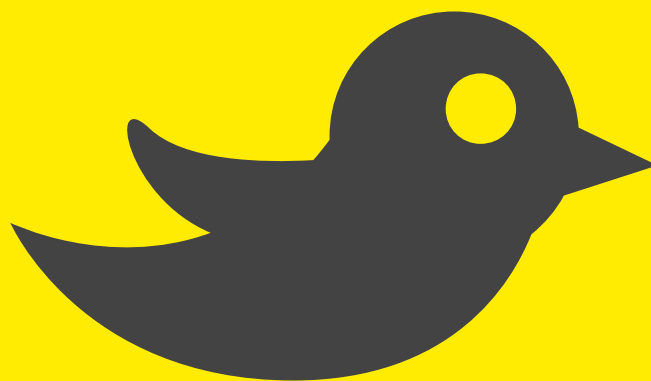
When news breaks, we know that many news outlets immediately turn to Twitter in search of eyewitness reports or direct comments from protagonists. There's always a chance to get lucky. Who knows? You may be the first to spot Paris Hilton tweeting from the back of a police cruiser.

The vital link between newsjackers and journalists is the Twitter hashtag. These are keywords preceded by the hash mark (#) that serve as unique identifiers to mark tweets about a subject and create a focal point for discussion. Hashtags make it easy to instantly locate all references to a particular subject, which are displayed in reverse chronological order (most recent tweet first).

If you can post a statement to a Twitter hashtag discussion that in 140 characters or fewer adds a compelling new dimension to the understanding of a breaking story, you may be contacted instantly by a journalist. If so, you will have made the first critical step to a newsjack.

Life of a news story
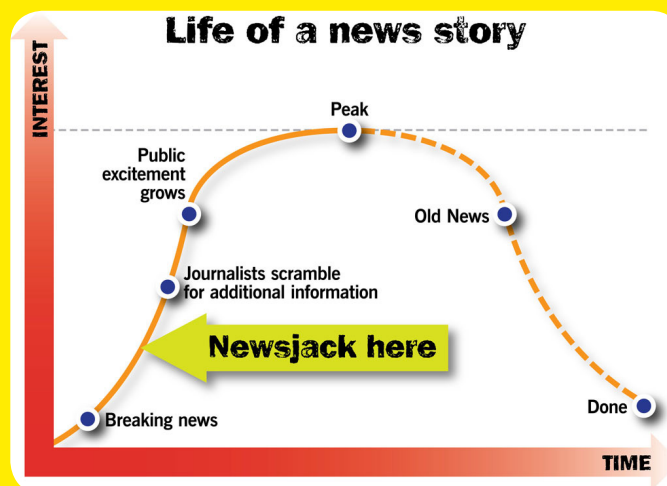
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NEWSJACK YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS

With your newsjacking underway, learn how to track the success of all your efforts with HubSpot's marketing analytics. Get a custom demo to see how!

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