



The Simple Guide to AI in PR and Communications



Introduction

Since ChatGPT launched in 2022, it feels like Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been the main topic of conversation in the PR and marketing industries. We've all heard a lot about how it's going to revolutionize not just our industry but the whole economy, and it's sometimes difficult to keep up with all of the newest developments, as well as separating hype from reality.

So, in this guide, we're going to keep things simple. Over the coming pages, we'll explain the practical reality of AI in public relations. No hype, no overly complicated technical detail, just a straightforward discussion of how the currently available tools and technologies can play a useful role in the day-to-day work of PR professionals at all levels.

If you're a PR executive with limited resources, you'll learn how you can use AI to punch above your weight and get better results. If you're working in, or perhaps leading a PR team, this guide will explain how to use AI to streamline your work and help your team be more efficient.



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1 What Can AI Do?

Before we talk about how it can be used in PR, we should first understand what AI is good at, so we have realistic expectations of what it can do for us. The reason we hear so much about AI these days is because its capabilities have improved significantly over the past few years, and it's able to do a lot of very useful things.



Data Analysis

AI is incredibly good at processing a lot of data very quickly and uncovering patterns, links, and trends — even ones that a human analyst might miss.

While this might not sound too interesting, it actually has a lot of practical applications for PR. For example, imagine you have a large volume of media coverage and social media mentions for a brand, and you need to figure out what it all says, what the sentiment is, how many people it all reached, and who the most influential voices are. Doing that manually can take a lot of time, even with a few people working on it — but AI can do it for you in seconds.

Content Creation

Generative AI can now create most kinds of content, including written copy (e.g., social posts, email pitches, press releases, blog posts), still images, video, and audio (including music and realistic-sounding speech).

Depending on the tools used and the specific use cases, the content AI creates can sometimes be of a high enough standard to be used directly, with very little additional work. But it's more often the case that AI is capable of producing a good first draft that can then be refined by a human creative, enabling content production to be scaled up faster and more easily.



Automate Repetitive & Mundane Tasks

Unlike humans, AI doesn't get bored, tired, or burned out. You can use it to do the kind of repetitive tasks that people often grumble about, such as compiling reports, writing up meeting notes, or summarizing media coverage.

AI can do this kind of work much faster than people, and because it doesn't get fatigued or distracted, it makes fewer mistakes. This means that the humans on your team are able to spend more of their time focusing on high-value creative or strategic work.

Now that we have an idea of Generative AI's broad capabilities, let's take a look at how the technology is evolving, and how Agentic AI can help take your team's efficiency to even greater heights.



2 The Advantage of Agentic AI

When we talk about Generative AI, we mean a chatbot which can create useful output like text, code, and images. Agentic AI (like ChatGPT's Agent-Mode) is able to accomplish more complex tasks by breaking them down into logical steps, gathering necessary information, and using appropriate tools for each step.



For example, you might ask an AI agent to schedule a catchup call with everybody involved in a project. So it would first identify all of the steps involved in that task (check everybody's calendars, find a time that works, send invites, create an agenda), and then it would use the correct software tools for each step (calendar app, email, Zoom, Slack, etc.).

So, the big takeaway is that Generative AI creates content, but Agentic AI can actually get more complex tasks done.

[Meltwater's Mira is agentic](#), although we like to call it your AI teammate. It works across our entire suite of solutions, so when you ask it to help with any PR-related activity it will first deconstruct your request into logical steps, identify which tools from our suite are needed for each step, and then work through the process.

You could ask Mira something as simple as:

“Please identify the top 10 journalists in the UK covering the electric vehicle space, and draft personalized emails asking if they would like to interview the CEO of a new British EV startup.”



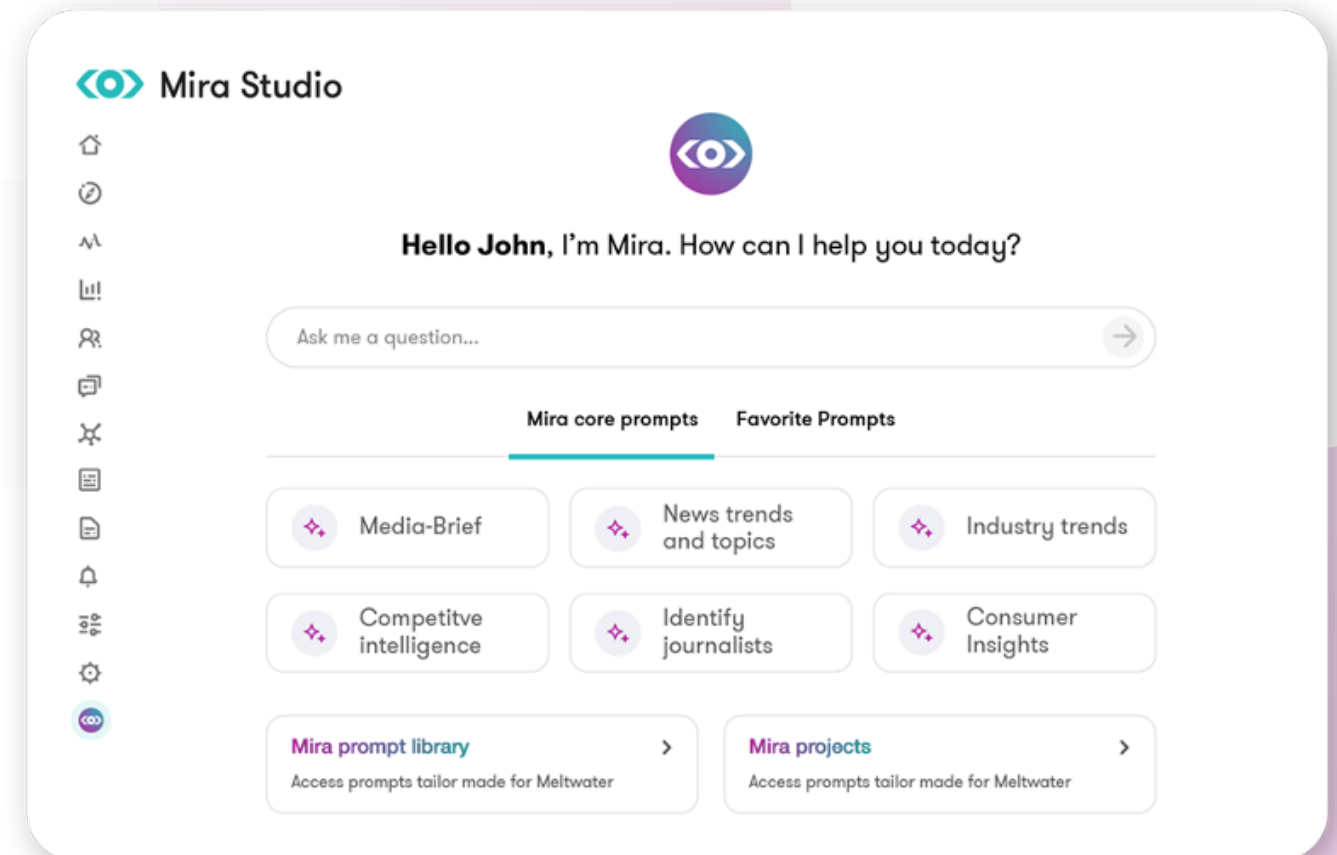
Mira will use [Meltwater Media Relations](#) to identify the journalists, find the relevant information about their interests and recent articles, then draft 10 emails, each personalized based on that data.

Alternatively you could make a more broad-sweeping request, such as:

“We are launching a new luxury hotel brand across North America, please help me build a comms campaign for this launch, including audience analysis, media and influencer outreach, measurement and reporting.”

Mira will then build a comprehensive plan for each stage, suggesting which Meltwater tools should be used ([Social Listening](#) for audience analysis, [Media Relations](#) for journalist outreach, [Klear](#) for influencers, and our Monitor and Analyze modules for [measurement and reporting](#)) and then guide you through the entire process, step by step.

Throughout the rest of this guide we’ll focus on how Generative AI can be used to achieve each task in isolation, but if you use an Agentic AI like Mira, this work can be automated much more easily.



3 Media Relations & AI

Building and maintaining relationships with key journalists takes a lot more work than many people might assume. You need to stay on top of which journalists are contributing to which media outlets, what topics they cover, how they've covered those topics previously, their sentiment towards your brand, and how they like to work. You also need to understand your organization's prior interactions with them, any personal details that will help you build a rapport, and more.

Traditionally, it's been a difficult process to scale because building these relationships requires a human touch, and much of the work simply cannot be automated. But AI is helping to solve this challenge — here's how.



Building Media Lists

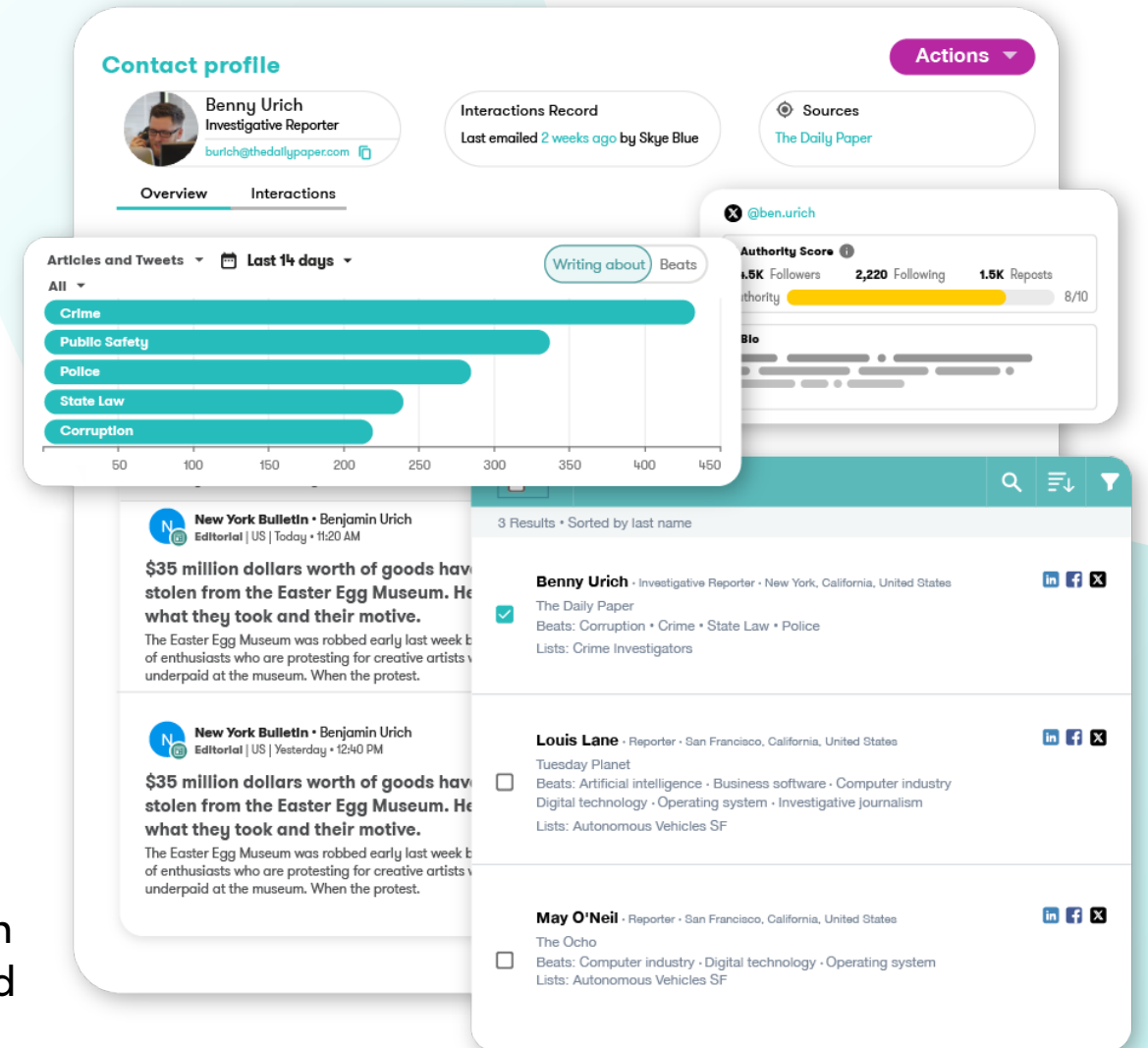
One of the most basic requirements of media relations is the ability to find relevant media contacts, and for that, you need an up-to-date media database with detailed information.

Even at this most basic level of the process, AI can help even if it's not immediately obvious to the user. For example, [Meltwater's Media Relations](#) solution uses AI to continuously improve the quality of its database of media contacts, ensuring that existing contacts are kept up to date with new information, such as job changes or new email addresses, as well as constantly adding new journalists.

That's a good start, but the next challenge is how to search a vast database to find the best journalists for your campaigns. There's a lot of information to consider — which media they contribute to, what topics they write about, which markets they operate in, and how they've written about your brand in the past — this can be time-consuming and tricky.

AI can help here, too. With [AI Journalist Search in Media Relations](#), you can find the right contacts by showing the tool some information about your story — that could be your key messages, a press release, or just an explanation of your pitch. The AI will then do the hard work of figuring out which journalists are best suited to your campaign and automatically create a media list of up to 200 relevant contacts, all within seconds.

So, AI helps us find the right journalists much faster and with greater accuracy.



Creating Targeted Pitches

Writing press releases and email pitches can be a headache — even the best writers can struggle with the tyranny of the blank page, and this is an area where AI can help.

Given a few details about the story you're trying to pitch, the tone you want, and the target audience, tools like [ChatGPT](#) or [Claude](#) can quickly generate a first draft, which you can refine manually or by giving the AI feedback.

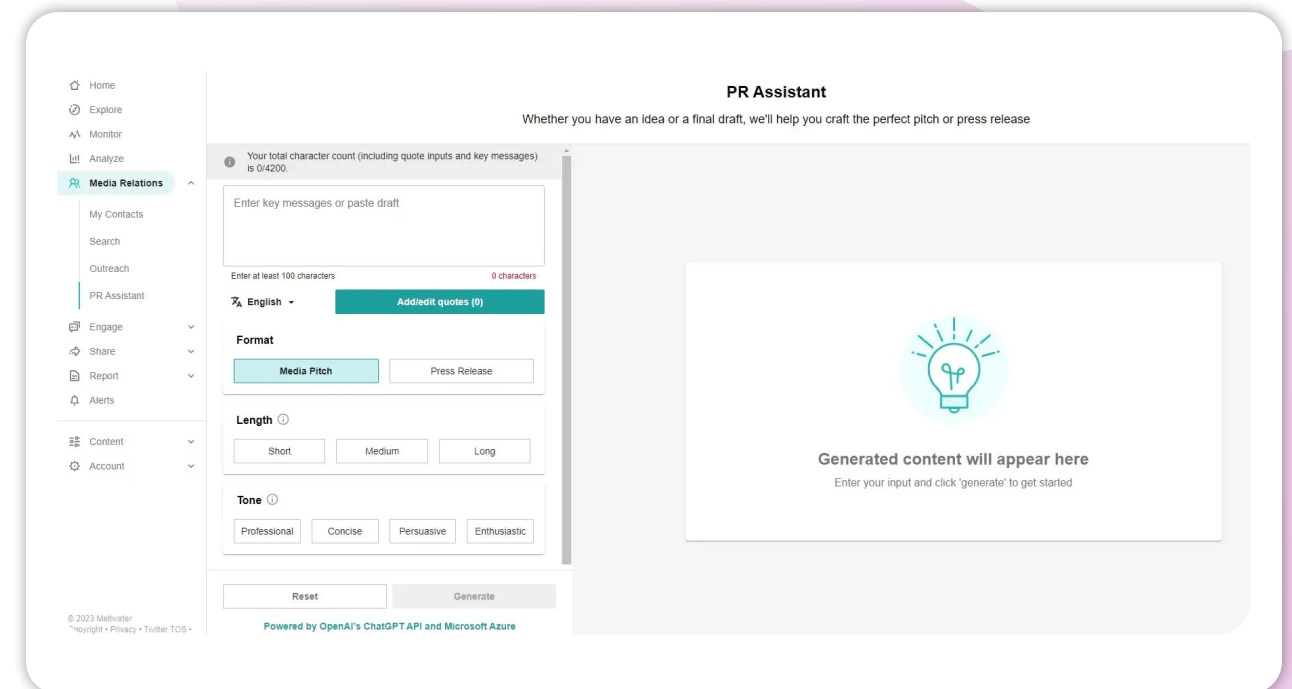
Here's an example prompt for generating a press release draft:

“My company’s latest product is a fun new baking kit for kids, which includes all of the ingredients, equipment, and instructions to help them make their first cake. It’s designed to be safe so that they can do everything themselves without their parents’ help. Acting as a PR consultant, please write a press release announcing this product to journalists. The target audience is food, parenting, and lifestyle writers at national newspapers. Focus on the elements of fun, learning, and safety.”

When you have a draft that you're happy with, you can ask the AI to tailor the release for different audiences, as well as write email pitches based on the final release.

Even better than using general-purpose AI chatbots, Meltwater's Media Relations features an [AI PR Assistant](#), which is tailor-made for creating press releases and email pitches. The assistant is easier to use, giving you a range of options for the length and tone of the generated copy and the ability to seamlessly include pre-written quotes from your spokespeople.

The PR Assistant also suggests target journalists from our media database based on the content of your release.



PR Campaign Planning with AI

Most seasoned comms professionals know how to plan a PR campaign, but there are some situations where you might need help. Perhaps the campaign you're working on has some unique quirks, or maybe you're new to PR and want to make sure you're not missing anything, or perhaps you just want to save some time.

Whatever your reason, you can ask ChatGPT to help you map out your campaign plan. All you need to do is give it the same kind of brief you might share with a colleague: what exactly the campaign is for, the target audience, and any other important details. Then ChatGPT will build the outline of a PR plan tailored to your specific needs.

For example:

“Acting as a public relations consultant, please outline a PR campaign plan for the launch of a new product. The product is an inflatable kayak that features a small solar-powered motor that can be deployed if the operator becomes too tired to row. Before you create the plan, is there any further information I can provide that will help you perform this task?”

Once you have the campaign outline, you can flesh it out with your own ideas or even ask the tool to expand upon any particular sections that you need help with.

A simple but powerful trick to use for AI tools is, once they've delivered a response to your query, just ask: *“Can you suggest any ways to improve this? Did I miss any important detail in my prompt?”* This usually results in the AI reassessing its work and delivering a better result.

Creative Brainstorming with AI

AI tools like ChatGPT have been trained on a huge volume of data, estimated to be the equivalent of 2,000 times the size of Wikipedia's entire English-language content library. So, even though it's not intelligent in the way that a human is, ChatGPT does know about a lot of stuff, and that makes it a very useful brainstorming partner.

While it's always fun to bounce creative ideas around with other people, sometimes you can't get the team together for a brainstorming session, or maybe you've just hit a wall and need some help looking at things from a different perspective.

There's no secret sauce for making this work, you just need to ask ChatGPT for some ideas, as in this example:

"I am a Public Relations professional, and I need to pitch a story about a new data privacy app to consumer technology reporters in the national news media, but non-technical people are not very interested in data privacy. Please give me some pitch ideas that would make this story more interesting to the general public."

There's no limit to what kind of ideas you can ask for; events, stunts, partnerships — ChatGPT will have suggestions for everything. If you need help visualizing an idea, you can ask ChatGPT to create an image based on your description (it's now integrated with the Dall-E image generator), and there are plenty of other tools for this too, including [Google's ImageFX](#) and [Microsoft Image Generator](#).

But we advise practicing caution here. The tool is capable of using all of the information it's absorbed to come up with its own ideas, but there is also a risk that it could sometimes simply regurgitate an idea that's a little too similar to something from its training data. So, if an AI ever gives you an idea that you intend to use in a live campaign, it's worth doing some Googling first, just to make sure you're not in danger of plagiarizing another brand.

PR Reporting with AI

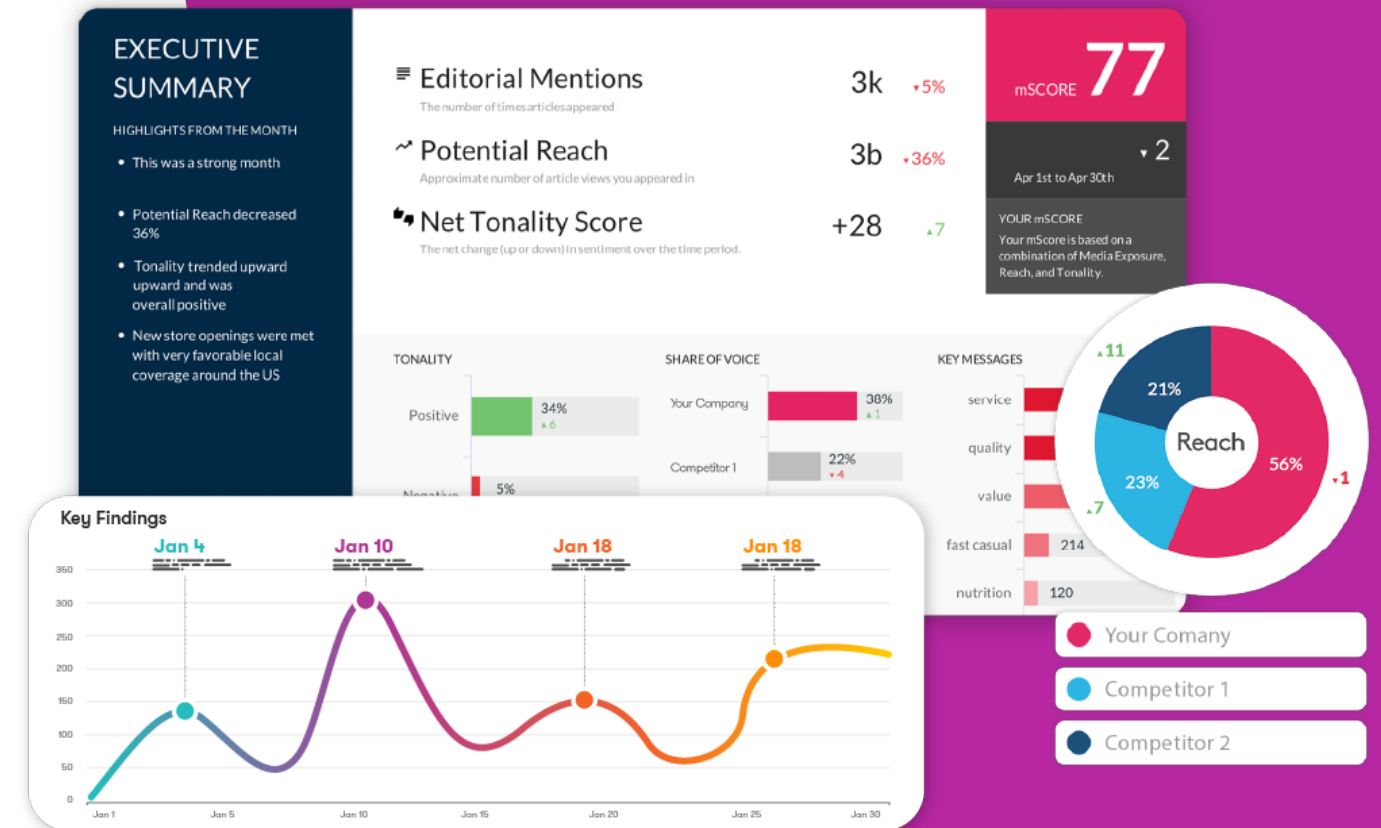
Building PR reports is a great opportunity to showcase your success to stakeholders in the wider business, but it's also challenging because you need to translate your work and results into a format that is easy to understand by people who don't work in PR.

Reporting is important, but it can also be time-consuming, repetitive, and frustrating. Sounds like a perfect problem for AI to address!

Our PR reporting tools in [Meltwater Media Intelligence](#) let you set up report templates with all of the information and KPIs you want and then set them to run on autopilot, being automatically generated with fresh data as frequently as you need.

The clever part is that we use AI to generate insights that provide context by summarizing coverage, explaining sentiment, and giving you insight into what's happening with your brand. This works across all of the types of reports you might need in a PR team, from daily coverage digests to monthly/quarterly performance updates or even competitive analysis. [AI can do a lot of the heavy lifting](#) and save you hours of work.

Reporting is a critical but often thankless element of PR. If you're interested in learning how to reduce the time and workload of reporting while increasing the impact of reports, we recommend reading our guide, [Modernize Your PR Reporting](#).



4 Reputation Management & AI

Media relations and promotional comms campaigns probably qualify as the fun parts of PR, but the more serious side of the job is protecting the company's reputation. For many companies, the brand's reputation is incredibly important and adds a lot of value to the business, so it needs to be safeguarded diligently.

While the scope of reputational risks is widening all the time, the good news is that a new generation of AI tools is available to help PR professionals identify and respond to these threats better than ever before. Let's dive into specifics.



Crisis Comms Training

Most experienced PR executives will have been involved with [crisis communications](#) preparation at some point in their careers and will appreciate the value of role-playing crisis comms scenarios. Typically, this involves hiring an external specialist to build the scenario and spend a few hours working through the role-play with your team.

But it might be difficult to secure a budget for this kind of training or to find the time to coordinate everybody's schedules. With a simple prompt, ChatGPT can create a crisis-comms scenario for your business and moderate a role-play session while you work through the scenario, either by yourself or with a team.

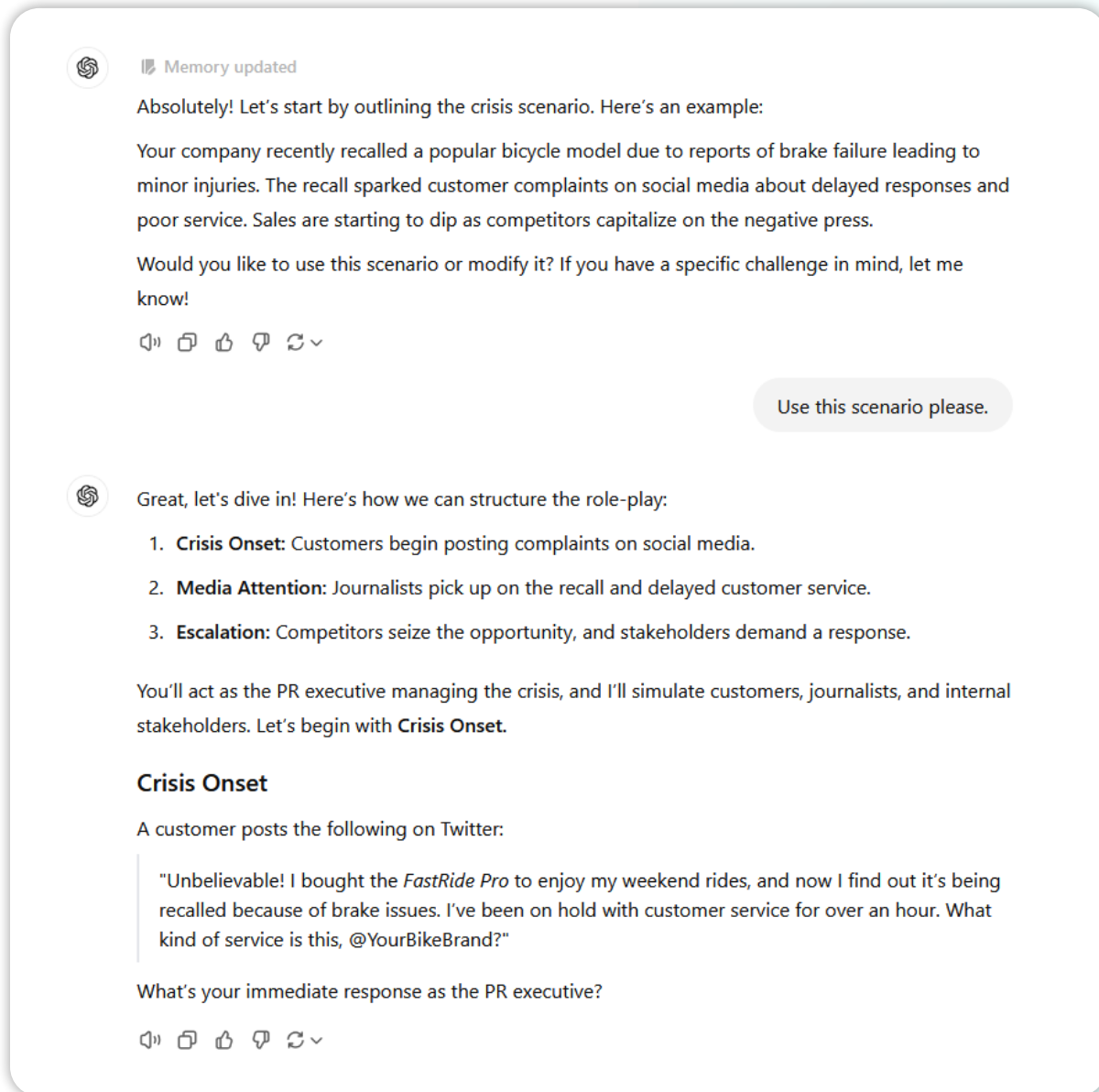
Here's an example prompt — for the purposes of this guide, we've kept it simple, but you could flesh it out with lots more detail so that the AI builds a scenario specifically tailored to your needs:

“I am a PR executive at a bicycle manufacturing company. Can you help me to role-play a crisis-comms scenario for my company? I'd like it to focus on the topics of safety and customer service.”



As you can see from this sample output from ChatGPT, the tool immediately maps out the scenario and structure for the role play, prompting the user for their response before continuing to the next step of the process:

While it's always a good idea to undergo specialist training for crisis preparedness from an expert who can assess your organization's risks and requirements, using AI to improve your skills with regular role play can be a great way to practice and stay fresh.



Memory updated

Absolutely! Let's start by outlining the crisis scenario. Here's an example:

Your company recently recalled a popular bicycle model due to reports of brake failure leading to minor injuries. The recall sparked customer complaints on social media about delayed responses and poor service. Sales are starting to dip as competitors capitalize on the negative press.

Would you like to use this scenario or modify it? If you have a specific challenge in mind, let me know!

Use this scenario please.

Great, let's dive in! Here's how we can structure the role-play:

1. **Crisis Onset:** Customers begin posting complaints on social media.
2. **Media Attention:** Journalists pick up on the recall and delayed customer service.
3. **Escalation:** Competitors seize the opportunity, and stakeholders demand a response.

You'll act as the PR executive managing the crisis, and I'll simulate customers, journalists, and internal stakeholders. Let's begin with **Crisis Onset**.


Crisis Onset

A customer posts the following on Twitter:

"Unbelievable! I bought the *FastRide Pro* to enjoy my weekend rides, and now I find out it's being recalled because of brake issues. I've been on hold with customer service for over an hour. What kind of service is this, @YourBikeBrand?"

What's your immediate response as the PR executive?

Are you fully prepared to safeguard your brand when a crisis hits? Download [The Ultimate Guide to Crisis Comms](#) to make sure you're ready for whatever comes your way.



Crisis Monitoring with AI

A key aspect of reputation management is crisis monitoring, which involves closely monitoring all types of media to quickly identify potential issues before they escalate. It's practically impossible to do this without a solution like [Meltwater Media Intelligence](#), which continually monitors online media for mentions of your brand and related search terms.

But what role does AI play in this? First of all, if your brand is regularly discussed online, it can be hard to separate the warning signs of a crisis from the general background noise, and that's where AI spike detection comes into play. This technology is able to intelligently identify when there's an unusual spike in brand mentions so the system can alert you to a potential issue.

Having detected a spike, the next step is to get to the bottom of what's going on so you can respond quickly. For this, Meltwater uses [AI Spike Analysis](#), which analyzes all of the data and provides you with a plain-English explanation of what's driving the spike — which saves you from having to manually dig through the data and figure it out for yourself.

This not only saves valuable time but also reduces the risk of error. Under pressure, it can be easy to misunderstand or overlook important information, so using AI to explain the spike can help make sure you get the right answers.



Misinformation & Disinformation

Just as AI is helping professionals in many industries work more effectively, it's also helping the peddlers of misinformation create ever more convincing fake news, often with images and video. This presents a whole new challenge for PR professionals charged with protecting their brand's reputation.

A scientific study by researchers from the University of Zurich, Switzerland, found in June 2023 that a popular AI tool was not only capable of producing accurate information that is easier for people to understand but can also more easily [create compelling disinformation](#). Since then, AI has become significantly more capable of producing deep fake images and convincing misinformation, so the current figure is likely to be much higher.

Misinformation can have a real and damaging impact on business. In May 2023, an AI generated viral image of an attack on the Pentagon [caused a stock market drop](#), and when a fake tweet announced that pharma giant, Eli Lilly, was [giving away insulin for free](#), the company's stock fell by more than 4 percent in a single day.

Identifying and countering misinformation like this is an increasingly complex problem for PR, but fortunately new AI tools have been developed specifically to address the issue.

Meltwater has partnered with two specialists who use AI to help brands combat these kinds of “narrative attacks.” Our [partnership with NewsGuard](#) helps customers assess the reliability and credibility of news sources shown in our search results, so it's easier to separate genuine journalism from fake news and propaganda.

In addition to this, [Blackbird.AI](#) uses narrative intelligence to identify and understand deepfakes, misinformation, and disinformation attacks on your brand. Simply, it uses AI to analyze online discussions, at scale and speed, uncovering potential misinformation and providing you with the intelligence you need to take timely action.

5 AI Tools for PR Professionals

Over recent years, there's been an explosion of AI tools ranging from general-purpose chatbots to apps designed for very specific jobs like note-taking — so it can be hard to figure out which ones are useful. Here, we've listed some of the best for PR use cases.



Meltwater

Our [suite of solutions](#) includes AI-powered tools specifically for media relations, media intelligence, social media listening and management, consumer insights, and more, used by thousands of PR and marketing professionals. Across the suite, our innovative AI features streamline workflows and uncover insights, saving you time and helping you to achieve better results.

LLM Chatbots

A Large Language Model (LLM) is an AI that has been trained to understand human language so it can take instructions and generate responses in plain English. As part of their training, LLMs also absorb a huge amount of broad knowledge, so they can be useful for assisting with a lot of different tasks, such as research, brainstorming, and campaign planning.

— ChatGPT

OpenAI's [ChatGPT](#) is the most well-known LLM and is widely regarded as the industry leader. A key strength of ChatGPT is that it can access current information from the web to give you more up-to-date responses rather than being limited to the information from its initial training data.

— Claude

Although not as well known as ChatGPT, [Anthropic's Claude LLM](#) is similarly powerful, so it's worth experimenting with both. Claude is often better at writing, although, unlike ChatGPT, it cannot access the web, so its answers may sometimes be outdated since it's limited to its original training data.

— Gemini

[Gemini is Google's LLM product](#). It includes a chatbot similar to ChatGPT, as well as a range of other AI tools integrated into the company's expansive suite of products, including Android, Chrome, and its productivity suite.

— Llama

What if you work in a sensitive and/or highly regulated industry that makes using cloud-based LLMs difficult? Or what if your business would like to modify an LLM for a specific purpose that existing models don't cover? For these situations, you could use [Meta's Llama LLM](#), which the company has made open-source for anybody to freely download, modify, and use as they see fit. If you have the technical resources, you can run a Llama locally on your own private hardware and adapt it to any use case you want.

Image Generation Tools

There are lots of options for image generation. Dall-E is integrated into ChatGPT now, but if you want to try some alternative, standalone options, [Google's ImageFX](#), [Microsoft Image Generator](#), and [Midjourney](#) are among the best.

LLM Chatbots

Video generation AI isn't quite as advanced as image generation, but the technology has improved a lot recently, and we're likely to see better tools soon. [OpenAI](#) and [Meta](#) have both demonstrated impressive-looking video generation tools, but these are not widely available yet. Currently, available video generation tools tend to be limited in scope:

— Synthesia

Creates video presentations with AI-generated avatars.

— Canva

Can create very short video clips and talking head videos for social media content.

— Runway

Is probably the best general-purpose video creation tool currently available, but it is geared toward professional video editors and artists, so there's a bit of a learning curve.

Note-Taking

PR people spend a lot of time on calls and in meetings — with clients, agencies, stakeholders, journalists, and more. Keeping notes on the discussions used to be a chore, but [Otter.ai](#) is fantastic for transcribing the conversation. It can also organize and summarize notes, making it easy to get to the key points of the discussion.

6

Prompt Engineering for PR

The trick to getting great results from AI chatbots is knowing how to write prompts that work well. This is called “prompt engineering,” but don’t be fooled — there’s no real engineering involved; it’s mostly common sense.

Tools like ChatGPT are already very good at figuring out what you need based on your simple instructions, but by following these easy tips, you’ll be able to write prompts that give you the best possible results.



Specificity: Be as precise as possible so there's no room for misinterpretation. If your prompt is too vague or broad, it can be hard for the AI to understand the exact context, so tell it exactly what you want.

Background Context: As well as telling the AI exactly what you need, you can help by giving it some background context. For example, if you wanted it to write a press release about a new product, you could include some information about your company's background and previous products, so it can understand what's different about this one or what it really means for your brand.

Give it a Job: It can sometimes be helpful to tell the AI what role it is fulfilling — in the case of PR, you'll probably want to start many of your requests with "Acting as an expert PR consultant...". This allows AI to use its knowledge of that field to do a better job. This can also be useful for getting different perspectives because you can ask questions like, "Acting as a financial journalist, what questions would you have about this press release?"

Watch Your Tone: Most AIs are able to write in different styles and tones. They will default to a fairly neutral, usually casual, conversational style, so if you want them to be more businesslike, more engaging, or more technical, you should specify that in your prompt. You can also ask the AI to rewrite existing content in a different tone.

Ask for Help: A simple trick to improve your prompts is to ask the AI to do it for you, with something like: "Please analyze the following prompt, and suggest ways I can improve it to ensure you are able to give the best response:" You can also do this to improve content it has produced for you — so when it responds to your initial request, just say "Can you suggest any ways to improve this?" and there's a good chance it will make some recommendations that you hadn't considered.



7 The Meltwater Difference

Meltwater's integrated suite of solutions makes it easy for all PR professionals to leverage the power of AI to streamline their workflows, working smarter and faster.



Meltwater helps you understand:

Who your audience is:

One of the most fundamental pieces of intelligence for any PR team is the identity of the target audience. This should absolutely not be left to guesswork. [Meltwater's social listening solution](#) helps you to identify online conversations that are relevant to your brand and focus on the people participating in those discussions so you can build a picture of who they are.

What your audience is saying:

It's just as important to understand what your audience is saying, not just about your brand specifically but also all of the issues relating to the products and services you provide. Meltwater provides real-time social data for an up-to-the-minute view of what your audience is talking about, as well as analytics tools that can help you make sense of all that data.

Where your audience is:

There are so many places your audience could congregate online, it's simply not wise to make any assumptions about the best channels to reach them through. Whether they're on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, or hanging out in niche blogs or discussion forums, Meltwater will show you exactly where your audience is most likely to spend their time online.

Who influences your audience:

The final piece of the PR puzzle — who are the most influential voices that your audience pays attention to? These are, of course, at the heart of any PR activity. While Meltwater social listening can be used to identify these people, Meltwater's influencer marketing platform, [Klear](#), has the world's most comprehensive database of online influencers already filtered and categorized for your convenience. And, naturally, our [Media Relations](#) tool makes it easy to find the legacy media journalists who are the best fit for your audience.





Contact Us

At the heart of our suite is real-time data from all the leading social media channels, TV and radio broadcast media, 270,000 legacy news sources (including print media), and over 20,000 podcasts.

Of course, data alone isn't much use; you need to be able to extract insights from it. Meltwater helps you do that with intuitive analytics tools and built-in AI capabilities that can spot trends and patterns in data for you.

Our entire suite of solutions is fully integrated, so whether you're building a targeted media list, planning influencer outreach, tracking campaign performance, or anything else, all of the data comes from the same single source of truth, ensuring consistency across all your activity.

Interested in learning more about how Meltwater's Suite of Solutions can help your team?

[REQUEST A DEMO](#)



Media Intelligence



Social Listening & Analytics



Consumer Intelligence



Media Relations



Social Media Management



Influencer Marketing



Data & API Integration



Sales Intelligence