



## Top Industry Talent Joins News Direct Team



*CommPRO Editorial Staff*

### News Direct continues to shake up the newswire category with standout industry leaders, each with nearly two decades of experience



News Direct, the only news and content distribution platform purpose-built for the demands of modern media outreach, announced several senior hires as part of the leadership team. These hires include Neil Hershberg as Chief Media Partnership Officer; Brenda Bell, Mark Essa, Jennifer Dunn and Josh Rehrer each as Vice Presidents of Regional Sales; and Jeff Abelson as Director of Multimedia Services. Hershberg and Abelson will report directly to News Direct founder and CEO, Gregg Castano, while Bell, Essa, Dunn and Rehrer will report to Chief Revenue Officer, Charles Lucchesi.

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"I'm thrilled to welcome Neil, Jeff, Brenda, Mark, Jennifer and Josh to the News Direct team. News Direct is disrupting the newswire industry and transforming the way PR and IR professionals distribute their news. Their combined knowledge and expertise are a tremendous asset to our brand and our customers. I can't think of a more qualified and forward-thinking group to lead the charge," said Founder and CEO, Gregg Castano.

Each executive on the leadership team has an average of 20 years of industry experience. Following is more information on the makeup of the executive team and their responsibilities:

**Gregg Castano, Founder and CEO:** Gregg brings to News Direct more than 32 years of industry experience, including a seven-year stint of serving as president of Business Wire. At News Direct, his primary responsibilities include overseeing planning and strategy, company operations, business development efforts, and account management and growth.

**Neil Hershberg, Chief Media Partnership Officer:** Neil also joins News Direct with over three decades of experience in the newswire industry, as well as a distinguished career as a journalist with UPI and Newsweek prior to that. After serving as Vice President of Media Relations at PR Newswire for nine years, followed by 22 years as Senior Vice President of Global Media at Business Wire, Neil became News Direct's Chief Media Partnership Officer this past May. Neil oversees News Direct's global distribution network and develops and maintains senior-level media partnerships.

**Brenda Bell, VP, Regional Sales:** Brenda has more than three decades of industry experience, including 18 years at PR Newswire and 13 years at Business Wire. Based in Colorado, she joins News Direct as VP, Regional Sales where she will bring the News Direct message to professional communicators throughout the Rocky Mountain region, as well as portions of the Midwest.

**Mark Essa, VP, Regional Sales:** Mark joins News Direct with more than 28 years of newswire industry experience. Previously, Mark held various senior roles at Business Wire, including Vice President of Competitive Business Analysis and Vice President of Sales, Tracking & Analysis. As VP, Regional Sales, Mark drives dynamic sales directives and relationship building throughout Southern California.

**Jennifer Dunn, VP, Regional Sales:** After spending time earlier in her career in marketing and PR, Jennifer entered the newswire industry when she joined Business Wire in 2008. After a highly successful 12 years covering the D.C. region as well as the Carolinas, she became News Direct's VP, Regional Sales, where she will continue to serve the D.C. metro area, while also managing the company's future expansion into the southeast.

**Josh Rehrer, VP, Regional Sales:** Josh brings to News Direct 18 years of industry sales experience with Business Wire. While with Business Wire, he served in various roles including Regional Vice President, Director and District Manager, focusing on the Mid-Atlantic region. Josh's role is to drive adoption of News Direct's game-changing platform throughout the Delaware Valley region.

**Jeff Abelson, Director of Multimedia Services:** Jeff brings to News Direct nearly 24 years of experience as Multimedia Specialist at Business Wire. As News Direct's Director of Multimedia Services, Jeff brings substantial newswire expertise in a client-facing advisor role, while specializing in multimedia support. News Direct is the only platform of its kind with the capability to release standalone multimedia content, making this an ideal role for Jeff's talents and knowledge.

"Gregg is a bold and progressive business leader. His vision for the future of the newswire industry is reflected in News Direct's purpose-built platform and predicated on more than three decades of industry leadership experience. I'm thrilled to join the News Direct team and deliver impact, value and results for our clients," said Neil Hershberg.

For more information, visit [newsdirect.com](http://newsdirect.com).