

Orchestrating Control4's Launches for Multi-Stage Media and Sales Impact:

"The setup itself is an absolute cinch. It also automatically pulls in favorites from your OS 3 settings, once you tell it the room you're going to use it in the most."

- Paul Lamkin, *The Ambient*
[Nevo Remote for Control4 Review](#)

Caster strategized the company's major software launch as the first building block for a cadence of earned media coverage and reviews six months ahead of the Nevo Remote launch.

campaign highlights

- Smart home company Control4 was planning its biggest software introduction to date with OS 3, followed by the highly-anticipated Nevo Remote.
- Caster Communications strategized a launch plan to land mainstream, tech, and trade coverage for the initial software announcement, while simultaneously seeding stories in an ongoing cadence to support the launch of the new Nevo Remote six months later and through the end of the year.
- The launch strategy set up for long-term success: Coverage topped 120 million impressions for the Control4 Smart Home OS 3 launch; later, impressions topped an additional 140 million in the first twelve hours alone for the Nevo launch.
- PR was the core marketing catalyst as the program did not receive advertising budget, and was credited with contributing to downloads of Control4 OS 3 and record sales of the Nevo remote.

client

Control4[®]

- www.control4.com

services

PR + Media Relations
Consulting + Strategy
PR Launch Event
Press Releases + Product
Reviews

the client



Control4 is the market leader for professional residential automation and networking for the smart home market. Control4 builds and sells hundreds of products including intelligent lighting, multi-room video distribution, AV communication and intercom devices, and automation controllers.

Control4 has a full line of smart home products designed to work together and more than 7,500 independent dealers who take the hassle out of design and installation of personalized solutions. The Control4 OS 3 platform works with over 14,000 third-party products — one of the most expansive in the professional smart home industry. These assets combine to make having a true smart home easier and simpler.

“Control4’s appeal has always been for those who want the capabilities of a smart home but don’t want to deal with the hassles of installing one and setting it up themselves. But with the Neo, Control4 might also attract those who are into sleekly designed gadgets — even if they are woefully expensive.”

- Dan Seifert, The Verge
Control4 adds a sleek new remote to its smart home platform



the problem

The smart home market had been growing in adoption and as a topic in the media, after smart speakers like Amazon Echo and Google Home have entered the market and advanced awareness. But as a professionally-installed system and not a do-it-yourself (DIY) gadget, Control4's smart home platform faced challenges with consumer awareness and mainstream tech media coverage.

With former Amazon executive Charlie Kindel at the helm, Control4's newly created operating system, OS 3, was poised to be the company's biggest launch in its fifteen-year history. OS 3 would be groundbreaking for the trade markets, but Control4 also wanted mainstream and tech press coverage to drive consumer interest in the platform.

As Control4's agency of record for over twelve years, Caster Communications had an ongoing PR program for regular editorial coverage and news. With their fingers on the pulse of the top trade and tech stories, and the state of the smart home market, they were tasked with launching OS 3 to Control4's professional dealer base and the greater U.S., U.K., and select international trade markets, as well as using the new software to break into tech publications who had never covered Control4 before. Planning the launch began early in the year in March; because Caster was looped into Control4's roadmap, they planned a more long-term PR strategy to successfully launch OS 3 and build a dynamic cadence of coverage leading up to the oncoming launch of the Neo Remote – a revolutionary new product planned for the end of the year following Control4's acquisition of the Swiss-based startup.

In addition to impactful launch days for both the OS 3 and the Neo Remote, Control4 expected in-depth system and product reviews. But orchestrating the new software launch wouldn't be simple without the luxury of shipping a gadget to press to play with, like other smart home brands can do. To build this diverse catalogue of coverage, Caster strategized how to first deliver stories for the launch of OS 3 in May that would drive deep interest in both tech and trade press. To build excitement and gain sales, the next step was to maintain the buzz with a consistent cadence of news leading up to the Neo release in November.

"Smart home connected devices can control everything from lighting and temperature to security systems and music. But with products from so many different companies, they don't always work together. Control4 wants to change that. Yesterday, it debuted its Smart Home OS 3."

- **Christine Fischer,**
Engadget

Control4's new hub connects
13,500 smart home devices on
one screen

the solution

For the OS 3 launch, Caster strategized a PR plan with media targets for pre-briefs, in-person demo presentations, and beta reviews, as well as messaging and press materials to achieve the impact and momentum they would need for the long-term.

Planning began with selecting the right press targets across the trade market for pre-briefs and beta reviews who could introduce the new platform to Control4's professional dealer base worldwide. To achieve this, Caster leveraged their extensive media network to home in on top targets. Categorizing by topic, interests, current smart home devices, knowledge scale, and overall potential impact, Caster prioritized media to work within an allotted time window, an often tricky and daunting task.

Caster also strategized a demo plan for the platform, timed with the annual [Parks Associates CONNECTIONS Conference](#) in San Francisco, which hosts top tech, IoT, and smart home press. Caster had secured Control4 CTO Charlie Kindel to be its keynote speaker, and invited media targets for an OS 3 demo with Kindel following his presentation. To break into mainstream media, Caster developed messaging to distill the new software's thousands of features and the benefits of professional installation so that it would resonate with the media, plus consumers. Using their knowledge of the market and their research on the state of the smart home, Caster decided to position Control4 OS 3 as the Smart Home Operating System as the solution for consumers frustrated with their DIY experiences.

Caster created press materials for each press group to accompany the demos, pre-briefs, and reviews, as well as a "What's New" sheet for tech-savvy trade press. Meanwhile, photos were broken out amongst the groups, so that each story would pop for consumers and show a different aspect of the operating system, e.g., a Netflix button, lighting control, music streaming, and more. This tactic worked well for the OS 3 launch, and Caster later used the same method to highlight and differentiate points about the Neo Remote in the subsequent launch.

Media reviews were critical to the sales strategy. Caster seeded beta reviews of OS 3 with press who had existing Control4 systems managed in their program, and worked out an upgrade plan to align detailed reviews to drop on the launch date. These reviews would also be the foundation for Neo Remote coverage six months later. The reviews required close management to succeed, and Caster guided press through device setup and the many new features of OS 3 with a detailed review guide. As the first product that Control4 introduced that could be setup by the user or homeowner, rather than a professional, Caster seized the opportunity and shipped remotes to press ahead of the pre-briefs for the Neo news — even those without a Control4 system.

During the video pre-briefs, the remote sample was handy for Charlie Kindel to walk press through an unboxing, while discussing features, highlighting the weight, design, and elegance and reviewing product features. Discussion sparked with press about how they would use the device in their very own Control4 system, and Caster jumped on their excitement to offer review systems.

the results

In May, the Control4 Smart Home OS 3 launch broke with 50+ unique stories on day one.

From over 30 press briefs, top tech coverage included [Engadget](#), [GeekWire](#), [CNBC](#), [GearBrain](#), [The Ambient](#) with trade coverage in [CE Pro](#), [Home Theater Review](#), [Sound & Vision](#), [Essential Install](#), [Inside CI](#), and more. to the launch sparked six months of continued coverage, with reviews in [Forbes](#), [The Ambient](#), [AVNation](#), [CE Pro](#), [Audioholics](#), [Residential Systems](#), [Residential Tech Today](#), and mainstream tech influencer Carley Knobloch's [blog](#).

Caster maintained Control4's momentum through to the Neeo launch, and landed more than two dozen unique stories that topped a reach of over 140 million in the first twelve hours and nearly 50 in the first 24 hours. New press covered Control4 for the first time, including [Slashgear](#), [Stacey on IoT](#), and [TWiT TV](#).

The seeded beta reviews began posting on launch day; including in-depth reviews on [The Ambient](#), [GearBrain](#), and more, as well as trade publications, and opened the door for additional reviews that posted well after the initial news launch.

The launches also fed into [Caster's ongoing award program](#): Control4 OS 3 won eight awards including the CE Pro Best of CEDIA Awards, CEDIA Best New Product Awards, Beautiful Kitchens & Baths 30 Most Innovative Products, and the CE Pro Best IoT Integration Awards, among others, and Neeo has won numerous awards but none more prominent than the Consumer Tech Association's very first Product of the Year Award.

For the period starting with the Control4 OS 3 launch in May through the Neeo remote launch, Caster's PR program and launch strategies garnered over 5,000 articles, with a total story reach over 2 billion and an advertising value equivalent over \$18 million.

More importantly, Control4 saw 20% of installed projects upgrade to Control4 OS 3 in the first 60 days, while new system installations increased across their entire dealer base month over month. Neeo became the best-selling product in the company's history with multiples of the \$600 remote going into existing projects and opening doors to new ones. The entire program was planned, implemented, and completed within the allotted 2020 budgets.



the numbers

Top headlines

"Control4 OS 3 Makes a Case for Smart Home Unity... and Your Wallet"

"Control4 Smart Home OS 3 Released; Promises 1,000+ New Features"

"Control4 Smart Home OS 3 adds over a thousand new features"

"Control4 'Sets New Standard' in Smart Home Control."

Control4 OS 3

- 30+ media interviews
- 4 hands-on beta media reviews; plus 6 full length media/influencer reviews
- 40+ unique stories in first 24 hours
- 250 additional stories over the next 30 days

Neoo Remote

- 40+ interviews
- 20 units provided to U.S. media, with a dozen reviews booked within 30 days
- 25+ unique stories in the first 12 hours
- 400 additional stories over the next 30 days

Sales Impact

- 20% of Control4 customers upgraded to Control4 OS 3 within the first 60 days. This is roughly 100,000 homes across the globe.
- The \$600 Neoo Remote became the best-selling product in the company's history.

30+

media interviews for Control4 OS 3

200%

Neoo Remote sales exceeded 30-day projections by 200%

25+

unique stories in the first 12 hours of the Neoo launch



GearBrain

Neoo Remote Control Review: Powerful enough to run your entire home

SMART HOME TECH

Control4 adds a sleek new remote to its smart home platform

The Neoo is a remote control for your whole smart home

By Dan Seifert | @dcseifert | Nov 5, 2019, 10:00am EST

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