



# Get Noticed

SIX WAYS TO BECOME A GO-TO MEDIA SOURCE.

By Lisa Horn, CAS

**OPEN ANY PUBLICATION**—from *PPB* to *Fortune* and *Fast Company*—and each will be filled with subject matter experts either being quoted within feature stories or writing their own bylined columns. How were these sources selected? Luck? No way. Most likely, these experts landed the interview by pitching their relevance to an upcoming article, or they suggested a story idea that was newsworthy and relevant to the publications' readership. Either way, they received the placements—and the implied third-party endorsement that comes with being featured in the media.

How do you become the go-to expert for your favorite publications? Don't assume you have to be a big corporation to get noticed by the media. In this case, size doesn't matter. What does matter, however, is that you have applicable knowledge to the upcoming story and a trustworthy reputation to back it up.

So how does one get noticed by the media? Before diving into the specifics, it's important to first understand *why* earned media should be an integral part of your marketing plan.

## The Benefits Of Earned Media

Being published in the media is certainly an ego boost, but is it an effective marketing tool? You bet. Unlike any other marketing and advertising activities, earned media offers a number of unique benefits:

First, there is an implied third-party endorsement when you are published in the media. It's what others say about you, so there is a trust factor with earned media that doesn't come from traditional advertising—trust that boosts your overall image and reputation.

Second, earned media builds links to your website's press page and becomes content to post on social networks. It provides the necessary social proof that you are expert enough to be considered a trusted source.

Earned media is also a great conversation starter with clients or prospects, and it can easily make a cold call feel warm. You wouldn't contact customers to ask if they saw your new tradeshow products ad. But you could call those who do annual events and talk about an article you wrote on the seven must-haves for every tradeshow promotion.

Finally, earned media can lead to guest blogging and/or speaking opportunities, increasing your impact and influence even more. Once you begin establishing your credentials through media

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placements, it becomes much easier to sell yourself as the expert that your targeted media outlets can count on to deliver the content they need to educate their audiences.

## Six Ways To Get Publicity

It's easy to see why pursuing earned media is a beneficial and worthwhile marketing tactic. But where do you start? What do magazines want and need? There are a number of ways to participate in most publications:

### 1. News Releases

One of the primary functions of any media outlet is to convey news, and the simplest way to communicate with the media about your company's news is through a news release that provides all the pertinent who, what, when, where, why and how details.

What constitutes news? Typically, news is based around new hires and promotions, awards and recognition, company updates, mergers and acquisitions, events and charitable activities.

### 2. Product Submissions

Within the promotional products marketplace, much of the editorial content is naturally based around products. As such, editors need unique items with interesting, high resolution images and creative descriptions.

### 3. Case Histories

The power of promotional products comes not from the product itself but from the application of the product in a marketing campaign—and this can make compelling editorial. When submitting case histories, explain the background to give context and include all pertinent details. Additionally, if ROI can be demonstrated, you're more likely to have the basis for a great story that will capture an editor's attention.

### 4. Earned Media Articles

Having a bylined article in a publication your audience reads is one of the most engaging ways to demonstrate your expertise. Take this article, for example. I'm writing about subjects I know (publicity and editorial content) in a way that is educational for you (the reader). This tactic can also work for you. Think about what you know (sales, marketing, technology, etc.), and determine how your skills align with a publication's mission and audience needs. I bet there are numerous story possibilities.

### 5. Giving Feedback

An easy way to get press mentions is through feedback. Most publications have letters to the editor where you can share your thoughts on an article or invite discussion on an industry issue. Depending on the publication, there may also be additional ways to contribute. In *PPB*, the monthly column, "Question" features commentary from readers about handling a common or not-so-common situation. Check out page 67 to see this month's question. Submit your answer (make sure comments are professional and objective), and you just might get some ink.

Hear Lisa Horn discuss content marketing and how to differentiate your business in a PPAI on-demand webinar available at [www.ppai.org](http://www.ppai.org). Find it by clicking on Education/PPAI On-Demand Webinars and Videos and then on Premium Education. The 49-minute webinar costs \$15 for PPAI members; \$30 for nonmembers.

## 6. Query Responses


If you are interested in getting press mentions outside the promotional products media, there are services that connect sources like you with reporters, editors and writers who need your expertise. Sign up for Help A Reporter Out (HARO) <http://www.helpareporter.com> or ProfNet <http://www.prnewswire.com/profnet> to be advised of the editorial opportunities happening right now.

## Work Effectively With The Media

- To be a strong, reliable source, follow these tips:
- Always do your homework to understand the publication you're pitching. Read multiple issues of the publication cover to cover. Review the media kit. Visit the website, blog and social sites. This research will help you tailor your content so that it is relevant for that specific publication's audience.
  - Take an audience-centric approach; don't sound like an ad or be self-serving. Rather than thinking about what you want to write, put yourself in the readers' shoes and determine what they need to read. Once you identify their needs, you can write to meet them.
  - Provide great content that's unlike previously published material. If you're just like the writers currently in print, why should you be considered? Offer a new idea or a fresh perspective so editors will take notice.
  - Finally, respond quickly. Editors are always on deadline. Responding first is no guarantee of publication, but it goes a long way in proving you are reliable.

## Final Thoughts

There's no such thing as free press. Earned media is truly earned in time and effort.

But getting mentioned in the media—from industry magazines to large newsstand publications to popular blogs—is worth the investment and should be an integral part of your comprehensive marketing plans. 

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