

# Publicity



# Publishing and publicity

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# **Welcome to “Publicity 2.0”!**

**This report is divided into 5 sections:**

**Section 1 - 30 Ways to Generate Publicity for Your Online Business**

**Section 2 – Introduction to Press Releases**

**Section 3 – HARO (“Help A Reporter Out”)**

**Section 4 – PR Web**

**Section 5 – Press Release Template**

## SECTION 1

### 30 Ways to Generate Publicity for Your Online Business

A common misconception among online business owners is that they must spend lots of money on advertising to grow their businesses. But if you're willing to put a little time into promoting your business, you can generate publicity that will be far more effective than paid advertising.

Here are 30 ways you can create publicity at little or no cost.

1. **Build a social media presence.** Building a presence for your business on popular social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+ creates ongoing opportunities for publicity. Make frequent, relevant and interesting posts, and bloggers and members of the media will take notice.



2. **Start a Facebook group.** An active Facebook group that is relevant to your niche can generate lots of publicity.
3. **Make use of LinkedIn.** LinkedIn is a wonderful site for online business networking and making contact with members of the press.
4. **Maintain a blog.** A good business blog is a great for publicity. Keep it updated with relevant and engaging posts, and be sure to offer an RSS feed so that readers can subscribe and site owners can add your updates to their own sites.
5. **Post linkworthy content on your blog.** "Top 5" or "Top 10" lists tend to attract links nicely, as do product reviews and tutorials.

6. **Comment on other blogs.** Keep your comments on-topic and useful, and only include a link to your site in the URL field. As long as you're adding to the conversation and not blatantly promoting your business, this is a quick and easy way to gain links and exposure.
7. **Write guest posts for other blogs.** Many bloggers welcome guest authors as long as they have something worthwhile to say. Instead of shamelessly plugging your business, write a post that their readers will be interested in and save the promotion for your byline.
8. **Invite other bloggers to write guest posts for your blog.** They will pass the link on to their readers, giving your blog greater exposure.
9. **Post interviews with fellow online business owners on your blog or website.**  
Again, they will let their customers know where to find the interview, giving you traffic and publicity.



10. **Submit articles to article directories.** When bloggers and site owners post your articles on their sites, you'll gain exposure and links to your own site.
11. **Give them something free.** Freebies are great for generating publicity. You can create reports and other information products and give them away without losing money.
12. **Give something away in a drawing.** Whether you host a giveaway on your site or donate something for someone else to give away, it's sure to attract attention.

13. **Have a contest.** Whether you have an essay contest, a design contest or a name our new product contest, you'll get people actively involved and generate lots of interest.
14. **Have a sale.** The bigger the savings, the more publicity you can expect.



15. **Exchange promos with other online businesses.** Ask other online business owners if they would be interested in offering their customers an exclusive discount from your business if you do the same for them. This will result in good publicity for both parties.
16. **Do a webcast.** You could do a product demonstration, a question and answer session, or even an interactive workshop. These types of events are sure to generate buzz.
17. **Put press releases on your website.** A carefully crafted press release is one of the most basic yet powerful publicity tools. Simply adding press releases to your website will attract traffic, and they could be picked up by media outlets.
18. **Submit press releases directly to media outlets.** This is what business owners did before the internet existed, and it's still effective. Simply find online publications that might be interested in your release, search for the appropriate contact, and email it to him or her.
19. **Submit press releases to press release distribution sites.** Sites such as PR Web will distribute your release to major news sites and search engines, greatly increasing the chances that it will be picked up.



20. **Donate money to a worthy cause.** Charitable organizations are usually happy to share the news when a business makes a donation. A donation is also a good topic for a press release of your own.
21. **Donate goods or services.** A good alternative to a monetary donation is a donation of supplies or services.
22. **Volunteer.** If you're not in a position to donate money or goods, donate your time instead.
23. **Create a scholarship.** Scholarships are excellent for generating publicity and goodwill. They don't have to be expensive – every little bit helps when it comes to paying for college.
24. **Make a video.** YouTube is more than just a site for watching funny cat videos. It's also a powerful promotional tool. A fun or informative video about your business could easily go viral.



Select files to upload

Or drag and drop video files

25. **Start a podcast.** You don't have to have a lot to talk about to do a podcast. Some of the best ones are short and sweet. As long as you have something interesting to say, podcasting is a great way to reach internet users who prefer their content in audio form.
26. **Participate in online forums.** Find forums that are relevant to your niche and start posting. You don't have to actively promote your site, just be interesting and helpful and add a link to your signature.
27. **Start a forum of your own.** Maintaining a forum can help you establish yourself as an expert in your field and attract traffic to your site.
28. **Answer questions.** Sites such as Yahoo Answers provide opportunities for you to share your expertise. Include a link to your site in your user profile, and link to pages on your site in your answers when appropriate.



29. **HARO.** Sign up at HelpAReporter.com to receive notice of queries from members of the media who are seeking sources. Respond to relevant queries, and you and your business could be featured in the story.
30. **Pitch a story.** You don't have to wait for reporters to come knocking or make a relevant query. You can think up a great story idea that ties into your business and go to them with it instead. If your first media contact is not interested, keep looking until you find one who is.

You don't need a huge advertising budget to get the word out about your business. By taking a little time each day to work on generating publicity, you can keep customers coming in without spending a dime.

## SECTION 2

### Introduction to Press Releases



The press release is one of the most powerful promotional tools there is. With smart distribution, a press release could get your business lots of publicity.

A press release is simply a newsworthy story about you or your business. Reporters might want to print your press release or they may be interested in interviewing to assist in a story they are working on.

### Why Do Press Releases Still Work?

Press releases have been around since the early 1900s. With newspaper readership on the decline, you might think that the press release's heyday has come and gone. But in reality, the increased speed at which information travels online has made press releases more useful than ever.

Editors of offline publications are busy people. They spend a great deal of time searching for news stories and assigning journalists to write them. Press releases can save them time by alerting them to potential news stories. And if they are written properly, they can be published as-is. This is especially helpful if they have page space to fill on a tight deadline.

Those who edit online publications also have tight schedules. If they receive a good press release via email, they can simply cut and paste for an instant story. Even if they decide to add to it, most of the work is already done for them.

Many bloggers like press releases, too. Mainstream bloggers use press releases in the same way as media professionals. Personal and part-time bloggers often use them when they're short on time but still want to give their readers content on a regular basis.



## Formatting Your Press Release

A press release is simply a document written in the form of a news story and sent to members of the press. Anyone can write a press release, but it's important to use the proper format. A press release should include the following:



- **Source information** – Your business name and contact information should appear at the top of the release if it is sent via mail or fax. Press releases distributed online should include this information at the bottom of the page.
- **Release instructions** – In most cases, you'll want to let the reader know that the release is ready to go live immediately. If so, use "For Immediate Release". If your release is time-sensitive, you can use "For Release Before (date)" or "For Release After (date)".
- **Headline** – Like any news story, a press release needs an attention-grabbing headline. The headline should be between 100 and 150 characters long. Some writers also include a subhead under the headline. This is optional, but it provides an additional opportunity to draw the reader in. It should be short and to the point, but can be slightly longer than the headline.
- **Dateline** – The dateline consists of the originating city and the date of the release.
- **Introduction** – The introductory paragraph is the most important part of the body of the press release. As with any well-written news story, it should include the "Five Ws" of journalism: who, what, where, when and why. This paragraph should provide all of the key points of the release.
- **Body** – The remainder of the body should include details supporting the main idea. Use statistics and quotations where appropriate. You can quote customers, business partners, industry experts or even yourself.
- **Company information** – The last paragraph can provide a brief background of you and/or your business.
- **Close** – The conclusion of the release should be marked by the "###" symbol. If you need to add any notes that you do not want published, they should appear below the close.

The ideal length of a press release is 500 to 800 words. For best results, try to keep the entire release no more than one page long. Always write press releases in the third person, and take care to use proper grammar and correct spelling.

## Where to Distribute Your Press Release

Before the internet, press releases were distributed by wire, postal mail or fax. They may also be sent by these methods today, but the vast majority are distributed online. Here are some of the best places to distribute your press releases.



- **PRWeb.com** – One of the internet’s leading press release services, PR Web submits releases to a huge network of journalists and bloggers. They also submit releases directly to major search engines and news sites. PR Web charges a reasonable fee for each release depending on the features desired, and subscription plans are available.
- **PRLog.com** – PR Log does not offer as many features as PR Web, but it is free to post your release on the site. All submissions are optimized for search engines, and premium distribution packages are available for a fee.
- **News outlets in your niche** – If you can’t afford a paid submission service, it’s a good idea to submit your press release directly to some publications that are relevant to your niche. A quick Google search should bring up some options if you don’t have any in mind. Visit their websites to find out if they accept unsolicited submissions and where you should send them. If you can’t find that information, email the editor to request it.
- **Local news outlets** – Even if your target market is not local, your local news outlets may be interested in news about your local business. If they publish your release online, it could help bring traffic to your site.
- **Your website** – It’s always a good idea to add your press releases to your own site. That way any members of the media that visit can easily access them. At the very least, they could help you get more search engine traffic.

Press releases are just as important today as they were when print publications were the primary sources of news. A good press release can go a long way in promoting your business.

## SECTION 3

### How HARO ("Help a Reporter Out") Works

Being quoted by the media is one of the best ways to establish yourself as an expert in your field. Unfortunately, the average small business owner simply doesn't have the connections it takes to be on the radar of popular bloggers, never mind the mainstream media. But thanks to HARO (<http://helpareporterout.com>), those connections are no longer a necessity.

The image is a screenshot of the HARO website. At the top left is the HARO logo, a circular seal with the text 'HELP A REPORTER OUT' around the perimeter and 'HARO' in the center. Below the logo is the text 'A Utility From Vocus'. To the right of the logo are five social media icons: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google+, and LinkedIn. Further right is a search bar with the text 'Enter'. Below these elements is a green navigation bar with the following links: 'Sources', 'Reporters', 'Sponsors', 'Success Stories', and 'Sign Up'. The main content area has a light blue background. It features the heading 'Sources' in a large, bold font. Below the heading is the sub-heading 'No such thing as free publicity?' in a smaller, blue font. The main text reads: 'From The New York Times, to ABC News, to HuffingtonPost.com and everyone in between, nearly 30,000 members of the media have quoted HARO sources in their stories. Everyone's an expert at something. Sharing your expertise may land you that big media opportunity you've been looking for.' At the bottom left of this section is a link that says 'Learn More'. At the bottom right is a blue button with the text 'Sign Up Today'.

HARO stands for Help a Reporter Out. It was founded in 2008 by Peter Shankman as a Facebook group that connected journalists with sources. It later transitioned into a mailing list. HARO was acquired by Vocus, Inc. in 2010. In addition to the free mailing list, they began to offer paid membership options with additional features.

HARO boasts connections with over 100,000 news sources. Agencies that have used the service include FOX, ABC News, The Associated Press, The New York Times and The Huffington Post.

#### How it Works

HARO is free for reporters to use. All they have to do is create an account to start submitting queries. There are certain rules that apply. These include:

- The site for which they are submitting a query must have an Alexa ranking of one million or lower. Outlets that charge a subscription fee to users to view all content may not use the service.
- The reporter may not ask for content of more than 300 words.
- The name of the publication or website must be included in the query; however, the reporter may request that this information not be made available to sources.



- Only television station and verified print media representatives may request product samples, and all samples must be returned to the sender at the reporter's expense.
- Reporters may not ask sources for any type of monetary compensation, including compensation for travel expenses.
- All information from sources must be received by via the on-site submission process.
- Reporters can ask sources to appear in a video, but they may not ask them to submit a prerecorded video.

Anyone can sign up as a source and submit responses to queries. It's up to the journalist to decide whether each source meets his or her needs. All members receive PR opportunities via email three times per day and have access to email support, but you can pay for advanced level of service.

Paid memberships entitle users to certain advanced features. They can set filters that provide opportunities based on keyword preferences and create profiles that may be viewed by journalists. They can also search the online database for relevant opportunities and opt to receive text alerts. Advanced and premium members get alerts early and have the ability to set up additional profiles, and premium members are entitled to phone support.

# Subscription Packages - HARO Publicity Alerts

Become a news source to get HARO Publicity Alerts from Focus. You'll receive real-time media opportunities, straight from journalists on a deadline needing a source.

	Standard \$19/month	Advanced \$49/month	Premium \$149/month
<b>Choose Your Package:</b> Browse our HARO response listings before. Simply choose the package you want, and start getting Publicity Alerts today!			
<b>Media Opportunities:</b> Delivered to your inbox, free 1 time a day	✓	✓	✓
<b>Filter your alerts:</b> Opportunities that match your keywords, preferences, and geographic location	✓	✓	✓
<b>Handwritten notes:</b> Add your own notes to any listing	✓	✓	✓
<b>Get the inside scoop:</b> See what is going on behind the scenes	✓	✓	✓
<b>Search online:</b> Search our entire database for opportunities	✓	✓	✓
<b>Get a headstart:</b> Get a headstart on responding to queries	✓	✓	✓
<b>Support</b>	✓	✓	✓
	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>

## How to Get the Most out of HARO

HARO is a wonderful tool for gaining exposure for your business and establishing yourself as an expert in your field. It levels the playing field for small business owners who would otherwise have a hard time making media connections. Here are some tips for getting the most out of your HARO membership.

- **Consider a paid membership.** They start at just \$19 a month, which is within the budget of most small business owners. It's entirely possible to get publicity with a free membership, but the ability to search the database alone is worth paying for.
- **Respond as quickly as possible.** There are tens of thousands of HARO users, so if you see a query that interests you, it's important to act quickly. Waiting until later to respond could cost you a great opportunity.
- **Read queries carefully before responding.** Sometimes the requester asks for specific information. He will likely receive numerous responses, and those that lack the information he needs will probably be weeded out first.



- **Respond only to queries that are a good fit for you and your business.** If the reporter is looking for a source with qualifications that you do not have, move on to the next query. If you waste a reporter's time, he may delete your next pitch before even reading it.
- **Focus on what you can do for the journalist, not what the journalist can do for you.** Try to include all the information he needs in the initial response, and avoid asking questions until you've heard back unless you need clarification.
- **Resist the urge to tell your life story.** Reporters aren't usually looking for a full bio. Stick to the information that is specifically requested in your response. If they want to know more, they will ask.
- **Be sure to include your name and contact information.** This seems obvious, but it's an easy thing to overlook. Include a phone number if possible, because some journalists prefer communicating by phone rather than email.

Used well, HARO can gain exposure for your business that's far more value than any paid advertising. And once you've built a reputation as a reliable source, even more media opportunities could come your way.

## SECTION 4

### How PRWeb Works

Press releases are among the most powerful publicity tools in an online marketer's arsenal. They're far less expensive than advertising – in fact, if you do your own writing and submissions, they're absolutely free. But sometimes it's worth paying for a good press release distribution service if you want to make sure your release gets maximum visibility.

[PRWeb.com](http://PRWeb.com) is one of the most popular press release distribution services around. Launched in 1997, the company has built relationships with thousands of blogs and online news outlets and all of the major search engines. It is the most visited press release website in the world.

Submitting through PRWeb gets your press release placed on their website, indexed by Google and Bing, placed on major news sites such as Google News, Yahoo News and Topix, and sent to media subscribers.



Among PRWeb's customers are such household names as Southwest Airlines, but the service is available to businesses large and small. Those who have never written a press release before can find lots of helpful information in the site's Learning Center section. You can even compose your releases using a template with step-by-step instructions. Or if you prefer, you can pay PRWeb's editors to write a release for you.

### PRWeb Distribution Packages

PRWeb offers packages starting at \$159 per press release. The following features are included in all packages:

- Placement of your release on the PRWeb website

- Indexing of your release by Google and Bing
- Placement on major news sites such as Yahoo News and Topix
- Placement on industry news feeds
- Placement on regional news feeds
- Distribution to media subscribers
- Enhanced blogger visibility
- Placement on media lists

The Advanced and Premium packages offer additional features such as:

- Placement on additional news feeds and media lists
- Placement on premium websites
- National distribution through the Associated Press
- Placement on local news sites
- Automatic Twitter posting
- Anchor text links
- Custom URLs
- Search optimized images
- Embedded video
- Next day distribution

#### Package Selection

<p><b>Standard</b></p> <p><b>Attract More Attention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Text-based release</li> <li>→ Major search engine placement</li> <li>→ More regional coverage</li> </ul> <p><b>\$159 per news release</b> or <a href="#">Learn More</a></p>	<p><b>Advanced</b> <small>most popular</small></p> <p><b>Drive More Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ SEO-enabled multi-media release</li> <li>→ Major search engine placement</li> <li>→ Expanded industry/regional coverage</li> </ul> <p><b>\$199 per news release</b> or <a href="#">Learn More</a></p>	<p><b>Premium</b></p> <p><b>Own The Media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ SEO-enabled multi-media release</li> <li>→ Major search engine placement</li> <li>→ Full industry, regional and national coverage</li> </ul> <p><b>\$299 per news release</b> or <a href="#">Learn More</a></p>	<p><b>Financial</b></p> <p><b>Achieve Financial Visibility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Multimedia format</li> <li>→ Major search engine placement</li> <li>→ Full industry, regional and national coverage</li> <li>→ Distribution to top financial outlets</li> </ul> <p><b>\$499 per news release</b> or <a href="#">Learn More</a></p>
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Customers can also purchase additional features and services such as release editing and revision, rush distribution, enhanced placement on PRWeb.com, search engine optimization and distribution to media digests.

## Select Editorial Add-ons:

### News Revision (\$125)

- Have you written your release but want a second opinion? One of our editors will review your release and provide editorial feedback to ensure it fits a relevant, professional tone. This requires a minimum two business days.

### News Drafting (\$175)

- Don't have time to create a new release? A Dedicated editor will work with you to create a professional news release that meets your goals and expectations. Note: requires a minimum two business days.

### Search Engine Optimization (\$175)

- We will help you write your release to optimize search engine traffic and ensure your release supports better search placement for your Web site. This means focusing on search friendly keywords, links and a variety of other SEO tactics. Note: requires a minimum two business days.

## What Happens Next?

Once you've submitted your press release through PRWeb, you don't have to just sit back and wait for others to read it. Each customer has access to tracking tools that let them know exactly how well their release is performing. You can see how many times your release is read, how many headline impressions it gets, which media outlets receive it, how many times it is shared in social media, how readers find it through search engines and more.

## Strategies for Success with PRWeb

PRWeb is an outstanding tool for business owners who are looking for publicity. But there are some things you can do to increase your press release's chances for success.

- **Write a release that will get readers' attention.** If you write a mediocre release, distributing it through PRWeb won't magically make it more newsworthy. It's just as important as ever to craft an attention-grabbing headline and write a release that media outlets will want to use. Take advantage of all the help that's available for free at PRWeb.com to write a great release, or hire a professional to write one for you.
- **Choose the best package for your needs.** The Standard distribution package is sufficient for many small business owners. If it has everything you need, there's no point in paying for a more expensive package. However, higher priced packages offer features that are particularly helpful for certain types of users. Weigh your options carefully so that you get the highest possible return on your investment.
- **Use social media to spread the word once your release is published.** Include a link to the release on PRWeb.com. Your announcement could make it to bloggers or



members of the media that are not regular PRWeb users, giving you additional exposure.

- **Let bloggers in your industry know about your release.** Send them a personal message letting them know that you think your press release might be a good fit for their blog, and include a link. They might use it for a post or even contact you for an interview.
- **Link to the release from your blog or website.** This can serve a number of purposes. For new or relatively unknown businesses, it lends credibility to your site. It can help your release's search engine rankings. And if a blogger or member of the media lands on your site, it gives them a link to your latest news.
- **Use what you learn from one release's performance to improve the next one.** Pay special attention to the keywords your audience is using to find your release, and make sure to use them in your next release if possible. If your release fails to perform well, think about what you can do differently next time around.

Using PRWeb is a surefire way to get your press release in front of more media eyes. If you take the time to create a well-written and newsworthy release, bloggers and reporters will take notice.

## SECTION 4

### Press Release Template

<INSERT COMPANY LOGO>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Person's Full Name  
Company Name  
Mailing Address  
Phone Number  
Email Address  
Precise Website Address / URL for More Information

#### **Attention Getting Headline Here – Include a Benefit for the Reader**

**City, Town, Date** – *Summary that draws the reader in to learn more. Make sure you address who, what, where, when, why and when. Be succinct, but include enough information.*

Provide some relevant background information about your product/event/announcement. Make sure you include information on why this is important to the target audience. Be factual and succinct.

Add a quotation from a customer or somebody who reinforces your expertise or the importance of your announcement. Include that person's full name and if relevant, include their credentials.

Include a quotation from yourself that says why you created the products/put together the event, etc. Having a quotation from yourself makes it easier for you to assert an opinion, while still remaining newsworthy. Make sure to include your full name and position in the company.

Finish your press release with a company summary and what you do. Include a statement that says, "For more information, please contact..." and include a phone number and email. Also include the URL of where to get more information on the website.

If you have any questions about publicity or publishing, don't hesitate to contact us and we will do all we can to help you:

[info@wisebear.org](mailto:info@wisebear.org)

website:

<https://wisebear.org>

