



How To Get Featured In Forbes

BY TOM WARD

I've been a contributor for *Forbes*, and other publications, for 2 years and I get at least a dozen emails everyday from PR people trying to get me to write about their clients. So far I've only written about one.

Why? Because their pitches are horrible.

Here's one I got yesterday. I didn't publish the name of the company, but I should have put them on blast.

This is actually like 99% of the email pitches I get. It's scary how bad they are.

So where the heck is everyone going wrong, and how can you get a writer to pay attention to you? Don't worry; I'm going to break all down for you:

Hi Tom,

I'm Doris from Anonymous Company. I'm sincerely writing to request an interview by you with the CEO of Anonymous Company, a rapid prototyping tool.

We could provide great discounts for all of the Forbes users if the interview content can be post on Forbes.com and shared with the subscribers of forbes.com.

As long as the user has registered Forbes.com and subscribed the newsletter, he can get a discount of 30% Off

Up to now there's no website users can get this discount.

And we will offer you a free perpetual license (worth \$399) of Anonymous Company's software so that you can try it anytime you want.

We prefer a questionnaire interview and we will refine the answers.

If you like this idea, please let me know.

Hope you are in good health!

Best,
Doris

Focus

It seems like the pitches I get are just because I'm on some email marketing list. Like these firms just pay for an email list of all the *Forbes* contributors and then send everyone the same email. This might seem productive to the PR person; like, "Hey, I sent 500 emails to writers at major publications today!" But this is just a huge waste of time! Instead, they should be looking for writers and publications that cover what they're trying to promote. It's way more productive to send 10 personal emails to the correct journalists, than 500 random ones. Remember, less is more.

Form Relationships

The one pitch that I actually did write about took a different approach. First, he reach out to me via LinkedIn and sent me a short note. “I like the last two articles you wrote about influencers for Forbes and would love to grab coffee someday. I’m based in LA and represent several big influencers. I always love connecting with people in this space. Let me know when you’ve got some time to chat.” Perfect! I actually met him and his boss for coffee and we just talked about influencer marketing for an hour.

They were smart and interesting people. It gave the people to the people that they represented. He pitched me some of his clients, and I ended up writing about one of them. Most of the major publications are based in NY or LA, so if you don't live in those locations you might not be able to meet up but you should always try to if possible. Conventions and trade shows are a great place to meet people from around the country. If you're just starting out, form relationships with local publications, where you can actually meet the journalists.

Think About The Reader

Why would the reader care about your client or product? Would most readers of *Forbes* care about a landscape planning software (I was actually pitched this) when there are already hundreds of platforms out there? Unless it's backed by big VCs or a celebrity, probably not. They should have been pitching landscape industry publications, software blogs, entrepreneur sites, etc.

Think Of Different Ways To Connect

95% of the pitches I get come via email but the most effective ones I have gotten come from other channels: LinkedIn, Twitter, my blog, etc. A short note on social media means a lot more than a spammy email because it shows that you actually searched the writer out.

My Experience

In 2015, I read a book by Dorie Clark, *Reinventing You*, where she talked about how writing can help you reinvent your career. The more you get published, the more evidence you get that you're an expert in your field.

So, I started blogging and after about a year or so, I built up a pretty good following on my site www.tomward.com.

Then I reached out to Dorie Clark to show her what I was doing, and she liked it and actually put me in touch with an editor at Forbes.

Now I had never written anything in my life. I wasn't in the school paper, I half-assed my papers in college (and bought some too) and never appeared in a publication before. So it was a big deal for me to go from my little blog to a major magazine, like *Forbes*.

I sent the editor a couple of my best articles and a link to my site and he scheduled a call. We talked for maybe ten minutes and he gave me a shot. I'd be an unpaid contributor. Woo hoo! Working for free.

My first article did amazing. It was a silly article about business lessons that we could learn from Cookie Lyon, a character on a popular show *Empire*.

The stars aligned because I wrote the article over the weekend, and on Sunday night, the actress who plays Cookie, Taraji P. Henson, won a Golden Globe for her performance.

I posted my article on Monday morning and it did extremely well. It got about 15k views on the first day, which is huge for a Forbes online article. Most articles get a couple of hundreds views. It also got shared on all the Forbes social media channels, which was cool because Forbes only chooses a handful of the best articles every day to put on Facebook and Twitter.

I kept writing a couple articles a month and pretty soon they offered to pay me to write five articles a month. I started interviewing a lot of big name influencers and Forbes started filming the interviews and paying me for that too!

I'm forever grateful for Dorie Clark for making that initial introduction for me. But, I wouldn't have gotten all the views and shares I've gotten without knowing a thing or two about writing. Granted, I'm no Hemingway (could you imagine Hemingway interviewing a YouTube kid who makes a million dollars a year? Haha) but I've been pretty successful at this writing thing, so pay attention if you want to get coverage and actually get people to read about you or your client.

About Me

I'm a New Jersey native living in Los Angeles with my wife and toddler.

I'm a sales guy by trade but I also write about influencer marketing for Forbes and other publications.

Thanks for stopping by! If there's anything I can do for you, hmu. I respond to each and every email. Even the trolls!