

HOW TO
CREATE A WINNING
PRESS KIT

PPR

WHAT GOES INTO
A PRESS KIT
AND WHY

(ONLINE PRESSKIT )

How To Create A Winning Press kit

What Goes Into A Press Kit And Why

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Introduction

You're watching TV or reading an article where someone is being interviewed and you think to yourself: "I have an awesome take and unique perspective on that exact topic. If that journalist had interviewed me, their audience's lives would never be the same."

Sound familiar?

For you to be front and center for that coveted media, you must be thoroughly prepared. In this workbook, you'll learn how to be prepared and why.

But here's the kicker: being prepared will only get you close to the finish line. To win the race, it's all about timing and knowing how to think like a journalist.

Why think like a journalist? In today's fast-paced media landscape, journalists are busy. If you can save them time by giving them exactly what they need, when they need it... it's a win-win scenario!

In this workbook, we walk you through the mind of a journalist, so you can:

- Put yourself in the shoes of a journalist and think like one too
- Stand out from the disorganized crowd
- Have the right message to hook them
- Provide them what they want, and more
- Answer all their questions, before they ask them
- Save their time and yours

It all comes down to having the right message, delivered to the right person, at the right time. That's the difference between sitting on the bench and being in the spotlight.



Drew Gerber, CEO
Wasabi Publicity, Inc.

PS ~ As you go through this workbook, I want you to have the support you need. If at any point you have a question, reach out to me. As a veteran public relations professional with 30+ years of experience, my team and I have written press kits for numerous professionals like yourself over the years.

Contact me



WEEK ONE:

Creating Your Secret Weapon: Your Online Press Kit

Let's start with the basics: A press kit is **not** your website!

A press kit is *specifically designed to serve the media's needs*. It has *specific components* within a *particular organization*.

Think of a recipe: A well-organized, concise recipe is easy to follow. But a recipe that is jumbled and unclear, full of extraneous material and wandering explanation? A cook's worst nightmare!

It isn't hard to put a good press kit together. You already have almost everything you need. You'll just need to tweak your materials, so they support you in a vibrant and successful PR campaign.

Basic ingredients:

About You: This is copy that talks about your purpose or mission, service or product or invention. [You'll tweak it on Day 3 to feature the unique or the poignant, the "how it solves our problems" and "why we should care" aspects of what you've got.]

Your Bio: Who you are and your experience. [On Day 4, you'll create versions that work for radio, print, investigative, and more in-depth media.]

Media Coverage: Clips or articles that have featured you. [If you've got some good ones, great! If not, you'll build this as you get more coverage.]

News and Story Ideas: Interesting angles that the media might use to feature you. [On Day 6, you'll create some evergreen like health, sex, money and relationships, as well as other topics that are seasonal or specific to current trends.]

Questions & Answers: A variety questions you want to be asked that will entertain, enlighten, or educate the audience. [You'll create these questions and some good answers on Day 7.]

That's pretty much it. Commit 30 minutes per day and follow the steps we outline and by the end of this week, you'll have a complete press kit.

First, let's introduce you to who this press kit is for: ***Ms. Media.***



Day 1 – Meet Your New Best Friend: What the Media Really Wants

Let me introduce you to your new best friend, Ms. Media. Ms. Media comes in all shapes and sizes – radio, TV, Internet or print. She’s male, female, young and not-so-young, all ethnicities. She’s local, national, and even international.

But no matter who Ms. Media is at any given moment, she’s got several things in common:

1. She’s in a hurry! It’s either *right now* or *never*.

Ms. Media needs what she needs *now*, not tomorrow or next week or next month when you get your act together. So before you introduce yourself, be prepared to give her what she needs *now*.

2. She is on a *mission*: to Entertain, Enlighten, and Educate her audience.

That is her job. That is her passion. That is the reason she exists. If she doesn’t consistently entertain, enlighten and educate her audience, she’s toast. So she needs *a constant flow of good material* to survive.

3. She doesn’t give a damn about you unless you can help her do #2.

You might be a very good person. But if you can’t contribute to her *constant flow of good material to entertain, enlighten and educate her audience*, her very survival demands that she ignore you. (Nothing personal.)

4. She will *adore* you if you can *really* help her do #2.

She is constantly bombarded by people who don’t know what she needs and have nothing to offer to help her entertain, enlighten, and educate her audience. If you are one of the few who can really give her what she needs? OMG! Best Friends Forever!

5. She does not have nearly enough time to meet all her deadlines.

It's all 24/7. Her audience is voracious. The next story is due before the last one has aired or gone to print. She has to think months in advance then grab that last minute lead before anybody else does.

6. Thou shalt not waste her time!

She's working an impossible schedule. So feeding her material that doesn't fit her needs, spinning her wheels by making her chase down photos or clips, sucking up her precious minutes with idle chit chat – it's just *plain cruel*. And she won't forget it.

7. She will adore you if you make things easier and faster for her.

Ah, but if you are the one in a million who gets right to the point, has all your material in a convenient place, refers her to other great resources if you aren't a good fit – she'll name her firstborn after you.

8. She's a real-live human person. Treat her as such. Be thoughtful.

99 out of 100 people simply want to use her. They don't acknowledge that great article she just published or that fascinating interview she produced. They don't notice that she just ran her first marathon or got promoted. If she's going to be your new best friend, shouldn't you pay attention to those things?

9. You are here to serve her and her mission, *not* the other way around.

Yep, it's all about her and her voracious audience. It's all about making it easy and even fun for her. And, yes, I know you have an amazing charity in Africa or a spectacular invention or a brilliant book – but this relationship is all about how you can fulfill *her* needs.

10. By honoring #9, you *will* get all you need.

And this is the golden key that so many people miss: If you provide Ms. Media all that she needs, she will be incredibly, almost frighteningly, generous.

This new best friend might sound pretty high maintenance. But once you understand her and work with her on her terms, she's really delightful to be with. And she can open up opportunities for you that you *never* even imagined!

And because she is so critical to your success, you're going to create a site that is for *Her Use Only*.

Your Press Kit.

To break it down, just keep *two main themes* in mind when approaching Ms. Media:

#1 Time: Don't waste it. Help her save it. Be brief and to the point.

#2 It's ALL About Her Mission: Entertain, Enlighten, and Educate: Give her what she needs. ALWAYS fit into one, if not all three, of those categories for her.

Day One Action Steps:

Let's start turning your thinking inside out. To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what the media can do for you. Ask what *you* can do for the media." How can you help Ms. Media to...?

1. ENTERTAIN:

Brainstorm and list as many ways as you can think of that you could help entertain her audience.

Can you share great stories? Do you have a humorous perspective on events? Can you juggle while analyzing the stock market? Pay attention to ways others who appear in the media are entertaining to you.

2. ENLIGHTEN:

What insights or wisdom do you have to share?

What fresh perspectives can you bring to old topics? What new questions can you raise that will benefit her audience?

3. EDUCATE:

What can you teach people that will help solve their problems?

What practical knowledge do you have that the common person doesn't? What resources can you tell them about that would help them get where they want to go?

4. Enlist:

A colleague, friend, or spouse to help you brainstorm these same questions.

Ask this person, "How do you think I can Entertain, Enlighten and/or Educate the media's audience?"



Day 2 – Standing Out from the Crowd: Quirks that Work

So you've got tons of experience at your chosen profession and degrees up the kazoo. You can explain your product or service in detail to even the most sophisticated listener and field impossible questions. Your IQ is off the charts and you have incredible gifts and talents to share.

And no one cares.

Well, they do care a little. But all those degrees and experience and knowledge do *not* make you warm and fuzzy. They don't make you relatable and frankly, they don't make you unique and interesting. And if you aren't interesting to Ms. Media's audience, you aren't interesting to her.

However, you *do* have things about you that *are* interesting and *will* grab Ms. Media's attention. Some of them relate directly to what you're promoting and some may not:

- 1. Your Story:** Everybody loves a good story. Your childhood, your history, where you grew up (Ms. Media loves to cover hometown heroes). How you got from A to Z. Your birthdate (do you match Ms. Media's target audience demographic?).
- 2. Your Challenges:** It's hard to relate to people who have had no challenges in life. We root for the underdog or the guy who blows it then finds a way to redeem himself. But a person who has made no mistakes? Who's had smooth sailing and everything handed to him on a silver platter? BORING!
- 3. Your Motivation:** We love to understand what drives people to do what they do. Whether it's a childhood incident or an Ah Ha moment, we are fascinated by what drives them forward. We want to know what keeps you going when the going gets rough.

4. Your Passions: Nothing is more exciting than a person who is passionate! Even if we are in direct opposition to whatever someone is passionate about, aren't we intrigued by the passion itself? So is Ms. Media. Not just about your passion for your work or business, but *all* of your passions.

5. Your Quirks: Is there really such a thing as "normal?" We all have dumb little things we do or silly rituals or irritating habits we won't give up. It's what makes us human -- and in a way, endearing.

6. Your Unique Insights or Perspectives: We all view life through lenses that have been colored by our experiences and beliefs. Think about your viewpoint on specific topics or the world in general. How does it differ from the crowd?

7. Your Winning Edge: Your winning edge is about comparing yourself to your competition or others in your field. It's the ways that you are different and/or better. It's about the specific clientele that you are uniquely qualified to serve. It's about your particular approach or the results you alone can produce.

8. Your Hobbies: Think about Rosie Grier, 6'5" former defensive lineman in the AFL, who does needlepoint in his spare time. Or Johnny Depp, who plays Barbies with his kids. Claudia Schiffer collects insects and David Arquette knits. Don't their hobbies make them a bit more relatable, attractive and interesting?

9. Your Secrets: Everybody loves secrets! Nothing makes us feel closer to someone than when they let us in on a secret. It doesn't have to be a big, deep, dark scandalous secret. But isn't it interesting that Beyoncé (who has launched several perfumes) is allergic to perfume? Or that Nicole Kidman is afraid of butterflies?

Does this feel like baring your soul and going to confessional? In a way it is.

The key is that the more vulnerable and real you are, the more interesting and attractive you become.

Day Two Action Steps:

The following exercises will help you dig for what is *unique and interesting* about you and your business. As you tweak your existing materials for your press kits, you'll start incorporating these *unique and interesting* elements to get Ms. Media's attention.

Because it's hard to see ourselves and our unique attributes clearly, enlist friends, colleagues, or family to help you.

1. Your Story.

Jot down everything: When you were born, where you grew up and went to school, what kind of childhood you had. How did you choose your career? Are you married, single? Do you have kids? Give us a brief history of your life.

2. Your Challenges.

What internal or external dragons have you faced? What daunting mountains have you had to climb? What impossible brick walls have you had to climb over, dig under or blast through? What has broken your heart?

3. Your Motivation.

What keeps you up at night? What pulls you out of bed in the morning? What is the driving force, the fire in your belly that keeps you doing what you do?

4. Your Passions.

What do you adore? What completely engrosses you so that you lose all track of time? What would you pursue even if you didn't get paid for it?

5. Your Quirks.

What's a little odd or different? What are your eccentricities? What about you makes people laugh or roll their eyes or do a double take?

6. Your Unique Insights or Perspectives.

How do you see the world, specific events or other people a bit differently than the crowd? Do you have a novel take on a particular topic?

7. Your Winning Edge.

How are you different and/or better than your competition or others in your field? What specific markets do you serve? How are the results you produce different or better? What have clients or customers complimented you on?

8. Your Hobbies.

What activities do you enjoy? What do you find engrossing, where time seems to fly by? What is fascinating to you?

9. Your Secrets.

What are some surprising things about you? Things that most people, maybe even your close friends, don't know?



Day 3 – That Critical First Impression: Your Press Kit *Home Page*

Let's just refresh your memory about your new BFF, Ms. Media:

- a) **She is in a *hurry* and**
- b) **All she cares about is *entertaining, enlightening, and educating* her audience.**

Everything in your press kit, starting with your Home Page, *must* take those two things into consideration. If not, you're just using your new secret weapon to shoot yourself in the foot.

But here's how you can create it to snag Ms. Media instead:

1. Create a Headline

Catchy, bold, memorable, intriguing. This is often (though not always) about *them*, not *you*. ("Experience Immediate Healing!" vs. "Amazing Healer Hits Town!") Like headlines on magazine covers, it should grab Ms. Media's attention and make her crave more.

2. Write a Tagline

A short, maybe thought-provoking phrase that's more specific to your particular schtick. For example, "Combining ancient practices with modern psychology to overcome chronic fatigue" or "Providing a Faith-based Approach to Physical Fitness."

3. Keep It BRIEF

Be concise! The ENTIRE Home Page should be **no more than 400 words**. Do not explain the obvious. Do not go into detail. Omit flowery, empty adjectives and adverbs. If the sentence or paragraph still makes sense without a certain word or phrase, slash it out.

4. Use Short Paragraphs

First paragraph: Juicy problems people have and how you solve them.

Second paragraph: Brief credentials. Why should people listen to *you*?

Remaining paragraphs: Explain your product or service in slightly more depth. State benefits people have received.

5. Don't Hide Gems in the Mud

Figure out your **3 or 4 main points** and hit them hard. Don't stuff your main points or catchiest phrases in the middle of lengthy paragraphs. Set them off by themselves, make them bold or italicized. Busy people will *skim*, they don't *read*.

6. Use Plain English

Unless your target market is sophisticated professionals within your own industry, and trade or academic journals, don't use fancy industry jargon. Don't use \$100 words when a 50 cent word will do. Be conversational and personal, not scholarly and abstract – *unless* that's who you're trying to attract.

7. Have Personality

If you're a humorist, be funny. If you're a therapist, sound understanding and calm. If you're a business turn-around expert, express decisiveness and confidence. Whoever you are, sound like *you*.

8. Use Third Person

Most of your press kit should be written as if someone else (like a journalist or publicist, not your mother) is writing it about you and your work. The nifty trick here is that you can intersperse "quotes" from yourself to break up the copy, make a specific point and add interest.

9. E,E, & E

What you say on this page must entertain, enlighten and/or educate Ms. Media. It should make her laugh or cry or captivate her. It should give her hope or open up her world view. It should offer solutions to her problems. It should teach her something *useful* to her or her audience that she didn't know.

10. Clear links to further info

Do not make her guess where to go for further information! If you've caught her attention, typically she'll want to know more about you, what kinds of topics you can speak to, more detail about your product or service, where else in the media you've appeared, photos of you, your regular website. Make links to these things OBVIOUS.

11. Clear Contact Information.

You've worked hard to get Ms. Media salivating so don't leave her hanging! Make your contact information clear *and* make sure when she uses it, she gets immediate response. If you're often unavailable, an assistant or marketing person might be a better contact. If it's best to reach at certain times, let Ms. Media know. (Just keep in mind that Ms. Media does not have time to fit *your* finicky schedule within *her* frantic schedule.)

Day Three Action Steps:

Let's build your Home Page step by step. You'll be able to pull in material you already have. But remember *who* we're creating this for and tweak accordingly!

By the way, the only way you'll get through these actions steps in 30 minutes is if you don't over-think it. Just write, don't edit. You can clean it up and spruce it up later.

And if you're not quite sure about any aspects of your Home Page, no worries! In the Appendix at the end of this book, you'll find several great examples – and a few lousy ones – to guide you.

1. Your 3-4 Main Points.

What are the *3 or 4 critical things* Ms. Media needs to know about you or your work? (And, no, you can't expand it to 5 or 6 points.) If those main points aren't obvious, begin with ten points. Next ask yourself, "If I could only have 9, which would I choose?" Keep eliminating until you have your 3-4 absolutely critical points. You'll incorporate these in your Home Page.

2. Write Paragraph #1: Problem/Solution.

What problems do people have that you can solve? Start by listing a bunch of them, preferably problems that relate to your 3-4 main points. Which strike you as particularly juicy i.e. the ones that keep people up at night?

Next to those juicy ones, write how you or your product can solve them. Finally, pick out the problem/solution combination that seems to be the most dramatic, gripping or unique. Now write that up in 2 or 3 sentences. Voila!

3. Write Paragraph #2: Your Credentials

Why should anyone listen to you or be impressed by your product? In 2 or 3 sentences, share only your most pertinent and impressive credentials (i.e. if you've got a PhD, we don't need to know that you also have a BA). If you written a book or received a relevant award, throw that in here.

4. Write 5-7 Brief Paragraphs.

Keep your paragraphs to 2-4 sentences. Give us more insight into what you do and who you are. Tell us a story. Share your 3-4 important points if you haven't already. (Hint: If this seems difficult, try writing a big long story first. Then pull out only the most interesting, critical parts and toss the rest.)

5. Tell Them What To Do Next

"For further information, go to www.MyWebsite.com"

"Contact me for interviews at MyEmailAddress@xyz.com or by phone 123-456-7890."

"Download my One Pager (or Free Report) here: www.MyStuff.com/OnePager"

6. Write a Headline

No more than 6 words – less is better. It should be a phrase that could have an exclamation point after it (though you won't use one). In other words, it should be exciting! "Lazy Girl's Path to True Love" "Hottest Games for Gen X'ers" "America's Financial Investigator." Look at headlines on magazines or Internet news sites to give you the sense of what works.

7. Write a Tagline

Again, checkout magazines and news sites to get the gist of a good tagline. A tagline tells a bit more but is still brief, not really complete sentence. Use your name or product name in it. Taglines for the Headlines above might be: "Suzie Q teaches busy (and lazy) women to find the man of their dreams in 21 days," "Gen X Products creates entertaining apps that sharpen your brain," and "NY Times best-selling author Pamela Yellen shows how to grow and protect your nest egg."

8. Spruce it Up

Congratulations! You've got the first draft of your press kit Home page. To bring it to the next level, set it aside for a few days and see what other ideas pop up for you. Ask for feedback from someone who knows your work and whose opinion you value. As you make changes and improvements, stay true to the basic structure and keep your Home page short, sweet and compelling!



Day 4 – Who the Heck Are You? Creating Compelling Bios

Your press kit bio is *not* a resume.

Whether it's for radio or print or your longer bio, it tells an *interesting* story about who you are. It doesn't cover the boring details because, well, they're *boring*. It does include things you would *never* put on a job application because, well, they're *interesting*.

To paraphrase Alfred Hitchcock, "A good press kit bio is life with all the dull bits cut out."

Remember those quirks and secrets, passions and challenges? That's what we to weave into the story of *you*.

You'll create 3 versions of your bio today: Byline, Radio, and Full Length. And don't panic! We've got plenty of examples in the Appendix to help guide you.

Your Byline (Print) Bio: under 100 words

1. Keep It Brief

Your byline will come after an article or blog written *by* you (or sometimes *about* you). The reader was intrigued enough to want to know more about you but the editor needs you to keep the whole byline *under* 100 words.

2. Credentials First

Lead with your most attractive credentials, the book you've written or business you've created. Start this sentence off with a phrase that describes your expertise. "Award-winning chef" or "Coach to successful entrepreneurs" or "Self-taught professional classical guitarist."

3. What You Do

What you do should be something they want! In this next sentence, make it clear: How do you help people? What problem does your service or product solve? For example, "Expert college admissions coach, Jane Doe, helps clients find the best college for their children and shows them how to make it affordable."

4. How to Get More

Capitalize on the interest you've created by making it very *clear and easy* to take the next step! Most bylines today offer a website link or a link to a free download or product to draw readers in. This last sentence will simply be: "For more information, go to www.LINK.com" or "To see how XYZ can benefit your family, download this free report at www.LINK.com/report "

Your Radio Bio: under 100 words

1. It's Verbal

This is the bio a radio interviewer will use to introduce you. Read it out loud to make sure it flows and isn't awkward. Is your name or your product tricky to pronounce? If there is *any* doubt, show it phonetically in brackets. For example, "Francesca Gianjorio [SAY: frahn CHESS kah gee ahn JOR ee oh]."

2. Brief

Odds are, your interview will be 10 minutes or less. You want to use most of those minutes to intrigue listeners with your insights or solutions. Keep this radio bio *under 100 words* so you don't want to squander too much of your time.

3. Hey Listen to This!

The first sentence should make listeners' ears perk up. It should relate to the problems you solve and tell them specifically what they might gain from paying attention. "If you've ever been frustrated by a boss who won't acknowledge you . . ." or "For those of you who are terrified of public speaking. . ." or "Where do you turn when you run out of conventional medical options?"

4. Most Pertinent Credential

Give your most important, pertinent credentials next. This lets the interviewer tell listeners why they should pay attention to *you* in particular on this subject.

5. Lead In

The last sentence of your radio bio can be simply, "Welcome, Dr. Kim McKean." But even better is to get the interview off to a running start: "So, Dr. McKean, you disagree with conventional wisdom when it comes to cholesterol. Why is that?" or "Dr. McKean, what is the most important thing we can do right now to lower our cholesterol?"

6. How to learn more

The interviewer should actually say this at the end of the interview. If they don't, make sure *you* do! It's simply, "To learn more, go to www.XYZ.com" This brings up an important point: Your website address needs to be *easy to remember*! A catchy phrase or a simple name that someone driving in rush hour traffic can quickly recall to track you down later.

Your Full Length Bio: This is the longer version for Ms. Media when she *really* wants to find out about you in more depth.

1. Do Everything We Said re: Your Home Page

Paragraphs should be short, 2-3 sentences. Leave out extraneous words and phrases. Write in plain English, with personality, and make sure the gems don't get hidden.

2. Juicy

Your full length bio should have interesting tidbits (quirks, passions, etc.) that Ms. Media can use to craft a story. Where you grew up, charities you support, the fact that you ran a shrink-wrap machine to get yourself through college.

3. Brief

Though longer, your long bio still can't be *long*. More than 250 words and Ms. Media will fall asleep and check out. So pick the *most interesting* of the interesting things about you.

4. Don't Start at the Beginning

Start with who you are and what you're about *today*, your expertise, accomplishments, mission and what problems you are uniquely able to solve. In later paragraphs, you might tell the brief story of what inspired you to be who you are. You can also give a nod to your childhood if it's pertinent or interesting: "As the child of archeologists who travelled the world. . ." "Because he didn't learn to read until he was 12. . ."

5. Show Don't Tell

Rather than *telling* Ms. Media that you or your products are brilliant and effective, *show* her: "Dr. Slate has successfully helped over 300 clients overcome their fear of flying." "Sun Lighting has brought inexpensive solar energy to over 2500 families in developing countries." "Mr. Minsk has been tapped as the keynote speaker for Toastmaster's International for 7 years running."

6. Strut Your Stuff

Bring out your awards and accolades. Tell them where you've been featured elsewhere in the media and how many books you've written. If you've been dubbed "the only trainer you'll ever need," say so. This is not the place to be humble.

7. Be Human

Let Ms. Media know about your family, where you live, your hobbies, your passions, your pets.

Day Four Action Steps:

As you do these exercises to create your bios, keep in mind that this is the *story* of you, *not* a resume. It will include facts and figures, but only those that will get Ms. Media's attention.

1. Look at Examples

Start by looking at examples of good bios. (Links to good press kit 24/7 bios?) What patterns do you see? How do they follow the guidelines above? What do you like and not like about them?

2. Edit Out the Boring Bits

Now pull up the bio you've been using for yourself, perhaps the one on your website. Highlight the parts that would be *interesting* to *Ms. Media*. These would include awards and accomplishments in your field, books you've written, places you've appeared in the media. These would *not* include your entire educational and career history. (Graduated from Stanford? Potentially interesting. Graduated from Podunk Junior College? Not so much. Worked for Richard Branson or Imelda Marcos? Interesting. Worked for your uncle? Probably not, unless he's Richard Branson.)

3. Rough Out a Long Bio

Following the guidelines above, use the highlighted parts to start roughing out your bio. Go back to previous days' action steps to remind yourself of passions, problems/solutions, quirks that you can weave in. Shoot for around 250 words. *But do not agonize over this!* For now, a rough draft is fine.

4. Rough Out a Radio Bio

Imagine an interviewer introducing you and, following the guidelines above, draft a brief (less than 100 words) radio bio. You'll be able to pull from your long bio here. Read your first draft out loud. How does it sound? Make any obvious changes. *Again, do not over-think this!* Go for a rough first draft.

5. Rough Out a Byline Bio

This is a condensed version (less than 100 words) from your long bio and might be similar to parts of your radio bio. Quickly draft your first version. Take a look and make obvious changes then let it alone.

6. Fine Tune Them

To bring your bios to the next level, set them aside for a few days. Review the guidelines above and revisit what you've written. Ask for feedback from someone who knows your work and whose opinion you value, making sure they understand the purpose of these bios and the basic structures you need to follow.

Voila! Your bios are ready to go into your online press kit! (And keep in mind, you can always tweak them down the road!)



Day 5 – Inspire Ms. Media: News & Story Ideas

Ms. Media’s audience is *insatiable*.

That means she is constantly hunting and scrambling for fresh, interesting stories and ideas to (c’mon, now, say this with me) entertain, enlighten, and educate them. As her new best friend, you could literally *save her career* if you can come up with fascinating stories and topics she can use – for which she will be very grateful.

And here’s the key: You may not be a professional journalist or editor with an eye for great news. But you have an expertise and perspective that is totally unique. You know things Ms. Media doesn’t know. You’ve got dynamite solutions to issues and problems her audience has. You are media gold!

So on this page of your press kit, you’ll give your new BFF exactly what she needs: fresh, unique story ideas. Just follow these guidelines and get inspiration from the examples in the Appendix.

1. Keep It Brief

This is a story *idea*, *not* the full story. Write a brief paragraph that peaks her curiosity with enough meat so she knows you can deliver. It should be 70 words or less, 2 or 3 sentences. Think of it like those story intro’s newscasters deliver right before they say, “News at 11:00.” (“What if you found a grizzly bear in your kitchen? With only a mop and a whistle, see how this 79-year old grandma sent a 300 lb. bear packing. News at 11:00.”)

2. Focus on the Big Six: Health, Wealth, Career, Sex, Relationships, Personal Growth

Why? Because this is what we all really care about. We want to make our lives better. Sure, we’d love to eradicate world hunger, too. But on a daily basis, we’re more concerned about making more money or improving our sex lives. Not all of your story ideas need to fall into these categories – but make sure some of them do.

3. Their Problems, Your Solutions

People are interested in solving their problems. And if you've got good solutions to those problems, they'll be interested in *you*. Focus on the aggravating, sleep-robbing problems you know people have. Make them *specific* (i.e. "How to Fit in that Bikini by Next Month" is much better than "How to Lose Weight"). Make sure your solution sounds unique.

4. Hot Topics and Trends

What's in the news lately? Gun control? Celebrity break-ups? The latest political scandal or Wall Street scam? Tackle topics everyone is talking about with a fresh perspective and unique insights.

5. Seize the Seasons

Every season has a bundle of tried and true topics to tap. Autumn? Back to school, Halloween costumes, political elections. Winter? Holiday gift giving, family gatherings, winter blues. Find a few seasonal ideas – and keep in mind, Ms. Media has to keep way ahead of the game (i.e. she begins to focus on summer vacation stories in January).

6. Juice It Up

Don't be tapioca. Be key lime pie. Forget about ketchup. Be extra-hot salsa (or at least medium-hot). Dispute the common wisdom. Be a little controversial or sassy. Throw down a challenge. Your story idea can't be same-old, same-old ho-hum. It needs to shake her up or wake her up.

7. Grab Her Attention

Begin with a snappy headline that she can't resist. Rather than "Is the Market Improving?" try something like, "Bull Market or Just Bull?" Rather than "Is Our Educational System Failing?" how about leading with, "Are We Raising a Generation of Idiots?"

8. Give Her Variety

Come up with story ideas that range over all kinds of topics for all kinds of audiences. Ms. Media may need an idea for parents or an idea for retirees. She may need something about finding your bliss or saving up to buy your first home. You can't cover every audience and every topic but give as much variety as you can.

9. Easy Peazy Structure

First: Snappy headline (i.e. “Risky is the New Safe” or “Tell Your Therapist to Take a Hike”)

Second: One sentence of the problem (“If we’re doing all the right things, how come we’re so broke?” or “Is there a way to scratch the 7-year itch without destroying your marriage?”)

Third: One sentence of your unique solution (“Dr. Lyons explains why lowering cholesterol is *not* the key to heart health -- and reveals what is.” Or “Jane Marks offers 6 tips to keep your daughter safe from sexual predators in college.”)

Day Five Action Steps:

It's time to build your story idea generating muscles! Not all of the ideas you come up with in this first pass will be brilliant. No worries! You'll definitely stumble on some very usable nuggets and you'll begin to get in the rhythm of thinking this way so that story ideas flow naturally.

Give yourself a running start by reviewing the examples in the Appendix before you begin.

1. Problem/Solution Story Ideas

Pick out *at least two* of the problem/solution combinations you created on Day 3. Quickly form each one into a story idea: Write a sentence about the problem and how people suffer with it. Write a sentence about the awesome unique solution you have for it. Cap it off with a snappy headline. Done!

2. Big 6 Ideas

Pick *at least two* of the Big 6 Issues: Health, Wealth, Career, Sex, Relationships, or Personal Growth. Follow the same format: One sentence about a problem or issue within this category. One sentence about your snazzy solution. Stunning headline. Finis!

3. Hot Topic Ideas


What hot topics are people talking about right now? Hot topics are being blasted at you from every magazine stand, every browser home page, and every TV news show. Grab at least two of those hot topics and draft a story idea for each. One sentence about *one interesting part* of the topic everyone is talking about. One sentence about your unique perspective or solution. Catchy headline. Snap!

4. Seasonal Ideas

Make a list for each of the four seasons (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn). What comes to mind when you think of each one? What holidays fall within them? How does the weather in each season affect us? When you have a few aspects, holidays or issues for each season, choose at least two of those thoughts and write them up as story ideas. One sentence about how that aspect, holiday or issue can be a problem for people. One sentence about your clever solution. Eye-popping headline. Voila!

5. Spruce Them Up

Put your story ideas aside for a day or two. Come back and pick out your favorites. Enlist your trusted friend again and get feedback on which seem most compelling. These are the beginning story ideas to populate the Story and News Ideas Page of your online press kit.



Day 6 – Leading the Interview Dance: Interview Questions

You want to lead in the interview dance – *without* being obvious. The way you'll do this is by feeding your interviewer irresistible questions to ask you.

There are interviews and there are *interviews*. Though we've all watched some guest getting grilled and chopped into pieces by a snarky show host, that's fairly rare for the type of PR you're looking for – *unless* your shtick is very controversial and you are *ready, willing and able* to bring it on!

Most of your opportunities will be venues where *the host or interviewer will look good if you look good*. Providing them fascinating questions that you can answer brilliantly is the best way for you *both* to shine.

So how do you create an irresistible interview question?

1. Do NOT Promote Yourself

What?!? Isn't that the point of all this? To promote your product or service? Yes and no – but let's focus on "no."

- 1) Your objective in a PR campaign is to *serve Ms. Media's needs*.
- 2) If you do this, Ms. Media will find opportunities to *showcase you*.
- 3) Her audience will *benefit* by your presence which is *very attractive* and when people are attracted to you.
- 4) They will automatically want whatever you have to offer. (But you will *not* be successful if you try to skip 1, 2, and 3 and go directly to #4.)

"So, why should we all run out and buy your book?" is *not* an irresistible question! But "Since you've never even attempted to write or get published before, what made you think you could do it?" just might be.

2. Be Indirect

Set yourself up to talk about your area of expertise, not just your product or service specifically. If you have an educational program, develop questions that relate to teachers,

students and parents. If you run a grief recovery program, talk about grief in general and ways to cope or process different losses. People need to be attracted and intrigued by *your expertise and insight* before they will care about your particular offering.

3. E, E & E

You know this by now: Your questions and your answers to those questions must entertain, enlighten and/or educate Ms. Media's audience. You want to be so compelling or entertaining that you become what NPR calls "a garage interview" – the interview a listener can't bear to turn off, even when they've made it home and are sitting in their own garage!

4. What's In It for Them?

Even if you're revealing fascinating tidbits from your personal history, there still has to be *something* in it for the audience. How will they be changed or better from hearing this question and its answer? What new resources will they have? What new insight or inspiration? Even if it's just giving them a few chuckles during their morning commute, you must *give them something of value*.

5. Do Inquiring Minds Really Want to Know?

Yes, I know, it's terrific that your scooter has dual brakes and front end suspension and an adjustable tiller angle -- but who cares? Rather than, "What makes your scooter superior to others on the market?" how about, "If I buy a scooter for my grandma, how can I be sure she'll be safe using it?" *That's* a question someone would care about — and an answer people want to hear!

6. Ruffle Some Feathers

Bringing up a controversial topic or taking an unusual stance on something makes the audience perk up their ears. It's not about being nasty or obnoxious. It's about adding a little spice or drama. Compare "What can parents do better to teach kids about money?" to "How are most modern parents sabotaging their kids' ability to handle money?" Or how about, "What makes your personal growth workshops so effective?" versus, "Where do you think most personal growth programs have missed the boat?"

7. Get Real, Get Personal

Theory is fine but most of us relate better to real life examples. Rather than “How does your therapy treat fear of flying?” try something like, “Can you tell us about a particularly difficult case of fear of flying that you worked with?” Using your own stories works too. Try “How has this discovery changed your life personally?” rather than “What is important about this discovery?”

8. Change It Up

Good interviewers know their audience and what their audience responds to. When developing your Interview Questions Page, make sure you have a smorgasbord of various types of questions.

9. Have Awesome Answers Ready!

The most fascination questions in the world won't do much good if you can't answer them or if your answers are just ho-hum. Make sure you have responses ready that are as juicy, delightful, entertaining, enlightening, and educational as the questions themselves!

Day Six Action Steps:

To take the lead in this interview dance, let's develop those irresistible questions. Begin by reviewing the great — and not so great — examples in the Appendix. Pay attention to which questions interest you and which bore you. Which would make you perk up your ears to hear the response?

1. Ask a Zillion Questions

Just brainstorm. Think of every question — from the brilliant to the ridiculous — that someone could ask you. What great questions have you been asked in the past about what you do? What do people ask most frequently about your work? What is the burning question you'd *love* for someone to ask? Write as many as you can as quickly as you can.

2. Find Your Sweet Spots

Which of these questions can you answer brilliantly? Which showcase your expertise or your humor or your insight? Which of these questions can you answer better than anyone else? Highlight the particular questions that will help you shine.

3. Are They Irresistible?

Judging by the 9 guidelines above, which of your questions really fit the bill? Enlist your trusted buddy again and get feedback.



Day 7 – You In Action: Submit Your Materials for Review

Ms. Media would rather not be your very first date because she knows first dates can be *very* awkward.

She would actually prefer to know that you've been around the block a few times in other media outlets. It makes her more confident that you can step up to the plate to entertain, enlighten and educate her audience.

1. Do what's obvious: spell check.

You wouldn't believe how many people forget to run spell check on their writing. It's a great first start.

2. Read it backwards.

An old publishing trick is to read copy backwards one word at a time. This way, you'll use other parts of your brain and problematic copy will jump out at you.

3. Make a party of it!

Serve up pizza and have a friend read through what you've written.

BONUS: What Is Important To The Media [The Pitch Formula]

Think of Ms. Media as your friend and pitching is no more than writing an email. Here's your cheat sheet from www.WasabiPublicity.com on the best email pitches to write Ms. Media...

SUBJECT: [Borrow a catchy headline from your favorite magazine and rewrite it here.]

Hello [Your media friend's first name]

Do you need an expert on [insert your expertise here]?

I am available [say when you're available and where you live]. ~ [Sign your first name & give phone number with area code]

WRITE YOUR SUBJECT HEADLINE AGAIN LARGE HERE

Did you read this new study [put a study, a statistic, or some kind of source material about the topic and headline you're suggesting]?

I would teach your audience: [Put three things you would teach about this topic].

- **Bullet**
- **Three**
- **Points**

My credentials are [put your bio here].

Read more about me at [put a link to your OnlinePressKit247.com here] and contact me at [put your contact information here].

About the Authors:

L. Drew Gerber is CEO of Wasabi Publicity, Inc. With business partner Michelle Tennant Nicholson, Gerber co-created www.PitchRate.com, a free media tool that connects journalists and producers with the highest rated experts. Gerber's business practices and staffing innovations have been revered by *PR Week*, *Good Morning America*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. His companies handle international PR campaigns and his staff develops online press kits for authors, speakers, and companies with Online PressKit 24/7 (www.OnlinePressKit247.com), a technology he developed for publicists.

20 Year PR Veteran and co-owner of Wasabi Publicity, **Michelle Tennant Nicholson** has seen PR transition from typewriters to Twitter. Called a five star publicist by *Good Morning America's* Mable Chan, Michelle specializes in international PR working regularly with the likes of *Oprah*, *Larry King*, *BBC*, *The Today Show*, and all major media. Recently she secured *Dr. Phil* for a client only 8 hours after signing the contract. Follow her PR blog, www.StorytellerToTheMedia.com, where she teaches tips from the trade.



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Next Steps...

Now that you have completed your winning press kit, what comes next? Schedule a call with me!

I can address any questions you've had while writing your press kit, and we can discuss affordable ways to have your press kit uploaded online. You've done the work, now it's time to start getting the media leads you deserve!



Drew Gerber, CEO
Wasabi Publicity, Inc.

Choose a time