

At HAWRAF, [we get a lot of press](#). So much, in fact, that many people ask us how we do it. They reach out to us and say things like, “Hey, how did you get so much press? Did you pay for that?” So, we’re making this document so that we can share it with you, too, and tell you how we get so much press.

Congrats on all of the ongoing studio launch press. Seems like you all are doing something right.

Contrary to popular belief, this is not due to us making really, really fantastic work ([although we do](#)) and then a journalist discovering us. This is from us sending intentional and thoughtful emails to lots and lots of people.

Let’s start at the beginning: **Why do you want press?**

Press is great for a few things, but not all the things you think it might be good for. **Press has never led to new clients or opportunities for us.** It has, however, been great for:

- 1.) Making everyone on our team feel happy and appreciated,
- 2.) Validating the studio to potential clients who search for us online to make sure we’re not a millennial Ponzi scheme, and
- 3.) Allowing us to contribute to a larger narrative around our work, discuss why we do what we do, and hopefully inspire someone else (usually in our own industry).

Ok, so now that we’ve acknowledged that press is unlikely to bring you new clients, let’s talk about how to get it. **First, you need to have a story.** Ideally, your story is both **timely and culturally relevant**. The easiest example of this is that it just launched (or, better yet, is launching in 2+ weeks, so a journalist has time to write the story and plan it out within their publishing schedule). Better yet, you’re launching your project on a significant date (i.e. an open-source project on the anniversary of some important date in open-source history), further weighting that date’s importance and tying your story to a larger narrative.

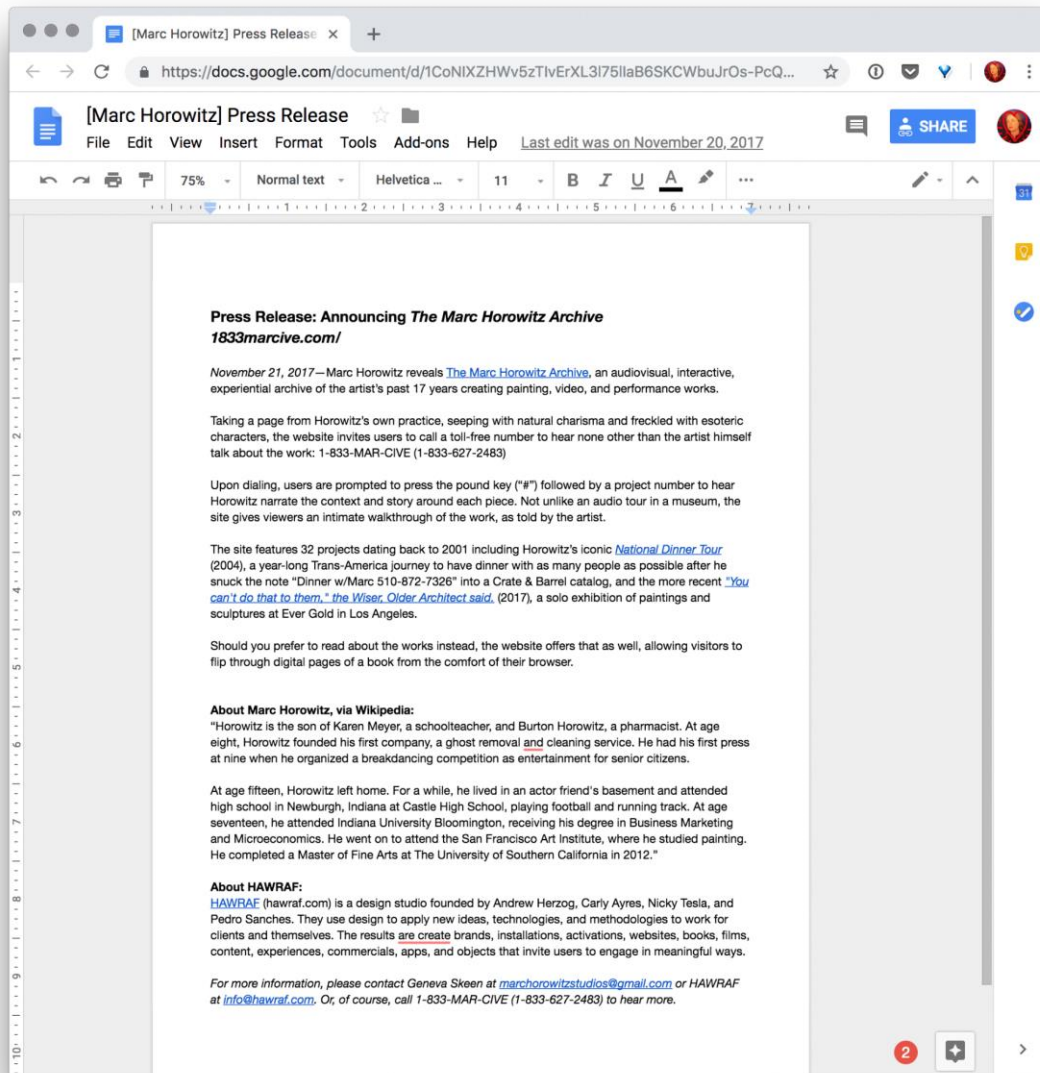
Your story does not need to be timely and culturally relevant, but it helps. Perhaps you need press about yourself for a visa, award, or another purpose. **Human interest stories tend to be the exception to this rule**, as people like to read about other people. Maybe your birthday is coming up? Or you just started a new job? Or won an award? These are other examples of things that could make your story [newsworthy](#).

Write a press release. Once you have a story that seems newsworthy, a good place to start is by writing it out. There are [a lot](#) of [examples online](#) for [how](#) to [write](#) a [press release](#). You should look at those samples and choose one that fits your needs best. I’d say the most important thing here is to share:

- Short, catchy headline
- Story! What’s is it? Why does it matter? Tell them as quickly as possible before they lose interest and exit this tab / email / et cetera.
- Contact information
- Quotes from people involved

Ideally, this document is enough for a journalist to decide whether they want to write about this. If not, it’s unlikely that they’ll follow up with you for more information, so you need to shoot your shot. A great press release should have enough information to write the article, and if they have additional questions, they can follow up for more.

Here's an example of one we did for a website we launched for artist Marc Horowitz:



Once you've written a press release— read it. Does it make sense? Maybe have someone else read it too, for safe measure. Does it make sense to them?

Format-wise, we like to export this as a .pdf, as it's really hard for an email client to fuck up a .pdf and most computers have the tools natively to read them easily (as opposed to other word processing software).

If you have links, make sure they work. For good measure and to make this as fool-proof as possible, we like to type out any links and make really long ones into bit.ly links.

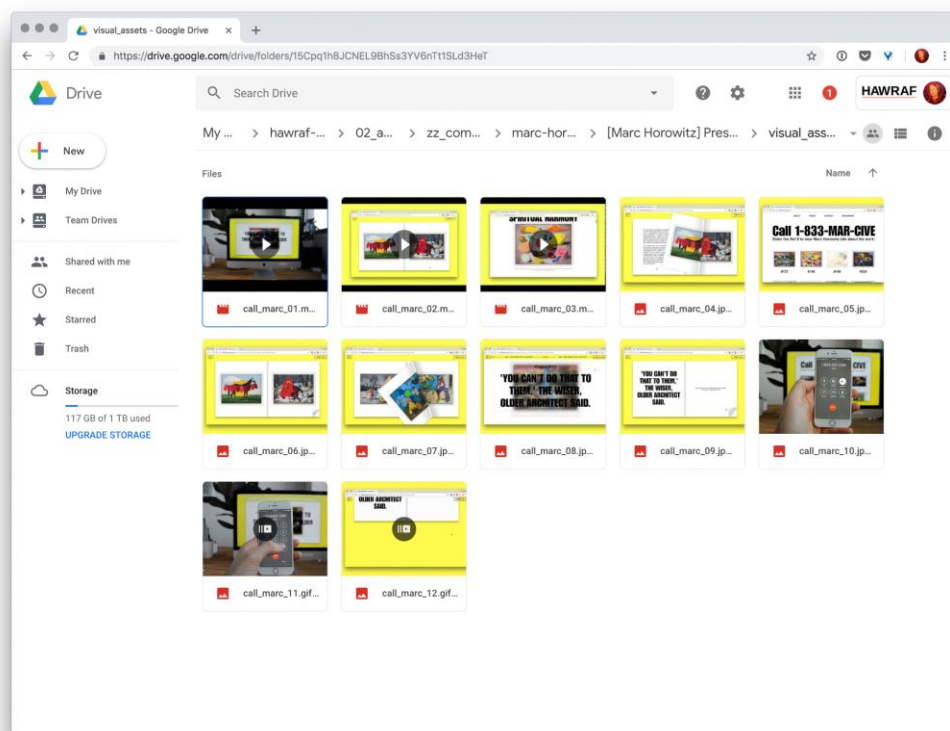
Try to keep your entire press release to one page. If they want more information, they should have the tools to contact you (also on the press release).

Once that's good to go, **start collecting or creating visual assets to accompany your story**. Do you have photos or, if it's a profile—headshots? If it's digital, do you have a screen-recording of the experience? Journalists are, of course, totally capable of finding or creating images, but 1.) this makes it easier for them, and 2.) allows you to have a bit more control over what that final narrative you're putting out into the world looks like.

Depending on the publication, many are incredibly focused on visuals to the point where it can make or break whether they'll even cover something. Videos are bonus points. We like to share a variety of formats, including those specifically formatted for Instagram. (I know, forgive us.)

We like to put together a publicly accessible folder with a press release and visual assets. For very long share links, we'll make a short URL (bit.ly) to make it easier to type out and share (you can also use that to track clicks, which *could* be a good way to test the effectiveness of your email pitch, but we don't pay attention to that).

In the case of the above site for Marc Horowitz, that looked something like this:



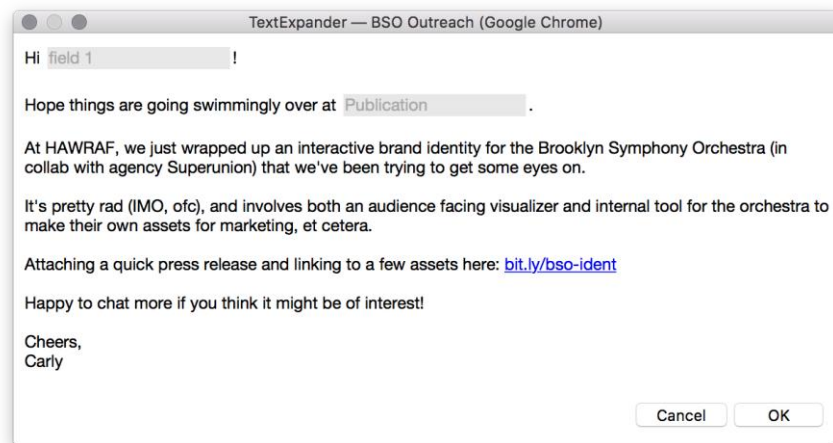
Once you've assembled your story and visual assets, it's time to share your story with someone who can write about it. Ask yourself, who do you want to read it? What are they reading? Where do they go for information? **Make a list of publications that you would like to be featured in.** Then, go to those publications. **Look for articles that are similar to your story** in terms of subject-matter or other relevance and **then look at who wrote them.**

At many publications, certain writers cover subject-related beats and you'll find them through this exercise. Maybe your story is about a website for an artist. The writer who'd most likely write your story probably covers the intersection of art and technology. They've likely covered those topics before. And, chances are, they'll do it again.

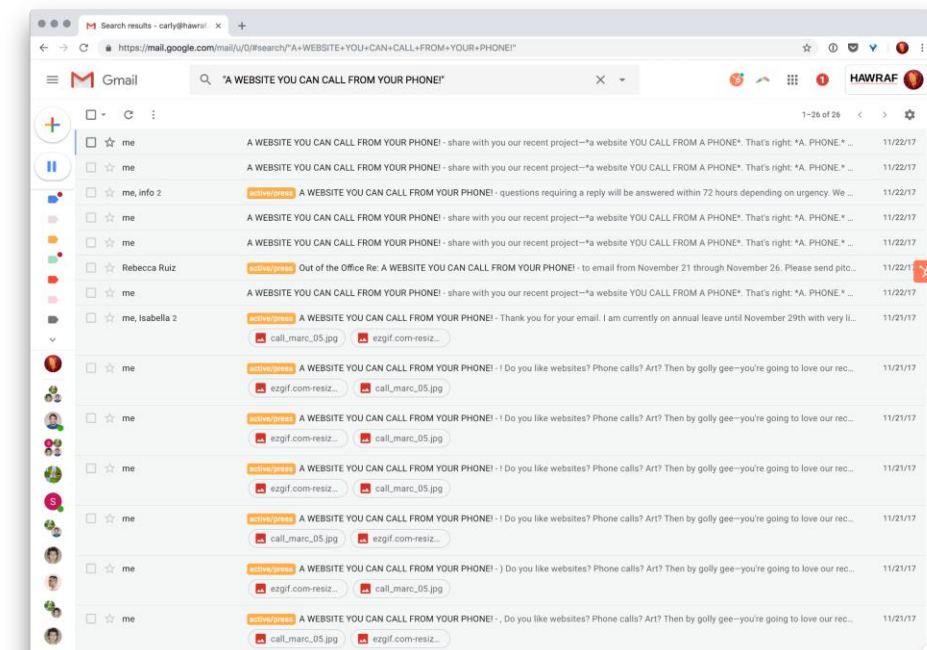
Many publications have author pages, where you can find contact information for a specific writer, or perhaps an address for a specific subject-matter, or maybe just an email for the entire publication. The more pointed you can be in your outreach, the more likely you are to reach a real, live human, and the more likely your email is to be read.

Now, **you're going to need to write an email.** The best pitches are ones where you can be like, *'Hey Dave, I saw you wrote about [x], which I looooooved—and seemed very similar to [this thing I'm doing], so I wanted to share it with you.'* It shows that you're not just blasting a zillion press contacts, and is ideally authentic and genuine, which you can imagine is better for a variety of reasons.

Like any email, try to keep it short and sweet. Keep in mind that the person on the other end is also human (like yourself), and probably hates long, confusing emails (like yourself). Here's one we sent for another launch:



As you may notice, we use [TextExpander](#), which is super useful if you're sending a lot of emails (which, you should be). Your outbox might even look like this:



Other tips:

- News cycles are fast, so **timeliness and relevance are key**. Few folks care if you launched a project a week ago, and in another week— it’s unlikely anybody will care at all. (Sorry.)
- Most publications have a queue of **articles planned in advance**, so depending on the interest level of your project and your timeliness in sharing it, they’ll either need to wedge yours in there or can plan accordingly and get you in that queue ahead of time, ideally timed around your launch or some other important date. The latter is ideal.
- Sometimes you can offer a publication **“first right” to publish**, which gives them the advantage of your story first, and then you have to hold off on sharing with other publications until a later date. This is mostly for big launches, and major players, but can be a compelling negotiation thing.
- If you’re incredibly tech-savvy, I would recommend drafting up several emails and **queuing** them in batches (we use [Boomerang](#) for this) around when you plan to release your story into the world.

That’s it! Please let me know if you stumble upon an error here, or have any feedback.

Hope this is helpful.

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