



# Media Readiness Pack

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An industry insider's guide  
for business managers and  
entrepreneurs who want to  
secure quality media publicity  
for their businesses  
– *without spending a fortune*



**By Jonathon Walsh, Business Grow**

**Professional writing, editing and business promotion services**

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## Note about the author

**Jonathon Walsh** is a professional writer, editor and director of **Business Grow**, an innovative Tokyo-based company specializing in providing professional writing, editing and business promotion services to Japanese and foreign companies.

Walsh has worked on a freelance and in-house basis for 7 magazines in Japan and has had 5 books, more than 350 articles and 12 cover stories printed in 17 media in 4 countries. Walsh's on-the-ground experience and insider knowledge of Japan's publishing industry coupled with the many valuable contacts, tips and information he has gleaned are the primary source of knowledge behind this Media Readiness Pack.

## Business Grow provides the following services

- In-house and promotional newsletters and articles
- Business biographies, promotional faxes, press releases
- Customized innovative marketing tools and turnkey strategies
- Business promotion throughout Japan's foreign community
- Professional editing, multilingual translation services
- Website text creation, copywriting services



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**Business Grow has provided writing/editing services either directly or indirectly to:**

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# Contents

What the Media Readiness Pack will do for you	4
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## Section 1: PREPARE – How to prepare your business to be published

Are you ready to be published?	5
Exploding opportunities	6
What's your story? – Discover your sales points	6
Sales Points: The final analysis	7
What you need to provide to an editor in order for them to write an article about your business	8
Creating a Press Kit	9
Sample Press Kit	10-14
Additional Press Kit components	15
How to prepare business summaries	16
How to prepare business sound bites	18
How to prepare testimonials about your business	19
How to obtain testimonials	20
How to be prepared to supply your Press Kit to an editor/writer – in an instant	20
Special Offers from Business Grow Affiliates	21

## Section 2: PROACTIVE – How to get proactive and market your business to an editor

Identify your target media	22
What are editors and writers looking for?	24
What makes a marketable story?	24
How to send an article pitch to an editor	25
Types of introduction letter	26
Sample article pitch letter	28
Sample article submission letter	29
The power of being media friendly	30
What to do once you are published	30

## What the Media Readiness Pack (MRP) will do for you

The prime purpose of the Media Readiness Pack is to teach and inform business managers, media executives, entrepreneurs, and anyone interested in gaining valuable publicity for their businesses in the art of getting published **and** generating greater publicity – *without spending a fortune*.

**The MRP is structured into 2 sections:**

1. **PREPARE** – Describes how to prepare your business to be published should an editor call.
2. **PROACTIVE** – Outlines how you can proactively promote your business to an editor.

You will also receive tips from an industry insider that can give you the edge when marketing your business.

**Fortunately, you don't need to pay huge amounts of money to an advertising agency to promote your business** – you just need a little insider knowledge and some solid, clear-cut advice to point you in the right direction – **and that is what the MRP provides.**

Not only can insider information position you ahead of the majority of other companies, but actioning it can quickly help you boost the credibility of your business *and* present you with opportunities you never had before to leverage publicity and gain extra business.

***Let's get started....***

## SECTION 1

# Prepare

## Are you ready to be published?

Many companies from tiny start-ups to large multinationals are simply not prepared to be published. As a result, a large number of these businesses miss the chance to have key information about their activities – *potentially leading to increased sales* – disseminated to thousands of potential customers.

**Besides having news suitable for publishing, preparation can be critical to your company receiving exposure through the media.** This is because even if your public relations department does have facts, figures and photos on hand, if they are not in an immediately usable format to meet an editor's strict requirements, a potentially valuable opportunity – and sales – may be lost forever. This may well mean that pro-active businesses – possibly including your competition – that do have effective media promotion strategies and immediately usable media-friendly information, get published instead.

**Here is an example of how Business Grow has successfully promoted a foreign-managed business throughout the Japanese and foreign business communities in Japan –**

## Getting published: CASE STUDY

**COMPANY:** Oak Lawn Marketing (OLM; also runs the 'Shop Japan' infomercial shopping channel).

**CHALLENGE:** Promote OLM to the foreign and Japanese communities in Japan.

**SOLUTION:** In order to promote Japan's largest infomercial company, Business Grow requested and received all necessary company information, images and graphics from OLM's PR department. Business Grow then interviewed key staff, wrote articles and distributed them to a bilingual Japanese/English magazine and a foreign entrepreneur-focused organization. Business Grow also arranged for OLM's president to be interviewed for a 50+ page bilingual article in a magazine targeted at Japanese business professionals. OLM was well prepared to be published and promptly supplied all the required information and graphics on time and to specifications.

**OUTCOME:** OLM was promoted to 85,000+ potential customers in both the foreign and Japanese markets.

## Exploding opportunities

The explosion of the Internet into our lives has created many exciting opportunities for people to get published and spread the good word about their businesses. The options are now widely known and include magazines and newspapers, websites, blogs, forums, business and social networking websites, industry and sector-specific organizations, and more.

But while many more options now exist for companies to get published, it is still crucial for business managers to:

- 1/ Be aware of the options available to them
- 2/ Know how to approach editors in order to get their story published, and
- 3/ Be fully prepared to supply all necessary information and other required components to an editor to enable them to craft a customer-winning article about their business.

## What's your story? – Discover your sales points

There's magic to having a well-written article published about your business. However, to reach this stage, it is, of course, **imperative** that you have news that is worthy of an editor's time and resources to publish.

**How can you identify your news?** The following investigative process will help you pinpoint key factors about your business that can be presented to an editor:

### Discover your sales points

**This is a key step in the process of getting published. To make your business stand out above the multitude of others, you need to have sales points. Sales points are facts and factors that make your business stand out** – they identify your 'edge' and are very often the reason an editor will pick up the phone and call you to request an interview.

As an example, a shoe shop that just sells shoes probably isn't worth publicizing, but a shoe shop selling biodegradable shoes containing built in deodorizers, a satellite tracker so you never lose them and where \$5 from each sale is donated to charity – that's a sales point!

Perhaps you will have already highlighted sales points in your business plan, but if not, here are some questions that will help you identify them.

- **What key points do you believe separate your business from your competition?**  
Start by listing some attention-grabbing topics that come to mind about your business. These might be recent product launches, awards you have won, announcements, cutting-edge technology, an area where sales are dramatically increasing, methods you have used to overcome large or overwhelming odds, successful new strategies, etc.

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## How to prepare business sound bites

As opposed to business summaries, sound bites are fact-packed comments used to describe other areas of your business and/or operations.

### Why are sound bites important?

**Sound bites** are important because they can be directly inserted into an article with minimal effort on the part of the writer. This makes the writer's job easier and gives them more time to craft a great article about your business quickly and efficiently rather than scramble around hunting for facts and figures. Sound bites – like sample sound bite 1 (below) about a company's design concept – are generally written in the third person. This means that the text sounds like it is being narrated by a person unrelated to the subject.

### Sample sound bite I

Emphasizing functionality over form, company founder Michael Smith, an industrial designer who with his research team has developed products that have achieved sales of over \$10 billion worldwide, outlined a key concept for producing great products: "Design is not about the way a product looks, but the way it works."

### Sample sound bite II

The 20-member team has a simple 3-step plan to operate their business: Firstly, they identify Japanese companies that they believe could benefit from professional SEO services. Secondly, they support those businesses by providing them access to affordable and effective resources (i.e. training and manuals). And lastly, they promote those businesses through a series of e-mail marketing campaigns and PR consulting services.

### Sample sound bite III

"We started ABC Company with zero in the bank, and for the first year, the only time we made any money was when we made a sale," Smith explains. "And even that wasn't completely true, because making a sale doesn't automatically mean money in the bank. What made money was when we were paid for a sale, so I think one of the important lessons, particularly for any new business, is understanding this, and that it is definitely in your interests to be really hard on your customers at first when you are a small company and encourage them to pay you as quickly as possible."

Sound bites like the ones above are great as they tell the editor a lot about the business in a short, easy-to-read format.

## SECTION 2

# Proactive

One of the most effective ways to get published and subsequently increase sales is to **get proactive** and tell the world about your business.

**The bottom line is simple:** if an editor doesn't know about you or your business, they will never publish an article about you.

Your mission is simple – **tell them about your business.**

## Identify your target media

**It is realistic to assume that due to the busy, deadline-packed nature of the publishing industry, most editors have little or no spare time.**

It is also useful to note that many newspaper, magazine and website editors will instruct their in-house staff or freelance writers to search for interesting stories and subjects to write about. One of the aims of the MRP, however, is to do exactly the opposite – *tell them about the stories and break the news to them.*

**Do not assume that an editor will contact you directly.** There is a very small chance of this happening unless your company is relatively well known in the marketplace or is engaged in activities that have caught a reporter's attention.

**The first step to getting your business published (after determining your sales points) is to decide which media you would like you or your business to be featured in. Is it:**

- A newspaper
- A magazine
- A popular industry website
- A special interest website or organization
- Members of specific industry groups

Make a list of publications, websites or industry groups that you want exposure in. Take into account that it is usually best to carefully consider media that contain the greatest number of your target customers, not just the most popular media of the day.



## Insider's Tip

### Focus on the Web first

While there is always limited space in printed media, **there is far more space available for publishing articles and news in online media** such as websites and e-newsletters. This makes these media a very attractive medium that you should seriously consider leveraging.

Being published online is not only generally easier than securing publicity in printed media, but it should also provide you with a fair amount of credibility, and act as a stepping stone to further publicity.

**There are many kinds of websites that accept articles. Here is a selection:**

- Chambers of commerce
- Sector-specific websites (ie: an online forum for marketing professionals)
- Industry groups (such as entrepreneur, women's, IT sites, etc.)
- Forum websites
- News websites
- General websites (such as country information websites), etc.

**When you are considering target media, look at them through the filter of:**

- How does my business news fit with their target audience?
- How will the target audience benefit from my story?
- Will being published in this particular media bring the benefits I expect to my company?
- Even go as far as to ask yourself: "Who cares?"

## The power of being media friendly

One of the keys to getting published is to be prompt and prepared.

If an editor contacts you, always be polite in your correspondence, be prompt and supply them with whatever they ask for as quickly as possible.

Doing this will dramatically increase the chances an editor or writer will write a story about you, and they will be far more likely to react favorably in future to any suggestions or submissions they receive from you.

## What to do once you are published

**Should you be published, here are some ways to leverage your success:**

- Post the article on your website and add a note (“Published in [name of media]”)
- Print the article and insert it into your Press Kits
- Add a mention of the article and a link to it in your e-mail correspondence to clients
- Add a mention of the article and a link to it in your press releases.

**NOTE:** In all cases, request the permission of the writer before you use their article(s) for your own purposes.

### **Congratulations!**

You should now have a good understanding of how to market your business to the media **and** how to self market your company to potential client companies.

We hope the information contained in the Media Readiness Pack contributes to the growth of your company for years to come.