

WRITE THE GOOD FIGHT • ATLANTA



GOOD PRESS

The whole method for earning attention you cannot buy.
From idea to execution, in seven steps, with the receipts to
prove it works. Fillable, printable, and free.

BY BRANDON GEORGE • FREE • NO SIGNUP • WRITETHEGOODFIGHT.COM

Made of free 1s and 0s. Worth considerably more.

THE PREMISE

THINK LIKE A REPORTER.

There is one secret to getting attention you did not pay for. No budget makes up for missing it. No retainer buys you out of it. I have run it for twenty years, on everything from a chest wax to a Nasdaq relaunch, and it fits in the four words above.

Before you picture somebody with a press badge: a reporter, today, is anyone with a feed. The newsroom scattered into 200 million people who feed an audience on a schedule, then all the way down to everybody, because anyone with a share button files to the feed their friends actually trust. That is where the world gets its news now. Not from a front page. From feeds. And the feeds are fed by algorithms, whether we like it or not.

So thinking like a reporter is not a nostalgia act. It is the discipline of reading your own thing the way the feed will read it, and nobody can do that from the inside. Everybody is the model train guy about their own work. Every founder. Every owner. Every client I have ever loved. Me, about my own website.

Here is the trade nobody explains. Everyone with an audience is in the same business, and it is not the helping-you business. It is the filling-tomorrow business. The beat reporter has a hole in tomorrow's page. The creator has a feed that starts empty every morning. Your customer has a group chat waiting for something worth forwarding. Show up as one more ad and you are spam. Show up with the thing that fills tomorrow and you are the best part of their day. The difference is who the sentence was written for. And every story answers to two editors now. The human deciding whether you are worth repeating, and the machine deciding whether the human ever sees you.

So the question driving every step here is never how do I get press. It is this: what can I do, at this step, that makes it more useful to the person with the audience? And today, that is everyone.

Good Press adapts a 2007 newsworthiness framework from publicityinsider.com and Kevin Allocca's 2011 virality frame. The frameworks are borrowed and credited. The merger into one system, and its modernization for this era, are Brandon George's own work, run for two decades through every platform shift. The age is the credential.

1

WRITE THE HEADLINE FIRST

01

Before you make the thing, write the headline about the thing. Not a working title. A real one, in a newspaper's voice, about the event that has not happened yet. A feed calls the same sentence a hook, so it pays twice.

If you cannot write a headline a stranger would click, you do not have it yet. Finding that out costs you an afternoon instead of a budget. This is the single highest-leverage hour in any project.

DO THIS

One sentence, in their words, not yours. LOCAL SYNAGOGUE PLANS FUNDRAISER TO HONOR RABBI is your press release. RABBI RECOGNIZED FOR LIFETIME OF SERVICE is their headline. The difference is whose interests the sentence serves. Write yours below, before you build anything.

YOUR HEADLINE, IN THEIR WORDS • TYPE HERE OR PRINT AND WRITE

Hard to fill in? Good. That is the system working. The next two steps find the fact your headline is hiding in.

2

RUN THE FOURTEEN

02

One attribute of your thing at a time, honestly, the way a stranger scrolling past you would. Check what is honestly true. You need one honest yes. Two is a campaign.

- ☐ **Is it timely?**
What was news last week is wallpaper this week.
- ☐ **Is it innovative?**
A genuinely fresh approach to a real need.
- ☐ **Is it unusual or different?**
If there are ten like it, what is true of yours and nothing else?
- ☐ **Will it change something?**
For your customers, or for your community.
- ☐ **Could it affect public health or safety?**
The bar is real effect, not implied concern.
- ☐ **Could it affect the local economy?**
A small business expanding is real news in a small place.
- ☐ **Has it never been done before?**
Anywhere, or just never here. Both count.
- ☐ **If it has been done, why is it different this time?**
Different has to be nameable in one clause.
- ☐ **Does it tie to something already in the news?**
Attach to a moving train rather than building one.
- ☐ **Does it tie to a trend?**
A trend a reporter is already writing about. Not one you named.
- ☐ **Does it tie to a season or a holiday?**
The cheapest calendar in the world, and almost nobody uses it.
- ☐ **Is it information that did not exist before?**
A survey, a study, a count nobody had run.
- ☐ **Does it have emotional appeal?**
Moving, funny, or inspiring. Pick one and commit.
- ☐ **Does it help someone decide, or avoid a serious mistake?**
Usefulness is the most underrated hook there is.

The questions never mention a channel. On purpose. A story that clears them satisfies both of your editors, the human and the algorithm.

PREFER SOFTWARE? RUN IT LIVE, FREE: [WRITETHEGOODFIGHT.COM/HOOK-CHECK](https://www.writethegoodfight.com/hook-check)

3

SCORE IT IN FOUR BUCKETS

03

Rate every checked answer against the only scale that matters: would a stranger with an audience actually use this?

**NO DICE**

Not newsworthy. Too common, too promotional, too boring.

**INSIDE STUFF**

Real to your industry or your members. Not to anyone else.

**GETTING THERE**

Interesting. Not meaty enough on its own.

**STOP THE PRESSES**

The thing a journalist eats.

Most lists come back four NO DICE and a GETTING THERE. That is not a failure. That is a starting position. Combine the survivors into one tighter idea and run the fourteen again. This is the step everybody skips, and it is the step that works.

THE SURVIVORS, COMBINED INTO ONE TIGHTER IDEA

THE VERDICT

One honest yes is a story. Two is a campaign. All NO DICE means change the thing, not the press release, and learning that today is the entire value of this page.

4

DESIGN THE SPREAD

04

Getting covered and getting spread are different jobs. Five reasons things travel, and both editors reward every one of them. The human hits share, and the algorithm follows the humans. Check the two you will deliberately build in before you spend a dollar.

- ☐ **Tastemakers.** Reach the eleven people who can reach a million. The first tastemaker is now an algorithm, and niche curators have never been cheaper.
- ☐ **Participation.** Leave the audience a move to make. Enjoyment ends. Participation compounds, and the platforms now pay for it.
- ☐ **Unexpectedness.** Surprising beats good. Now it has to beat infinite.
- ☐ **What is already popular.** Animals, talent, funny, celebrities, nerdy, remixes, drama, memes. The list has not moved in fourteen years. It is a map of heads, not formats.
- ☐ **Visible cost.** Nobody shares a claim. People share proof that somebody paid. Pain. Risk. Sleep. Dignity. Machines made polish free, so cost is the one signal left that cannot be faked. If your idea costs nothing visible, add the cost before you add the budget.

The fifth is the one every case on writethegoodfight.com runs on, and the one your competitors will refuse to pay. That is exactly why it works.

5

WRITE IT DOWN

05

Once you have the angle, the writing is a solved problem. Five parts, in order. This is also the shape of a post that travels, so write it once and it works everywhere.

The headline. The most interesting thing, in the fewest words, in their voice. You wrote it in Step 1. Sharpen it against your survivors.

The deck. One line under it that flushes out the angle without stepping on the drama. Almost everybody skips this. It is the most useful line in the document.

The lede. Who, what, when, where, how. If they read only this, they could start writing. No hype, no sell, no throat-clearing.

The support. Everything backing the claims you just made. A quote from someone with standing beats another adjective.

The boilerplate. A standard block about who you are, reused every time, sitting right above the ###.

THE RULES

Kill breakthrough, unique, state-of-the-art, revolutionary, and every one of their cousins. Write from the journalist's side. Never I or we outside a quote. Shorter is better. Two pages is fine. One page is better.

6

MAKE THE APPROACH

06

The best angle in the world dies against bad manners. The manners have not changed in twenty years. The channels have. When Muck Rack asked 1,890 working journalists how they want to be approached, they answered plainly. Your pre-flight checklist:

- ☐ One person, one email, chosen because you read their work. No mail-merge.
- ☐ You have read their last five pieces, and this story fits what they cover.
- ☐ Under three hundred words. Headline, deck, and the offer of more.
- ☐ Sent Tuesday morning, not Friday afternoon.
- ☐ No cold call. The phone call is what the fax machine was.
- ☐ It is a story, not an ad. Nobody's audience exists to publicise you.
- ☐ Creators are press. Same fourteen, same manners. Their editor is their audience, and that editor is meaner than any city desk.

7

FOLLOW THROUGH

07

Follow up once. Maybe twice. Three to six days apart, then stop. Silence is an answer, and pestering turns a maybe into a never. The moment they ask for more, have it ready and send it immediately. After that, checking in is not rude. It is the job.

PITCHED TO

SENT

FOLLOW UP ON

THE RUN SHEET • ONE PAGE, ONE IDEA, START TO SENT

RUN SHEET.

THE IDEA, IN ONE SENTENCE

THE HEADLINE A STRANGER WOULD CLICK

THE FOURTEEN • CHECK YOUR HONEST YESES

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Timely | ☐ Innovative |
| ☐ Unusual or different | ☐ Changes something |
| ☐ Public health or safety | ☐ Local economy |
| ☐ Never been done | ☐ Different this time |
| ☐ Ties to the news | ☐ Ties to a trend |
| ☐ Season or holiday | ☐ New information |
| ☐ Emotional appeal | ☐ Helps someone decide |

THE TWO SPREAD REASONS I WILL BUILD IN

THE VISIBLE COST I WILL PAY

THE ONE PERSON WITH THE AUDIENCE

SENT • FOLLOW UP DATES

THE RULES, COMPRESSED

One honest yes is a story. Two is a campaign. Under three hundred words. Tuesday morning. One follow-up, maybe two, then stop.

THE RECEIPTS

THIS SYSTEM RAN EVERY CASE ON THE SITE.

- A fake sign company preceded a governor's veto. Covered by NBC, CBS, AdAge and the AJC.
- A student with a camera and no money reached the front page of The New York Times.
- A loyalty program stopped counting and started telling stories. Mentions up 278% in a year.
- A repositioned company was acquired for \$350 million, described in the language the relaunch wrote.
- A pitch walked in with a finished TV spot produced in 48 hours. The account, won.
- A barber's chair raised over \$1,000 for charity and put Chris Webber in the seat.

None of it had a media budget. All of it is documented, with sources you can check, at writethegoodfight.com

THE DOOR

Run this yourself. That is what it is for, and most of it costs you nothing but honesty and an afternoon. If you would rather hand me the thing and have me run it, that is the other door.

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Brandon George is a creative director and copywriter in Atlanta. Two decades of making words do the work that money usually does, for Delta, Coca-Cola, Chick-fil-A, the United States Marine Corps, NBC, and a governor who changed his mind. Good Press is his method. Hook Check is its free tool. This file is yours to keep, print, and mark up.

All hustle. All heart. Always.

