THE PRESS PLAYBOOK

How to Get Featured in Major Press

The exact system I use to get founders into Forbes, Entrepreneur, Nasdaq, USA Today and beyond — how the industry really works behind the curtain, and why most people never crack it on their own.

FORBES · ENTREPRENEUR · NASDAQ · USA TODAY

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FIRST, WHY LISTEN TO ME

I closed a $20,000 deal walking through my hallway.

I wasn't even trying to. I was in medical school. I'd just spent weeks figuring out how to get *myself* featured in Forbes — and I'd cracked it.

Walking out of my building, a man was on the phone saying he needed to get his company into Forbes. I told him I could actually do it. He hung up. Two days later he wired me $20,000.

That was the moment it clicked: **press is the one credibility asset people will pay almost anything for** — and almost no one knows how to get it. I did $200,000 in sales the next summer doing exactly this, while still in med school. Today I'm an emergency physician who still runs press for founders, creators, and brands.

$200K
in press deals in one summer

1,400+
outlets I can navigate for clients

100+
features placed for founders & brands

This playbook is the real process — not theory, not recycled blog advice. It's the same map I use every week. By the end you'll understand how the press industry actually works, how to get featured, what it really costs, and why doing it alone is harder than it looks. Use it yourself, or skip the years of trial and error and have my team run it for you.

THE LEVERAGE

Why one feature beats 100,000 followers.

Followers are rented. Press is owned. A logo bar that reads *"As featured in Forbes, Nasdaq, USA Today"* borrows the trust those institutions spent a century building and lends it to you, instantly.

> *People don't buy from who's loudest. They buy from who looks legitimate. Press is the fastest shortcut to legitimate.*

Here's what a single feature actually does — and why the ROI compounds far past the placement itself:

- → **It closes deals before the call.** Prospects who see real press arrive already half-sold. You stop convincing and start closing.
- → **It raises your price.** The identical offer, behind a Forbes byline, commands more — without changing the offer. Credibility is a pricing lever.
- → **It compounds.** One credible feature makes the next easier; outlets cite and syndicate each other, and editors take you more seriously once you've been placed.
- → **It ranks forever.** A reel disappears in 48 hours. A feature ranks on Google for years — so when someone searches your name, the first thing they see is authority.
- → **It re-frames who you are.** "Founder of a startup" and "founder featured in Forbes" describe the same person — but the market treats them completely differently.

This is why founders pay for press and not for another social-media manager. It's the highest-leverage credibility you can buy — *if* you know how it actually works. That's the rest of this playbook.

KNOW THE LANDSCAPE

The four ways you actually get featured.

Most people think "getting press" is one thing. It's four — and knowing which lever to pull for which goal is half the game.

01 Contributor & byline placements.

Publishing under a named contributor inside a major outlet. The fastest, most controllable path to a real "as featured in" — *if* you have access to the right contributor networks. Trade-off: more controllable, slightly less prestigious than fully earned editorial.

02 Earned editorial.

A journalist writes about you because your story is genuinely newsworthy. The hardest to land and the most credible — it can't be bought, only earned with the right angle, timing, and a real relationship with the writer.

03 Syndicated press releases.

A well-built release distributed across a network of outlets for reach and SEO footprint. Great for volume and search presence; weaker on prestige on its own — best used to build a base layer under the other two.

04 The stack.

The real strategy: combine all three so they reinforce each other. A release creates footprint, a contributor piece adds prestige, earned editorial seals it. Layered in the right order, they don't look like placements — they look like *momentum*.

THE SYSTEM

The five-step process, start to finish.

1 Find the angle, not the ad.

Editors don't publish promotions — they publish stories. Translate "I have a business" into something a reader cares about:

- A trend you embody or predicted
- A contrarian take backed by your results
- A surprising number, milestone, or origin story

2 Match the angle to the right outlet.

Every outlet has a lane, an audience, and a section. The same story pitched to the wrong publication dies on arrival. Map your angle to the outlet — and ideally the specific writer who covers that beat.

3 Craft the pitch like a journalist would.

Short, story-first, zero fluff. Lead with why the reader cares, not why you want coverage. The subject line decides whether it's opened; the first sentence decides whether it's read.

4 Place it through the right channel.

Contributor network, direct relationship, or distribution — chosen to fit the angle, the outlet, and the timeline. This is where access and relationships do the heavy lifting that cold strangers can't replicate.

5 Leverage the feature everywhere.

A feature you don't deploy is wasted. Logo bar on the site, the bio, the deck, the email signature, the next pitch. One placement, used relentlessly, becomes permanent credibility — and the seed for the next one.

HOW I GOT IN WITH ZERO CONTACTS

The "borrow the door" method.

When I started, I didn't know a single journalist. No PR background, no rolodex. What I had was LinkedIn and a willingness to do the unglamorous work most people skip.

Here's the exact sequence I used to get my own first features — and it still works:

→ **Find people already getting featured in your niche.** Search LinkedIn for founders, contributors, and operators in your space who already have the press you want. They've already found the doors.

→ **Reverse-engineer how they did it.** Look at which outlets they're in, who wrote about them, and what angle got them coverage. The pattern is usually visible if you look closely.

→ **Reach out leading with value, not a favor.** Don't open with "can you get me featured." Open with something genuinely useful — a substantive compliment, an intro, a relevant insight. You're starting a relationship, not begging for one.

→ **Ask the right question, not the big one.** "How did you approach getting into [outlet]?" opens doors that "can you help me get in?" slams shut.

→ **Compound every connection.** One warm contact in the press world introduces you to the next. The first door is the hardest; each one after gets easier.

How I got into Forbes — the real version.

I went to the Forbes contributor list, searched the categories that matched my story, and worked through the writers one by one. I sent **100 DMs.** A handful replied. I offered to pay one for a pitch — and he said: no need, I like your story. He published me at **no cost.** Forbes ran my words: *"It grew into something much more lucrative — opening the door for early loan repayment, investing, and additional business ventures."*

That feature took hours of finding the right angle, the right writer, and the right conversation. It worked because of the reps, not a hack. **I've been doing exactly this for clients for years** — which is why most people would rather hand it off than send their own 100 DMs.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

What press actually costs — and why.

Press isn't one price. The same word "feature" can mean $75 or $15,000, and the difference isn't random. Once you understand what drives the number, you stop overpaying and start buying placements that actually move the needle.

These are the levers that determine what any given feature is worth:

FACTOR	WHAT IT MEANS & WHY IT CHANGES THE PRICE
Domain authority	The outlet's strength in Google's eyes. Higher authority = more SEO value and prestige = higher cost.
Do-follow link	Whether the feature passes real SEO value to your site. Do-follow placements cost more because they're worth more.
Turnaround time	Same-day publication costs more than a 1–2 week window. Speed is a premium.
Indexed	Whether the piece actually shows up in search. An unindexed feature is far less valuable — and should cost far less.
Editorial vs. sponsored	Genuine editorial carries more credibility (and price) than clearly-sponsored placement. Know which you're buying.
Region & niche	National, regional, and niche outlets price differently. The "best" outlet is the one your buyers actually read.

The trap most people fall into: chasing the biggest logo at the lowest price, and ending up with an unindexed, no-follow placement that looks impressive and does nothing. **The right feature is the one that matches your goal** — credibility, SEO, or both — at a price that reflects what it truly delivers.

Navigating 1,000+ outlets and knowing which is overpriced, which is unindexed, and which actually fits your goal is the part that takes years to learn — and the part I handle for clients.

THE HARD PART

Why most people fail doing this alone.

Everything in this playbook is simple to read and brutal to execute solo. Here's where it falls apart — and every one of these is a reason founders eventually hand it off.

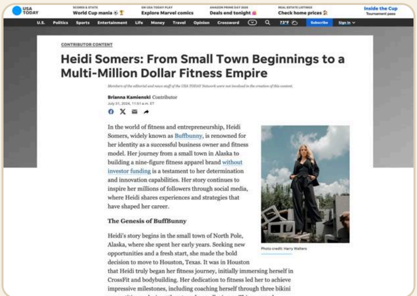
- → **They never find the angle.** They pitch their company instead of a story, so there's nothing for an editor to say yes to.
- → **They have no media contacts.** Cold-emailing journalists from a no-name address lands in the void. Access is the moat — and it takes years to build.
- → **They pitch like an ad.** Promotional language gets deleted on sight. Writing like a marketer is the fastest way to get ignored.
- → **They overpay for the wrong placement.** Without knowing the levers from the last page, they buy unindexed, no-follow features that look good and do nothing.
- → **They quit after the silence.** Press takes follow-up, reps, and timing. Most send three emails, hear nothing, and give up right before it would have worked.

> *None of this is about being smart. It's about having the angle, the access, the judgment, and the persistence — all at once. That combination is rare, and it's exactly what you pay for when you hire it out.*

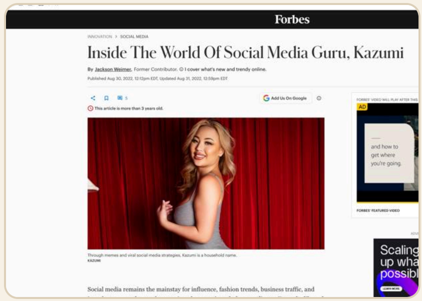
PROOF

Real placements.

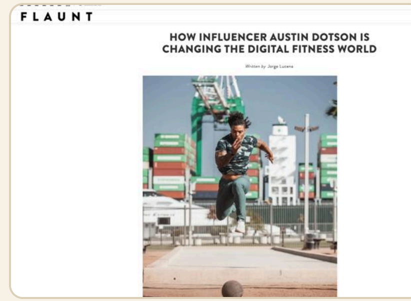
Not stock logos — actual published features, for our clients and ourselves.


Heidi Somers: From Small Town Beginnings to a Multi-Million Dollar Fitness Empire

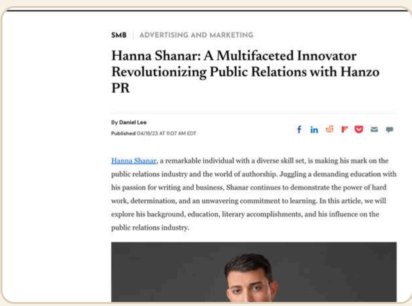
USA TODAY · BUFFBUNNY


Inside The World Of Social Media Guru, Kazumi

FORBES · KAZUMI


HOW INFLUENCER AUSTIN DOTSON IS CHANGING THE DIGITAL FITNESS WORLD

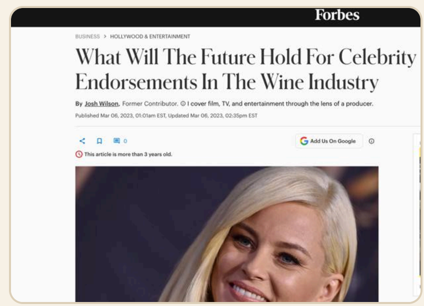
FLAUNT · AUSTIN DOTSON


Hanna Shanar: A Multifaceted Innovator Revolutionizing Public Relations with Hanzo PR

INT'L BUSINESS TIMES · HANZO PR


Airbnb Mogul Offers Insight Into How The Entertainment Industry And Others Affect The Airbnb Market

FORBES · BUSINESS


What Will The Future Hold For Celebrity Endorsements In The Wine Industry

FORBES · ENTERTAINMENT

Forbes. USA Today. Flaunt. International Business Times. Different industries, different outlets — **same system, run by the same hands.**

IT WORKS

What this looks like when it's done right.

A handful of results from running this exact system for founders and brands:

A 7-figure fitness apparel brand

Placed in **Forbes and USA Today**, turning an already-strong product into a press-backed household name in its niche.

A digital creator

Landed in **Forbes**, converting a large-but-fragile following into durable, searchable credibility.

A founder with no prior press

Featured across **multiple national outlets**, building a logo bar from zero that now closes deals on his behalf.

Different industries, same system: angle → outlet → pitch → placement → leverage. The names change. The process doesn't.

Client examples shared with permission; some details generalized to protect client privacy.

WANT IT DONE FOR YOU?

You can run this yourself.
Or I can run it for you.

You now have the real system — the process, the sourcing method, and the economics most people never see. But here's the honest truth: that Forbes feature took me *hours* — finding the story that would land, working through contributor after contributor, and navigating the conversation until one said yes. I've spent turning that into a repeatable process for clients. If you'd rather skip all of it and just show up featured, that's exactly what we do, end to end.

Book a free 15-minute press strategy call. We'll map the right angle for your brand and the outlets you can realistically land — then walk you through our retainer packages if it's a fit. Whether you work with us or not, you'll leave with a plan.

Work with me — book your call →

See packages & book: **hanzoenterprises.com** · @hannashanar