



## Episode 92

**The quickest and easiest  
way to get Press**



**Jason: [00:00]**

Hello and welcome to designer discussions with Jason, Miriam, and Maria. Today we are talking about quick and easy ways to get press.

**Intro: [00:17]**

Welcome to the designer discussions podcast with Jason, Maria, and Mirjam. Tune in each week where we talk about marketing, PR, and business advice for design professionals. So we are super excited to announce that the Marketing studio is open. We are providing simple and easy to use resources to help keep your marketing, PR, and client communication the best that it can be. Go to [DesignarDiscussions.com](https://DesignarDiscussions.com) marketing studio to get started.

**Mirjam: (00:46)**

Okay, yes. Let's talk about not just quick and easy, but the easiest and quickest way to get press for you and your interior design business. Let's take a step back and just think about why is it that you want press? I think everybody who's listening to this probably wants press. Seems like a good idea to get some press, right? But why is it that you want that? And I'd say if you distill it all down, it really is to differentiate yourself from your competition. And then if you think about what press you need for that, I often feel like designers have these impossible expectations or ambitions. It's like when you think about getting press, people think about, Oh, I want to get a feature in Architectural Digest, or I want to get featured in Alde Core. Everybody is thinking of the most high profile, usually magazines. Depending on what stage you're at in your business, that can make sense. But that only makes sense if you've already been doing PR and getting press for quite a while because those placements are very, very, very, very, very difficult to get. So that is not a good objective.



## Mirjam: (02:26)

And if you think about your ideal customer looking, they decide they want to redo their kitchen or whatever, their entire house, whatever it may be. They go online and they Google interior design businesses in the area. If they look at a few different websites from designers and one of them has a nice press portfolio with different features and different titles. It doesn't have to be AD, doesn't have to be L Decor, doesn't even have to be House Beautiful, doesn't have to be any of the really huge names. But if you have it and the other people don't, that sets you apart. And I think that's what we're talking about here. It's just to get a really robust press portfolio that you can show off on your website, on your social media, in your e newsletter, whatever marketing efforts you do for your business. And it's not the reach that the actual placements give you, but it's how you use them to enhance your credibility and target your ideal client. So that's what we're talking about, right? How you're going to differentiate yourself from your competition. And it's not as hard as it seems. And we've talked about this before, and I'm going to reference the previous episode for more details. But I want to introduce you to a couple of services and a new service that we've never talked about in this podcast that can be helpful for you in your efforts to get press. And what I call this type of PR, I call it reactive media requests. And the reason is because you are not proactively reaching out to a journalist or a media outlet without any prompting. But these are requests that are out there. These are journalists, freelancers, and editors that are working on stories, and they are looking for input. And you go out there and you find the requests that are already there, and then you provide your content for consideration, hopefully inclusion in whatever story they are working on. Maria, who's here with me, she's actually a veteran and she's done many of these requests and she can talk to us a little bit more about that as well. Because the first service that we're going to talk about and we've talked about previously is called... I call it Harrow. I hear some people call it Harrow, but really it stands for Help a Reporter Out. And it's a service that has been around for a very long time.



### Mirjam: (05:26)

Actually, I think it's been around for ever since I've been doing PR in the United States, which is probably 20 years or so. It's a service that is now owned by Cision, which is one of the big PR software companies out there. They bought it, I don't know, a few years ago, but it still runs the same way. So it seems almost a little bit antiquated, but it's the standard. It's where everybody goes. It's where a lot of journalists go to find sources. And it's where a lot of PR people and brands and small business owners like yourself can go to get media. So how it works is basically the platforms that we're talking about, their purpose is to bring together journalists who are working on stories and need content and people who are out there who are experts and who have content and who can contribute that to the story. It's almost like a dating platform for journalists and brands or business owners. So it's really handy. And the way Harrow works, Harrow is free. They have some paid options, but it's not really necessary, especially if you're starting out. But the way Harrow works is they send out three emails every day, and usually they call them queries. So the requests from the media that are in these emails are called queries. And there are a lot of them, I'd say on average, there's probably over 100 queries in each of these emails, and they come three times a day. So it's a lot of queries to look through, which is one of the downsides of it. But I will say that pretty much on a daily basis, there are queries in there that specifically ask for input from interior designers. It is rare that there is a day where there is no query that's design related. So it is a really good place to be. We did do an episode way back when, but it's still very current. It was our Episode Number 10, where I talk about how to go about, in practical terms, to submit to the request that come through Harrow. So if you're interested in doing it, definitely check that one out. So Harrow is the big one. I would say the challenge with Harrow now is that it is very well known. So there are a lot of people checking the queries, which means there are more people submitting their answers to the queries, which can make it more difficult for you to get picked up because it's like there's more competition.



### **Mirjam: (08:26)**

And it is beneficial to submit quickly. However, if you submit within, I'd say, a day or two, usually the deadlines are very short, so you usually don't even have more time than that because most of them are due the next day or two days after. Some of them are a little bit longer, but not often. But quality content is definitely key. And Maria, we can also talk about not using AI generated responses for Harrow because the journalists have caught on to that. So if you put the query in chat GPT and you generate a response and you send it, they're going to sniff it out and they're probably going to blacklist you for the rest. So share original content, share something that's of value and that portrays you in the best light and really helps the editor end their story. Maria, what do you think about HARO? You've had quite a bit of success, actually, with it. So talk a little bit about that.

### **Maria: (09:48)**

So I think it's one of those things where you're not going to be confident enough to pitch a really huge magazine right off the bat. It really is unrealistic for designers to only assume the placements they're going to get is one every five years when they have the perfect project and it's been photographed and you've submitted it to multiple publications and then getting that perfect placement. And realistically, maintaining and managing PR in a healthy way does look like submitting a lot of request to see if your project is fitting for their magazine and dealing with rejection. And honestly, HARO is like you said, it's like a dating profile. You're getting your information out there with a large group of reporters and finding out what they want to hear from you. One of the things I really love about HARO is you're constantly seeing what the newest writing content is going to be about your industry. And I find this to be very helpful for your business because then you can understand what you need to be blogging about. You can understand what you should be putting on your TikToks and your social media. It's a constant flow of ideas that you could be covering in your social media because you're already seeing what's going to be published in magazines, newspapers, and online content in the next couple of months.



**Maria: (11:48)**

This information doesn't get published the next day. They do require it within 48 hours, 24 hours, but it still takes 2-3 months for it to hit their publication. One of the things that's super great about Harrow is you get this insight, what are they looking for, what are they forecasting, what are they trending for, and they're going to have it published in 2-3 months, and you can take that information and use it to your benefit. So that's one of the things I think is super important. And then the second thing I think is super important is learning what rejection looks like and getting used to it. The first and only time you ever try to reach out to the press is with a beautiful, amazing project that you have years invested in and thousands of dollars in a photography, and you submit it to one magazine and then they say no. Then you submit it to another magazine and it takes months and then they say no. Then you submit it to another magazine and they say no. Now you're nine months into this, you've gotten a lot of rejection, it's going to wear you down. And emotionally, I think that most designers are going to find that really hard to deal with. And I think that having a resource like Harrow, where you're just writing a couple of lines about a topic, right? So someone might be reaching out and asking, because I do every January, what are the newest trends in interior design? So you're going to be responding to all these publications. I mean, you're talking 10 to 15 publications are going to ask you in January or December, what are the trends that you're going to be seeing in this next year? So as you're just pitching different things, what happens is after 15 applications, you're going to get placed at least twice, and you're going to have a lot of data and information for your business about what is the good information and how is that forward facing? So if you get picked up by one of these smaller publications that nobody else is reaching out to, you might realize that your content isn't maybe fresh enough or different enough. So if I come out the gates in 2024 talking about the trend of the white kitchen, you're not going to get picked up.

**Maria: (13:48)**

And that teaches you a lot about what people want to hear about and what they want to be seeing in your social media. And this really helps curate and craft your content by having access to what these requests are. So you don't even have to be getting the publications, and it can already be helping your business. Two, we basically learned that if you pitch eight of these horror request, you're probably going to get one. We learned that. Eight to 10, you get one. We tested it. We've gone through this. And so once you find out the average going rate for being picked up, you learn that that level of rejection isn't a reflection of who you are or what you can put together, but just.

**Mirjam: (14:29)**

The society of it. But it's also easy of rejection because it's not... They don't say no, you just don't hear anything. So it hurts less.

**Maria: (14:39)**

It does. It hurts less because you already know that they are going to be getting a lot of feedback. You're throwing together stuff within 24 hours. You're just throwing something out there. You're literally throwing something at the wall. I've had people reach back out to me and say, Hey, can you help me get research and information on how easy it is to install this? And they reach back out to you. But what's really interesting is that you start finding that you're hearing from the same publications and the same people. Well, where does that put you after two or three years of doing a horror request? You can reach back out to some of the people that have already published you and already like you and say, hey, I was just wanting to find out if you're going to be writing any articles about certain topics. I'd love to talk to you more about it. So you can start becoming their go to expert. And as Miriam said, we have also the Clotted platform that I think designers will benefit from as well. We'll get to that. We'll talk a little bit more about that. Okay. So maybe I let you go into that, but I definitely think HARO is about learning about rejection, finding out what the trends are, and three building relationships with reporters.



## Mirjam: (15:29)

Getting Press, though. There's no easier way to get published than through Harrow, especially when you start out. And at the end, I'll talk a little bit about how you can use it at different stages of your career, which can vary. But it's a great way to get started. And along the same lines, like we had both mentioned before, there is a platform called Qwoted, and it's spelled QWOTED. And it's almost like the next generation HARO. So it's basically a startup in the PR space, and it's been developed. It mostly targets PR people who represent other clients, but it's easy enough that you can also use it as a small business owner, as a brand. And we've experimented with it in my membership. It's really their purpose is to have you buy into their paid service, which runs about \$150 a month, which I find that pricey, I have to say. I find that pricey. And I've been monitoring it for a while, and it looks like there's only really a few requests that are specific to interior design a month, and you get at least two free submissions. I tried to look it up just before. I think it was three, but it's between two and three. And that doesn't sound like a lot. But the point is that a lot fewer designers and PR people who represent designers are using quoted than HARO. So the journalists that use quoted, they get a lot fewer submissions. So your chances of getting picked up are actually higher. So it's, I don't know, it may be one in three that you submit instead of one in 10. I think that ballpark hits the way that it's working right now. So it's a good platform to check out and it's easier to use in that when you set up your profile, everything is trackable. So if you have any interactions with a journalist and quoted, it gets tracked within the actual app or software. I'm not even quite sure what to call it. And they have keywords too. So it's much easier to filter out the queries that apply to you, which is a huge advantage, honestly. So it's a little bit more involved than HARO, but it's still really easy to use. And we've seen good success. So I would recommend that anybody who's really serious about wanting to get press, check it out.



**Mirjam: (19:09)**

Maybe you'll like it, maybe you won't. And just use the free submissions that they give you and then see what happens. Maria, we played with that together for a while, but you had some interactions with journalists on there, too, which is really actually fun.

**Maria: (19:21)**

So Qwoted is different than HARO. So harrow is a list of Mirjam calls me queries, and I'm going to call them request in case you don't know what that means. So it's, hey, I'm writing an article on podcast. Can you tell me how a podcast has impacted your business? And so that's a query, right? That is the request for information or reference on a topic. And it is just sent to you. They don't know who they're hearing from. They really need to spend a little bit of time doing research on learning about who you are as a person because they will reference you. They will reference who you are, what your expertise is, and what business you work for. And they may even hyperlink to your website for online press that you'll get. And so they are going to research you. So it's one more step in their game. So the reporters are having to take an extra step through HARO, help a reporter out. And Qwoted does that on the front side. So what happens is you have an online profile with a lot of information and all of that data already pre approved and up and on your profile. And so what happens is when HARO reaches out to you and says, Hey, we have a couple of publications that we think that you are qualified for. So what happens is when you respond to those publications, the reporter already knows that you are a qualified resource and that what you're giving is good quality stuff. And you will see that HARO will say, do not give us any AI generated stuff. If you are, we will block you on our platform. And so I, over unquoted, they will know if you're using AI or chat GPT type responses because they curate and care for your profile and how you are present on their platform. And since it's newer, I mean, Mirjam, what is it, about 24 months old? Yes, it's very new. There are not that many people on it. And because there's not a lot of people on it, when you join and when you have a really nice profile, you will stand out and you will get placements. And one thing that Miriam didn't mention is some of the placements that show up on Qwoted also show up on HARO. So you will see a crossover between the two.

**Maria: (22:01)**

And if you respond to it on Qwoted, you're more likely to get picked up because the platform is easier for them to use than if you just respond via HARO because they have to take an extra step. Whereas with Qwoted, Qwoted has already taken that step for them.

**Mirjam: (22:18)**

I think a lot of... Not a lot, but some journalists were experimenting with both platforms and saying, Okay, I'm going to put it here on Qwoted, and I'm going to put it on HARO, and then I'm going to see what I get more. And I see a little bit less of that. So I wouldn't only focus on Qwoted. If you're serious about getting press, I would definitely want to monitor both of those platforms, at least if you pick only one, I'd probably only do Harrow because it still has a lot more requests coming in on a daily basis. But yeah. No, but I actually I love quoted. I think that's where things are going. HARO is definitely going to have to modernize its platform if it wants to stay attractive. But it still has so much clout. It almost has a monopoly in this space still right now, and that has some leverage, but eventually that will probably grow. But that being said, it's still there and you should use it. And pretty much regardless of where you are in your business, I've seen it in my group that I've been coaching for the last couple of years. I mean, we've had really great success. There's placements from House Beautiful, Better Homes and Gardens, Forbes, the Wall Street Journal. There's really good names that show up in there. And when you show that off on your website, nobody knows how you got it. Nobody knows if there's just a one or two sentence quote in there from you or if it's a three page thing. Most people don't go into that much depth when they look you up. It's like you want to have the name recognition of these media outlets. What I would recommend is that these request... It's a great place to start out. If you're maybe a little bit insecure, you don't really know, you don't want to invest money in hiring somebody, you don't want to invest a ton of time. This is something easy, really, that's very doable and that can give you quick success, which is key because it makes you feel good and give you confidence and it'll let you build relationships like Maria said. That can be really beneficial down the road. I've also seen... And then maybe at the beginning, you're not so selective. Maybe you're going to submit two more careers.



### **Mirjam: (24:18)**

Maybe you're going to submit to media titles that don't have the clout of a house beautiful or a better home in a garden or a fort. So it doesn't really matter. You have to practice and you have to start small. And then you can start, I always say, you stack your media placements and they will only get bigger. So as you go through your PR career for your business, maybe after two, three years, you have an may have 10, 20 placements that you have, you can still keep an eye on HARO or quote it, but you're not going to submit to everything anymore. But if there's a really good one, then you jump on it and you already know how to do it. And I've seen this strategy being applied very successfully. And it's actually a great place to even place some of your projects in an indirect way because a lot of the queries are going to be about trends. And quite often they ask for photography. And I wouldn't... If you have a tier one super high profile project, don't do this first. Pitch it for a bigger placement first. But once it's been published, you can still use all the other photography that you have for these types of trends queries on HARO, and you can get probably a few more placements out of it like that. So there are strategies to use this all throughout your career, I would say.

### **Maria: (26:39)**

One thing that I appreciate about working with Miriam on helping me get through these horror request is one, she does pull only the interior design request out of these emails with hundreds. I mean, it's hundreds of requests. She does pull those, but then she also checks to see if you would even want to be published on it. There are a lot of people who have blogs that are trying to write their personal blog, and they are reaching out to try to get experts that they can fill and boost their personal blogs. There's even apps out there, and I can say this because I'm an app, there are even apps out there that are trying to circumvent the interior design industry, and that's their profile and their platform. But then they're asking for interior designers to provide quoted information on their blogs and on their website. Most interior designers say, right, so they are leveraging this platform in a way that is not as helpful for the industry, not as helpful for the end interior designer. And Miriam calls through those. She will go through and be like, oh, this is this blog, and they're just wanting blog content.

**Maria: (27:39)**

So she will help understand which ones would be... Even like she said, there's going to be some tier that you're not going to care if you get it or not, like Yahoo Finance and a couple of other ones that aren't really a big deal. It's good for SEO. And it really is a lot, and it gets repicked up and rolled back out in the future, especially if you get a higher tier one. And so she will go through and be like, these aren't worth submitting for. And there's going to be a ton where people are wanting to ask an interior designer to call information so that they can then hyperlink it to a sales page.

**Mirjam: (28:41)**

With their affiliate links, right?

**Maria: (28:44)**

So they can make a commission off a product and they can say an interior designer is telling them that these are the best things off of their website. So she does go through and check to make sure that those things aren't happening because those are the reality of the world that we live in. Sometimes people are wanting to leverage our content in a way that's not actually beneficial for us. And that's been something you do have to be aware of. And if you're not aware of it and you are looking at these hundreds and hundreds of requests, you will get burned out because you aren't getting the placements that you want. You're finding that your content is being used for them to leverage to make money. And I'm not saying any of this should be a turnoff. I'm just saying the more you can have a PR expert tell you which ones would be worth your time and which ones aren't is a great thing for any interior designer.

**Mirjam: (29:38)**

And that's a great segue because here at designer discussions, we're all about hands on tools and saving time because time is of the essence in all of our businesses. So in our marketing studio, we have a subscription for media opportunities. And it's exactly what Maria just explained. Basically, it's a Facebook group where I post all the requests that are specific for interior designers. And it's a huge, huge time saver because you don't have to read three emails every day from HARO. People who try it, they love it. They're like, Oh, my God. I never knew this could be so easy because the easiest and quickest way to get press just got a lot easier with that service. So if that's something you're interested in, we'll put the link in the show notes, but definitely go check it out and see how easy and quick it can be to get published.



### Outro: (30:57)

This was amazing information. And if you want to know more, just head over to designer discussions, Marketing studio, where you can find out more information. And we hope to hear you all here in two weeks on designer discussions. Are you ready to get serious about marketing your interior design business? Our designer discussions marketing studio offers a series of in-depth, actionable and done for you content to guide your marketing, PR and business development. We want to help you transform your business and elevate it to work with your dream clients. Go to designer discussions. Com marketing studio to get started. We hope you enjoyed this episode of designer discussions and all of the helpful information. Subscribe to our podcast, leave us a review and share it with your friends. We look forward to having you back next week. For more information on the podcast and the marketing studio, visit [DesignerDiscussions.com](https://DesignerDiscussions.com) and follow us on social media.

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