OUR STUDY

20 of 26 publications take outside articles *without a fee.*

We read what 26 publications, from The Washington Post and Harvard Business Review to Forbes and trade outlets, say on their own pages about publishing articles by outside writers.

20 of 26
accept articles from outside writers with no fee on their page; editors choose what runs

6 of 26
offer a membership or sponsorship route to publish (for 5 of them, the only route we found)

12 of 26
say in their rules that articles can't promote the author's company or products

10 of 26
want the article to be exclusive to them

Free to quote with a link

OUR STUDY · EDAMAME PR & STRATEGY RESEARCH

Which publications accept outside articles, and their rules: 26 outlets checked

KEY FINDINGS

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Short answer: Most publications still take articles from outside writers without charging: 20 of the 26 we checked have a free route, where editors decide what runs. 6 sell a membership or sponsorship that lets members publish, and for 5 of them (including Forbes, Fast Company and Entrepreneur) that is the only route for outside writers we found. The rules are strict almost everywhere: 12 ban self-promotion and 10 want the piece to be exclusive.

What we checked

We picked 26 publications founders often aim for: national news and business titles, management journals and trade outlets in technology, marketing and finance. For each, we found the page where the publication itself explains how outsiders can contribute, and recorded what it says: the route, any fee, who may write and the main rules. We only counted what the page says, and we left out outlets where we couldn't find a current page of their own. Every page is linked in the table below and in the sources.

Three ways in

Free, editors choose (20 outlets). You pitch or send a draft, and editors decide. This is how op-ed pages (The Washington Post, USA TODAY, The Guardian), management journals (Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review) and most trade outlets work. One, Business Insider, even pays writers for first-person essays.

Membership or sponsorship (6 outlets). Forbes, Fast Company, Newsweek, Entrepreneur and Rolling Stone run membership programs whose members can publish bylined articles; The New Stack ties contributed articles to a sponsorship. None of the membership pages shows a price; Entrepreneur's says the fee comes once you're accepted. Newsweek runs both: a paid Expert Forum and a free route for personal essays.

Closed (1). TechCrunch says it no longer accepts guest columns at all.



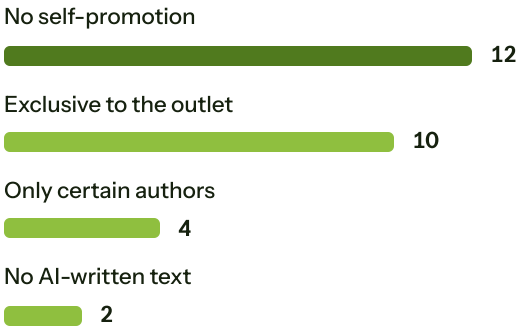
The rules: no selling, and keep it exclusive

12 of the 26 say, in one form or another, that the article can't promote the author's company or products. AdExchanger's is the strictest: you can't reference your company's business model, products, research or events at all. TechRadar Pro allows your company's name only in the author bio.

10 want exclusivity: the piece must not have appeared anywhere else (Federal News Network asks for at least 75% exclusive content). 4 limit who may write: academics only at The Conversation, senior executives or engineers at AdExchanger, DatacenterDynamics and SDxCentral. And two rule out text written by AI: InformationWeek bans articles written with generative AI, and The New Stack asks for human-written work.

What the rules require

Number of the 26 publications whose page says so



Source: Edamame PR & Strategy study of each publication's own contributor page, November 2026.

Outlet by outlet

Outlet	Route for outside writers	What the outlet's own page says
Harvard Business Review	Free: editors choose	Pitch, outline or draft through Submittable; no pieces that promote products or services or have appeared elsewhere; disclose financial ties.
MIT Sloan Management Review	Free: editors choose	Drafts only, not proposals, 1,000 to 2,500 words.
The Washington Post	Free: editors choose	Op-ed form; a finished piece of up to 800 words that hasn't appeared elsewhere; full name required; no answer within a week means no.
USA TODAY	Free: editors choose	Opinion columns of 550 to 750 words by email, with a short bio and a photo.
The Guardian (US opinion)	Free: editors choose	Ideas from anyone; a 3 to 5 sentence pitch, not a draft; disclose conflicts of interest; no answer in four business days means pitch elsewhere.
Newsweek	Free route and a membership	Two routes: My Turn personal essays (600 to 2,500 words, no fee) and the Expert Forum, a membership program sold in packages, open to US and Canada residents.
Business Insider	Free: editors choose	First-person lifestyle pitches through a form; Business Insider pays writers, from $240 for about 600 words.
Forbes	Membership or sponsorship	Forbes Councils: invitation-only communities; members choose a membership package after approval and can submit bylined articles to Forbes.com.
Fast Company	Membership or sponsorship	Fast Company Executive Board: application and membership packages; members publish bylined articles on FastCompany.com.

Outlet	Route for outside writers	What the outlet's own page says
Entrepreneur	Membership or sponsorship	Entrepreneur Leadership Network: free to apply, paid after acceptance; the help page names no other route.
Rolling Stone	Membership or sponsorship	Rolling Stone Culture Council: a private, vetted community whose members publish bylined articles.
The New Stack	Membership or sponsorship	Contributed articles come with a sponsorship; original, human-written and informative rather than salesy.
TechCrunch	No longer accepted	"We no longer accept guest columns"; sponsored posts are sold as advertising.
The Conversation	Free: editors choose	Only scholars and researchers at a college, university or research institution.
Psychology Today	Free: editors choose	Blog proposals from clinicians, scientists, mental health experts and writers.
HackerNoon	Free: editors choose	Anyone can submit, free; editors review, and not every story is published.
CFO.com	Free: editors choose	Opinions of experts in the industries it covers; exclusive; promotional pieces rejected.
Social Media Today	Free: editors choose	Opinions of industry experts; exclusive; promotional pieces rejected.
AdExchanger	Free: editors choose	Very senior contributors only (CEO, director, C-suite); exclusive; no reference to your company's business, products, research or events.
TechRadar Pro	Free: editors choose	Pitch first for approval; exclusive; no naming your own company or products outside the author bio.
InfoWorld	Free: editors choose	Contributed articles are edited; no marketing collateral.
InformationWeek	Free: editors choose	Columns from IT practitioners (vendor staff sometimes); unpaid; exclusive; no product promotion; no articles written with generative AI.
DatacenterDynamics	Free: editors choose	Vendor authors must be C-level, senior executives or engineers; exclusive; no product endorsements.
SDxCentral	Free: editors choose	Vendor authors must be C-level, senior executives or engineers; one author per article; exclusive; no product endorsements.
Corporate Compliance Insights	Free: editors choose	Vendor-connected authors may be considered; "We do not publish content marketing."
Federal News Network	Free: editors choose	Commentary form, 750 to 1,250 words, at least 75% exclusive, not product-focused or marketing.

What it means for founders

- **The free route is real, and selective.** Editors choose a small share of what they get. A piece that teaches readers something, with your own data or experience, has a chance; a piece about your product doesn't.
- **Know which route you're on.** A membership byline and an article an editor chose are different things. Readers, journalists and AI assistants can often tell, so decide what you need before you pay for either.
- **Respect exclusivity.** Sending the same article to several outlets at once breaks the rules of most of them. Pitch one, wait for the answer, then move on.
- **Read the page before you pitch.** Length, format, who may write and how fast they answer differ from outlet to outlet. Writing for what editors want starts there.

How we did this

We read each publication's own page about outside contributors on November 5, 2026: 26 publications in total, listed with links in the sources. We recorded only what each page states. "No fee" means the page mentions no fee to the writer; membership pages generally don't show their prices. We left out publications where we found no current page of their own (for example, a page from 2017, or one we couldn't open). Rules change; check the page before you pitch.

Questions

Which major publications accept articles from outside writers?

Among those we checked: The Washington Post, USA TODAY and The Guardian (opinion), Harvard Business Review, MIT Sloan Management Review, Newsweek (My Turn essays), Business Insider (essays) and many trade outlets, at no fee. Editors choose what runs.

Do you have to pay to publish in Forbes, Fast Company or Entrepreneur?

For an article you write yourself, their own pages describe membership programs (Forbes Councils, Fast Company Executive Board, Entrepreneur Leadership Network). Being covered by their journalists is a different, editorial route.

Can I promote my company in a contributed article?

Usually not: 12 of the 26 publications we checked say articles can't promote the author's company or products, and some don't allow naming your company outside the author bio.

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