



# USING EXPERTS IN BLOG POSTS

HOW TO CITE EXPERTS TO PUSH YOUR CONTENT FORWARD

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*As an FYI, this document is designed to go along with our video by the same name. If you haven't checked that out yet, you can view it on our private YouTube channel for members [here](#).*

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# WHY SHOULD YOU USE EXPERTS?

If you're writing a blog post, you probably are an expert on the subject you're writing about – after all, it's probably what you've spent your life doing (or, at the very least, what your business has spent its existence doing). Your position and your expertise – not to mention your writing chops – should be more than enough to write a kickass blog post, right?

If you're a good writer, the answer is probably yes. You can absolutely write an awesome blog post on your own – no problem. Here's the thing, though: if you're interested in writing 10X content, then writing an "awesome" post isn't enough. You have to write the best post. Your post has to, quite literally, be better than any other post on that subject out there. If it isn't, then how can you possibly expect to rank #1? How can you expect to control a keyword? How can you expect to pull in visitors (or at the very least, gain their trust) over every other website out there?

You are competing for eyes, and you need to be doing everything to get ahead.

This is where expert testimony comes in: when you are quoting experts who have been sourced explicitly for your article, you are setting three things up:

- You are positioning yourself as an expert in the field who is well-researched on the subject matter.
- You are including sources that reinforce what you are saying.
- You are incentivizing those experts to link back to your website.

In every case, you are both increasing your reach and your reputation.

## OKAY, WHERE DO I GET EXPERTS FROM?

Chances are, unless you are an incredibly well-connected person, you don't have a pool of highly-respected experts at your every whim.

Luckily, that isn't required to snag quotes from experts.

Here at The Content Factory, we are huge fans of [HARO](#), or Help a Reporter Out. HARO is a service used by journalists, blog writers, and experts in a variety of fields. This isn't some amateur service, either. Big-time names use HARO to source their articles (we're talking CNN and the New York Times big). Likewise, there are many experts out there with huge social media followings that are looking for pitches to reply to. It doesn't matter which side you're on: HARO is a goldmine.

While HARO is our favorite service, it isn't the only service out there. While this guide will focus exclusively on HARO (and how to maximize your experience using it), here's a brief breakdown of a few other popular options for finding and sourcing experts:

- [ProfNet](#): Much like HARO, ProfNet is solid for collecting sources. The major downside? Unlike HARO (and some of the other resources on this list), it requires a subscription. While this likely increases the overall quality of the sources you'll find, it means that there's a much smaller pool to pull from.
- [Quora](#): Quora is, at its core, Yahoo! Answers with more accountability (and a lot of professional paint). While it's not explicitly designed for journalists or people looking for experts in general, if you're willing to spend some time searching through answers, it can help connect you with the source that you're looking for.
- [SourceBottle](#): Just like HARO, SourceBottle allows journalists to request sources to send them information. Unlike HARO, SourceBottle doesn't do this with just a newsletter – it also sticks requests into a database. Typically, with HARO, you will get a burst of answers immediately after their newsletter goes out with your pitch in it, but with SourceBottle, you'll get an initial burst followed by a steady stream until you remove your request from their website.
- [ExpertiseFinder](#): While most of the services on this list focus on helping you find someone to respond to a single query, ExpertiseFinder works by allowing

## USING EXPERTS IN BLOG POSTS

you to search a database of experts. In other words, if you were writing a blog about the best chocolate cake recipes, you wouldn't send out a pitch asking that question – instead, you'd just search for someone with culinary or baking expertise and then directly ask them.

(As a final note here, if you'd like to see how this process works from the other side, check out our blog post on [getting quoted in the media](#) six times in one month.)

## HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF HARO

HARO is easy to use, but that doesn't mean there aren't tricks to getting the most out of it. Here's what you should know:

1. **Check Your Alexa Rating.** Unfortunately, HARO won't send out queries for you if your website doesn't have an Alexa rating of one million (or less). You can see your Alexa rating [here](#). If your ranking isn't high enough, don't fret – one million isn't particularly low, and that's something that should be achievable with a few months of content writing and marketing.
2. **Be Specific – No, Seriously. Really, Really Specific.** In our experiences, when you're trying to find a source, it helps to be hyper-specific. Ask for exactly what you want: don't just try to lob something vague into the void hoping that you'll get a "more interesting" answer.
3. **Use the Requirements Category.** A lot of people posting queries will ignore the requirements field: don't do this! Specify exactly what you're looking for: do you want an interview? Do you want an easy quote to drop in your article? Are you looking for someone that lives in a certain part of the country? Are you looking for someone with a specific degree? Once again, the more specific, the better.
4. **Be Aware of the Time.** HARO will send your query out before your deadline, but depending on volume, this might mean your query goes on today, tomorrow, or a day before your deadline. For this reason, never actually use your real "deadline" – always give yourself breathing room.
5. **Wait, What Does Urgent Mean?** When you click urgent, your query will be tweeted out to HARO's followers, likewise, it will have priority in the queue.
6. **I'm Not Getting Responses!** First: try again! If you're still not having any luck, then consider adjusting your query. You might be a little too specific (despite what we said above, sometimes you do have to back off a bit), or you might just be asking the wrong question. If you aren't getting any good

## USING EXPERTS IN BLOG POSTS

responses after a few tries, consider using one of the other HARO alternatives above.

7. **I'm Getting Too Many Responses!** While this might seem like a good problem to have, it can be incredibly overwhelming to have too many responses to your query. How do you decide which ones are good? How do you decide which ones aren't? Outside of the quality of the pitches themselves, you should look at the social following of the people that replied to your query. Remember: if someone has a larger following, there's a good chance that if they share your post, you'll get a much bigger boost from their network. Also, if people pitching you are affiliated with certain websites, consider the value their backlinks could potential give you.
8. **Beware the Anonymous Button.** When you submit your query as anonymous, you need to understand that you are saying to potential experts, "I do not want you to know who I am." While that sounds obvious, a lot of experts will avoid anonymous queries for this reason. How can they be sure they won't end up on a website they find objectionable? Or a competitor's website? Or, most importantly, how do they know that they aren't just wasting their time? While sometimes the anonymous button is worth it, keep in mind the risks before you click.
9. **Follow Up With Your Sources.** Once your article is posted, you need to make sure that you're following up with the people quoted in your article. Let them know it's been published, and that they have been quoted in it. This will give them a chance to link back to you. If they use Twitter, it might also help to ping them there, too.

## HARD QUERY CHECKLIST

Now it's your turn. If you're looking to source experts in your piece, make sure you complete the following checklist before sending out a query:

- Step 1 – Is your Alexa rating under one million?
- Step 2 – Are you submitting anonymously? If so, why? If you don't absolutely need to, do not submit anonymously.
- Step 3 – Is your summary concise and catchy? Consider it as important as a blog title.
- Step 4 – Is your query itself specific? Are you sure you are asking the right question(s)?
- Step 5 – Did you give yourself enough time to gather responses if the first query falls flat?
- Step 6 – Have you picked relevant categories for your post?
- Step 7 – Are you picking the best responses for your website? Are you looking at follower counts? Are you looking at what website they are affiliated with?