

## Women's Magazines

The six sisters: *Family Circle, Redbook, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Better Homes and Gardens, and Woman's Day.*

Freelancer W. Eric Martin has written several pieces for *Woman's Day*, and Pam O'Brien, former executive editor of *Ladies' Home Journal*, said the magazine uses several male writers on a regular basis.

### steps:

- ✚ Study the magazines so you'll send just the right idea to just the right person. You'll also learn what not to send editors. "I can't tell you how many poetry submissions I receive," said Cari Wira, *Woman's Day* reader editor.
- ✚ All of these writers get rejected, not because their writing isn't good, but because we don't ever publish poetry.
- ✚ Studying a few past issues will give you an idea of the magazine's demographics and the attitudes of its readers.
- ✚ "As a writer, you need to think about who will be reading the article," said Stacey Colino, who's written for about a dozen women's magazines including *Redbook* and *Ladies' Home Journal*.
- ✚ Do these women have kids? Do they work outside the home? Is their style more suburban soccer mom or urban hip? Factors like these will affect the tone, content, and angle of the article—and this need to be reflected in your query.
- ✚ Writers tended to use short, spunky words like "nix" and "zap,
- ✚ Next, think small. **The fastest way to break into women's magazines is to aim for the shorter department pieces.** "Unfortunately, many [writers] propose huge features right off the bat before getting their feet wet.

✚ **Best advice to writers who are just starting off, either in women’s writing or writing in general, is to start small.** Three hundred and fifty-word pieces for regular columns are tough for editors to brainstorm every issue.

✚ To get in the door and cultivate a relationship with an editor and try pitching smaller pieces, which can always lead to larger pieces.

And even unpublished writers have a chance with opinion pieces and essays, since it’s standard practice to send in those pieces as complete manuscripts—no clips required. Compelling real-life stories always stand out in the slush pile.

“The best way to break into *Ladies’ Home Journal* is through their column called First Person,” O’Brien said. **“Many of these are as-told-to stories.**

**They need such a steady supply of them and such a variety of them that it’s a good opportunity for writers.”** All this advice is easy enough to give, but where do you come up with the ideas that will have editors adding you to their favorite writers list?

First, take a look at the magazines and see what they run month after month. These evergreen stories never lose their freshness. In *Ladies’ Home Journal*, for instance, it’s the story of an exceptional woman. **“They are always looking for stories about women who are doing interesting things,”** O’Brien said. “Great human interest stories, women who have overcome obstacles—women who both you and I want to read about.” **Evergreen topics in *Woman’s Day* include finding time for yourself and your family, ways to save money, and learning to love yourself,** Wira said. **Other good solid standbys for women’s publications include how-to’s on relationships, parenting issues, health, and saving money.** Just be sure to give a tired topic a new twist. For example, Formichelli, who sold articles to *Redbook* and *Family Circle*, broke into *Woman’s Day* the same month with an article on not just saving money but unique ways to save money on big-ticket items like appliances, furniture, and cars. Your life should also be mined for all it’s worth. “I draw directly from my life,” said Diane Benson Harrington, managing editor of *Freelance Success* (a weekly guide to freelancing opportunities), who has written for *Woman’s Day* and *Family Circle*. “Thus, I pitched ‘The I-Hate-Housework Guide to Cleaning and Decorating,’ which offered tips on how to decorate your house if you hate to clean and [on] how to clean with absolute minimal effort.” Editors are inundated with queries, so it’s imperative that yours stand out. A reader-grabbing lead is the way to start. “I don’t think it’s the length of the query so much as the quality of the idea,”

O'Brien said. **Don't force yourself to write long queries, but be bold enough to include any appealing information, even if it pushes the query over the standard length.**

**Include in your query the names and credentials of your sources (along with a juicy quote or two from one of them), plus any stats that show why your idea needs to be written.**

**Women's magazines are sidebar-happy, so be sure to include information on any potential sidebars or boxes you could create.**

It's hard to break into women's magazines without related clips, but you can't get clips until you've written for women's magazines. Well, take heart. Formichelli broke into *Woman's Day*, *Family Circle*, and *Redbook* with clips from health and business magazines. Writer Kathryn Lay sent clips from kids' and religious magazines, and Harrington sent newspaper articles. Clips from Web sites and regional magazines also work. "Even if it's just from a newspaper, any clips you have will help you get your foot in the door," O'Brien said.

Once you land an assignment and get a clip from one woman's magazine, you're in. "Half the editors at every national magazine in the country must have read my first published clip in *Woman's Day*," said Jennifer Nelson, whose publishing credits don't end with *Woman's Day*. "At many places, the doors seemed to open up immediately. Even some magazines that were rejecting my pitches appeared to take a teeny bit of extra time, at least reading them, or responding with a personal rejection."

### *Creative to do*

- ❖ *Name few Indian Women's magazines and try to know about their content diversity.*
- ❖ *What will you consider while writing for a women's magazine? Briefly state.*