

Carol Tice:

Hey, everybody. It's Carol Tice here with Linda Formichelli.

Linda Formichelli:

Hey, everyone.

Carol Tice:

And we are excited to be here at our Q&A call for story ideas for Pitch Clinic, and we have a lot to do today, and we're going to do a few housekeeping things first just to kind of orient people. We are in Module 1. This is going to be a podcast. There are no slides. Coming up on Friday in our query training I believe we have a slideshow recording for you.

But right now we are in Module 1. We are looking for your story idea in the form of a headline and dek or subhead, a one-sentence summary of your idea, and at least one specific market it is for. That is our Module 1 homework. We are not reviewing full query letter drafts in this call or in the Module 1 forums. We just want you to focus for now on the idea, and refining that, and getting it right before we go to expanding it into a query.

Most ideas, if you've been reading through the forum, you will know need some tweaking before they're perfect ready to roll. So save yourself some time and don't write the whole pitch now, and just give us your idea in a very concise form. If you have posted more than that one the forums or in here, note that we are just looking at the headline and basic idea of it for now and the market.

And before you make your announcement, Linda, let me just clarify that when we say what market is it for, we are looking for an answer like Motorcycle Digest, not an answer like older people. We want you out and researching your specific markets, reading back issues, and seeing if your topic has already been covered or really is a fit. We do not want to see an answer like this is for women's magazines. They all actually really are different from each other, and we want you diving in, and analyzing, and figuring out how they are different and what one it would really be best for. Linda?

Linda Formichelli:

Awesome. Yes. We have some really exciting news. We already have two editors in the forum. We have Peggy Bennett, formerly of Entrepreneur, and we have Heidi Raschke, who has just started today, and she is from Minneapolis St. Paul magazine, but we have such a big group of students this time that we decided to hire a third editor.

And we just hired Amelia Harnish, who is the associate editor of Health magazine, and I'm super excited about that because I see a ton of health-related ideas going up in the forums. So it's obviously a big interest for people, and she is starting tomorrow. So that's the news on that. Pretty exciting.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. We're totally thrilled to have her and to have more support because, yeah, this is the biggest Pitch Clinic class we have ever had, and you may know that we are nobody's massive online course. We are all about really individual feedback and response. So we always want to make sure we've got enough people on deck to make sure we cover everybody's ideas.

So I just want to say I do see some people reposting their idea into the Q&A that has already gotten feedback on the forums, and if time allows, we're going to get to those, but we may skip over them. If you have a follow-up question from the feedback you've already gotten, maybe if you could post that, but I think we're going to try and not just repeat things we already said in the forums.

We realize that quite a few students joined us in the final 24 hours of class, and actually, I think three or four people have joined kind of through a back door this morning, and if that is you, just know that you are not behind, and you're okay. There is a recording of last week's Let's Make Your Story Idea Not Suck call from last week that you can take a listen to.

There are show notes, and we are going to be taking many more ideas in the call today, and we will try to stay on until we get through at least one idea for each person, and you can always post more if we don't get to them over on the forums, and we'll take them there, and feel free to put them in chat if it's working, but we have had problems with it in recent history, and if it bombs out for you, just move on over to the question box. We can't really do much to troubleshoot it once we're rolling.

So we just move over there if we need to. If you are brand new and/or if you have been here all week but have not yet read our orientation guide, FAQs, and our two Module 1 handouts on how to get the most from Pitch Clinic and Getting Started with Pitch Clinic, we so, so want you to read them because they will really save you a ton of time and get you oriented and get you rolling in this class.

You will learn how to put up your forum profile and get your picture in there and all the good stuff you need to know, and always, always if you cannot log in, you cannot figure out how to do something in the forum, you can't find anything, can't get access to a recording, can't get something to play, your one-stop shop for all technical issues is help@usefulwritingcourses.com.

Trust us, we are the writers, and they are the tech team. I get lots of emails, I can't get this to work, and all I do is forward them to the team because, trust me, that is not my expertise. So enough about that. We got two types of things in the question box. We got some general questions about freelancing, and then we got more story ideas, and we thought we would take some of the basic freelancing questions, and then we will do the ideas, and that'll give people more time to think up and post even more ideas.

Linda, you want to take this first one from Sarah? We have many people named Sarah, by the way, in this class. So it's not one person when you hear us say Sarah over...it's about three different ones.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. Well this is Sarah M., and she asks, where do I find the basics on constructing an article? And that is an awesome question. In fact, we just wrapped up our article writing master class where we have a 10-week class on how to write an article, but it's too big of a question to be able to answer here on the phone because it's just really huge, but I have some articles on The Renegade Writer blog that gives some instructions, and I'm going to be posting links to those in the chat.

Let me do that now, and if you look at those, I have my trick for writing difficult articles and how to write an article, and those go over some of the basics, and The Renegade Writer blog has a ton of thousands, literally 1,000 posts on things like how to construct an article, how to write a lead, how to write a kicker, how to do interviews, how to find sources. So do just look around on there, and you'll find a lot of information. Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. The other class we teach on this, besides Article Writing Master Class, is 4-Week Journalism School, and that is coming up this summer. So if you feel shaky on that end of it, on the execution end, you can check that out, and other than that, you could do it the way I mostly learned to write articles. Study, study, study your target publications. How do they construct their articles? You can usually pick up on a pattern as you scan through.

They all start with a real-person anecdote, or they all have academics as experts. They use a lot of, you know, emotion words. They end with a quote. You'll really be able to pick up on their conventions. You'll be surprised how much you can learn. Think of your target magazine as a class in how to write for that magazine, and start taking it apart and reading it analytically rather than as a fan of the magazine, but as a writer. Linda?

I think Helene's question is for you. I already answered it once. So I think they want you to also weigh in. You still there, Linda?

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, yes. I'm sorry. Helene says in the forum, I inquire about how to balance an opposite point of view article with the conventional wisdom. How much do we talk about conventional before we introduce the opposite point of view? I'm thinking of Linda's pro-peanut article.

And yeah, just so you know, that article was what I call an opposite idea, where everybody in the media was writing about, oh, peanuts, allergies. They're being banned from airlines. They're being banned from schools. So I pitched an opposite idea which was in defense of the peanut, and it was about all the health benefits of the peanut, and I sold it to Oxygen magazine.

So you really do want to set up that controversy up in the beginning of your query. So, oh, everything that's going on with the peanut, but guess what? It has a lot of health benefits, and I'm going to talk about it just to show the editor that you're going to be taking something really newsy and kind of flipping it on its head, which they really love.

So you do want to set that up, and then for the rest of the article, it really depends on what you're writing about. In the case of the peanut article, I just launched into the benefits of the peanut, and I didn't really have to go into the controversy any more.

But in another type of article, you may need to balance each point with conventional wisdom says this, but here's the real deal. So it really depends on what topic you're writing about, and how it's been portrayed in the news, and how you are tackling the angle. So I can't really answer that definitively.

Carol Tice:

So, I can shed light though. The pitch that was in the forum was, it was like, why you shouldn't spay or neuter your pet. So, obviously, we have all heard 1,000 times how important it is. Population control, prevents strays, and so my feeling was that to do that story, you'd have to start by stating that we all know and have been told 1,000 times that it's really important to spay or neuter our...but an emerging school of thought says you shouldn't, and here's why. You have to at least bring it up as a baseline...

Linda Formichelli:

Set that up.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. You are going to have to set it up, and I'm thinking that's going to be so controversial that probably you're going to need to have people refuting that as you go. It's kind of a point-counterpoint scenario because...

Linda Formichelli:

Right. Yes. It sounds that way.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I'm not sure you can set it up from the top and then just have somebody go and basically lobby for not spaying for the rest of the article without anybody coming back and saying, well, here's why I want to...

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, because that's very controversial.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So that's why I went that way.

Linda Formichelli:

Cool. I like that idea. So we have another question from Sarah M, which I love. She says the pitch worked. You landed the job. Now what? What typically follows a successful pitch? And what's really funny is that Carol and I both have articles called something along the lines of holy crap, I just got an assignment. Now what? Which I believe she's posting in the chat right now. Right, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay, and it is short. The editor will contact you and will likely leave out some important information you're going to need before you start. What often happens is they go, hey, want to write a 500-word article? And you're so excited to get that, that you say yes, and you don't have the details you need, and then you get burned later.

So you want to make sure you get how long the article will be, what the deadline is, what the pay is, and what the contract terms are, and let me tell you, editors often leave off the pay and the contract part. So you do want to find that out. You'll want to talk with the editor to make sure you're super clear, not only on these things, but also what the exact angle of the article is because they might want something different from exactly what you pitched.

If the editor has any sources they want you to use, or anybody they want you to not use, or any types of sources they prefer...just get really super clear on what it is they're looking for, because often you'll pick something, and they'll like it, but they'll want to tweak it to fit their audience a little bit better. So they might change it from the way you originally had it. So you need to be really clear on that. Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Right on. So Sarah M. also had a question on what do we mean by pays really well? And how does that vary?

Linda Formichelli:

Sure. So, typical trade magazines, in my experience, pay around \$0.20 to \$0.50 a word, and your hourly rate can be pretty high because trade magazine articles take so much less time than consumer magazine articles. So I've written for Health magazine for \$2.50 a word, but that was a super difficult rush assignment with a lot of rewrites.

When you're getting paid \$0.25 to \$0.50 per word with a trade, often there might be one light rewrite and that's it. So time wise, it works out in your favor. Custom publications, like those ones you see that come out from insurance companies, and hospitals, and stores, and things like that tend to pay \$0.50 to \$1.00 a word and up.

Most of the ones I've written for paid \$1.00 a word, and then big newsstand magazines like Cosmo and all those pay \$1.00 to \$2.00 a word and up, and like I said, I've been paid up to \$2.50 a word. Smaller and local magazines tend to pay less, but it's really hard to generalize. That's just my experience.

Because it's really all over the board. I mean, you're going to write for some magazines that don't pay anything, which you want to avoid, and you're going to run into some that would pay more than you would expect. So, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I'll just say Seattle magazine I think paid \$0.50 a word, and it was just a regional city lifestyle magazine. So you never know until you ask them and find out, or you look in Writer's Market, or ask your writer network, or get some intel on it, but the big thing I wanted to say is you don't need to be physically near your market.

This is different in small towns or bigger cities. You want to just go after the markets in the cities where you are a fit for the publication. Otherwise, almost all of us would have to live in New York City if we want to write for national magazines because all of them are based there. So don't worry about that. It's a real remote gig at this point.

So Elaine says what does a dek mean?

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. That's a great question because I know we say dek a lot, and that's D-E-K, and it's like a long subhead that appears under the headline. So, unlike a subtitle, a dek can be a couple of full sentences that describes the article and draws the reader in, and if you start looking through some magazines, you'll see a lot of them run it. So they'll have a title, which might also have a subtitle, you know, a colon and then a subtitle, but then it'll just have a couple of sentences underneath it, and that's called a dek. So I hope that's...

Carol Tice:

I posted a head with a short-ish dek, but yeah, sometimes they will do two sentences. Like "Feeling too warm? Here are three ways to cool down." They'll do it even in a couple really punchy sentences.

Sarah says can the same article be published in several publications without a conflict of interest? What do publications typically request from writers as far as copyrights?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, and it does depend on the rights the magazines ask for, and unfortunately, when I was first starting out, a lot of them bought first rights, and I could sell reprints or do whatever I want. Many these days ask for all rights or what's called work for hire, which means basically they own the entire article and you can't do anything with it. You can't resell it or anything.

The best news for you is if you can get first North American serial rights, which means the publication has the right to first run the article in North America. After it's published, the rights revert back to you, and you can sell reprints to magazines that run them. For example, a lot of the local parenting magazines run reprints.

So, depending on whether you think you can make a good income selling reprints or you're writing the kind of article that is often reprinted, you might want to consider fighting for the rights and the contract you want. I didn't do it as often as I probably should've because I just liked to write an article and be done with it and move onto the next thing, but that is definitely something you can negotiate.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I too have to say I have not been all into reprints. I tend to be short attention span theater and move onto the next thing, and just increasingly with the rise of the Internet and the duplicate content problems online, I think less and less markets are willing to go for the duplicate content deal because it just doesn't work for them. I have a great guest post I had about doing reprints, and I'm going to dig it up while we're talking and try and put it in chat.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay. I can take Susannah's question.

Carol Tice:

Sure.

Linda Formichelli:

All right. Susannah says do you need to contact potential interviewees before including their names in pitches? Not famous ones, but say a research scientist, or professor, or blogger? That's a great question. One thing is you're going to learn in the next lesson that you really want to do a couple of quick pre-interviews for your query, which has a lot of benefits. You could get some good quotes in there. You can get some good information in there.

You can show your editor that you know how to get people and how to get a quote, and also when you talk to a couple of people quickly, it'll let you know if your idea is going to fly or if it maybe needs a little bit of tweaking, because these people really know what they're talking about. That said, you don't need to interview every single person you plan to include in the article, and you don't need to get all of their permissions to be in the query.

A trick a friend of mine uses is she says, in my article X, I'll interview people like...and then she'll list a couple of people. So she didn't say she was going to get those exact people, but she's going to get people like that. So it's a nice way of covering your butt, but then she would interview a couple of people that she definitely has locked down for the query letter itself. I hope it answers your question.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I just want to stop here for a minute and say that there's a suite of questions that we get, and this is one of them, and what they all have underlying them is sort of a basic...I don't want to insult anybody, but laziness or...Linda will probably think of a better way to say this, but people are really asking us how little work can I get away with doing and still get my pitch ready to send out?

And I would just like to coach everybody that that is not the mindset you want. That is not a successful mindset for freelance writers who are pitching to publications. What you want to do is dive in and do some of the work. Like Linda said, make sure your idea is real, and as we go through this call today, you're going to see a bunch of story ideas that I'm sure someone's just saying off the top of their head, and you need to find out if that story is real, if there is anything new to say about it or not, and if there isn't, it's not going to work.

So that is why we want to really emphasize this to you. That what's happening is people are just putting off having to talk to experts and get information. They're putting off having their story idea meet the bright light of day and possibly turn to dust, but that's what you need to do. It's so much better to talk to your expert and for them to redirect you and say, you know, that isn't really what's happening, but here's something interesting.

And for you to prep a pitch that's stronger, because the other way it goes down is you send a half-baked query in hoping this idea will fly. The editor assigns it, and then you start doing it, and it isn't out there. You cannot bring the story back, and then you're in a world of hurt where you have to go to the editor and say, well, I said I had a story about this, but the experts are telling me actually nobody's doing that any more.

And then you either have a killed article on your hands, or you have a scenario where you've got to scramble and come up with another angle, which your editor may or may not go for, and believe me, I've had this happen even with queries I prepped pretty well, and hopefully you can get them to redirect it.

But it's much more awkward and embarrassing to have to say I promised you X, and it isn't there. So that's why we're on you to research these ideas and bring back some real info, and that's really a thread I saw through many, many of these questions.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. That's her pet peeve. Susannah in the chat is saying it's not a question about not wanting to do the work, but about bothering someone before landing the job, and that is something we hear all the time. It's scary to contact people when you don't have an assignment in hand, and we're going to get into this a lot more in the next lesson.

So I'm not going to get too far into it, but if you contact people and say, hey, I'm working on a query for X magazine, and I was wondering if I could talk to you for just 10 minutes

to get some good quotes? You throw a little flattery in there, a lot of people are willing to say yes.

The potential to get media coverage is great. People love talking about themselves and what they do. So don't let it scare you. Get out there and do it, and I think once you experience personally that people are going to be nice to you and a lot of them are going to say yes, you're going to start feeling a lot more confident, and people are chiming in in the chat that yeah, people do want to talk to you. They really do.

Carol Tice:

They totally are...most people who are out there as experts, they're such blowhards. They love the sound of their own voices. Honest to God, they are dying to talk to you. You really have to think about this a different way. They are dying to get in the media. They will do anything. They are so happy to talk to you. People think they're impinging on...no. A lot of these book authors are sitting around doing nothing wishing they could get an interview. So, really, do not be sad about it.

Linda Formichelli:

And that was a great question.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, that was a great question. Sara says what's the best way to determine who to send a query to when you've got one of those mastheads full of different editors and titles? And Linda has a fun post on that that I'm just going to pop into the chat.

Linda Formichelli:

And we skipped a question too. So let's go back to that one.

Carol Tice:

Oh, did we? I'm sorry. Circle back.

Linda Formichelli:

But yeah, I have a post called How To Figure Out Which Editor To Query, which she's going to post in the chat. In short though, you don't want to go too high up or too low down on the masthead. You know, the editor-in-chief or the executive editor, they're not handling pitches. The editorial assistant, probably not handling pitches.

So I like to kind of find that sweet spot in the middle, which for me is an associate deputy or senior editor. Those are often a good bet. When I've written for magazines, the bigger magazines, that's often who I'd be working with. With the trades, it was the managing editor.

But the best way to find out would be to call the magazine and ask before you start guessing, because sometimes you could just make a quick call and find out. Often you'll get stuck in voicemail hell and won't get a call back, but you tried, and then you start doing the guessing game. So, Carol?

Carol Tice:

So, I'm sorry, did we do the pitching simultaneously, or did we...

Linda Formichelli:

That is what we skipped.

Carol Tice:

That's what we skipped? All right. I'm putting in a post link in the chat for that.

Linda Formichelli:

All right. Check the chat, you guys. We're posting a lot of links in there.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, and you know what I'll do? Same thing I did with last week's call. I'll scoop these all up at the end out of our script and pop them into the general questions.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, great.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. We did that last time.

Linda Formichelli:

Want me to read her question?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So you'll have a handy little compendium of them.

Linda Formichelli:

Awesome. So...

Carol Tice:

So Andrea says my question's about...

Linda Formichelli:

Wait. Wait, are we going to...

Carol Tice:

Did you have more...

Linda Formichelli:

Are you going to take the other question?

Carol Tice:

Sorry. Did you have more you wanted to say?

Linda Formichelli:

Nobody knows what the question is. The question is...

Carol Tice:

Oh.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. Nobody knows what the question is. She says I would love to hear you say more about using one idea for multiple markets. Can we submit simultaneously to national magazines and regional newspapers or wait for regional stuff as reprints? And I did a huge post on that. In short, they don't like to simultaneously submit.

But you should because you need to make a living, and often the MO of editors is if I don't want it, I'm not going to respond. So if you sent an idea somewhere and are waiting for them to respond before you send it on, you're never going to sell that thing. So check out that post. There's a lot of information there. There's a lot to think about with it.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, and as far as ideas for multiple markets, I think we go into that a lot in Story Idea Lab about localizing a national story and nationalizing a local story, and basically, think about non-competing publications that you can sell an idea to...is a great way to recycle the same idea. I used to write things for a regional business weekly that I would also basically sell the same idea to a restaurant trade publication that was national. We felt like there was nearly no overlap between those two markets. So that's a situation where that'll work.

So on to Andrea's question which is about finding blog and online markets that fit my niche. I'm a beauty writer, and I write one, two posts a month. I'd like to get eight to ten more clients in April. Well, first off, we don't like goals like I'm going to get eight to ten more clients in April because that is a goal you can't control.

What you can do is create a marketing plan. I'm going to send 20 guest post pitch ideas to different new blogs I identify. Make your goal something you can check off, that you can definitively do and say you did. I don't write in that niche, but you can go on Alexa or I think on Google PageRank and put in keywords and find out what top sites are. It's not very tough, or just ask around your network.

Network with the blogs you've already posted on, and just say I'm looking for more opportunities. I don't know if you're looking for paying markets only or just exposure opportunities. I have a list of 140 paying markets on my blog in the sidebar in my most populars. So you can take a look there, but I don't know if there's anything there in beauty.

Linda Formichelli:

Well, I was going to say a lot of the national magazines that do have beauty articles in them have blogs and have online versions of their magazines that have separate content. So you might want to look into all of those websites. The only problem is, like Carol was saying, I don't know if you're hoping to get paid with these. A lot of these national magazines pay a lot less for online content, and sometimes they don't pay at all, inexplicably. So you have to watch out for that.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I think we'd like everyone to spend less time with markets that don't pay anything and more time finding markets that pay. So those were our basic art of writing questions that we got, and now we are ready to head into the story ideas. You want to take Ashley's?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. Let me take Ashley's. So, she wants to write about a business owner who started a business about beards, which is so awesome. He sells oils and other products to the Urban Beardman, and she says that it has been covered a lot in the big national newspapers and the business magazines, like Forbes, Ink, and Fast Company. Is this worth pursuing?

And you know what? It is worth pursuing because the trick is what can you pull out of this that hasn't been done? It doesn't have to be a straight profile for a business magazine. For example, would the business owner work as a source for a men's magazine article on the hottest new tools for grooming your facial hair?

Could you profile or interview him for the lessons he's learned for a trade magazine for the beauty and salon industry? Maybe he's a part of an article on the newest trends on products for working with men's facial hair. Now that's something I'm completely not familiar with, but it's something worth looking into.

Another thing is the guy who's doing this, where does he live, and are there local magazines that run profiles of exceptional local people? What college did he go to? Is there an alumni magazine that runs profiles of people like this? So you can definitely take something that's been in the news a lot and think of new ways to slant it and think of markets that haven't touched it yet because this is a cool idea.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So people are saying, hey, I posted a question. Did you not get it? What we're running through right now is all the questions that were posted before this call began. So we will get to the ones that are getting posted live as we progress here. So did you want to take this other one of Ashley's...or let's try and get to one per person and maybe come back.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay. All right. So we'll come back if we have time.

Carol Tice:

I want to share the wealth a little more. Let's take Katherine's idea.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay. Did I do this one? Yes. So this is a long one. So I'm going to try to edit it down a little bit, but it's about a chiropractic business called Upper Cervical Wellness that has gone into the functional medicine field, which is really interesting, and I did address this in the forum, but I did want to make a couple of points.

One is that the writer was thinking that since the magazines she's targeting don't pay very much, that maybe she could get some payments from the chiropractic company, and really, you can't take pay from a source and from the magazine. It's called double dipping, and it's considered unethical, and if you're found out, the editor would not want to hire you again.

So in this case, I would say, you know, if you don't have a lot of clips, if you're looking to build a clip file, it doesn't matter if they don't pay that much. Just go with it. Get your clip, and move up. That said, I couldn't tell whether you were pitching a profile or a feature on functional medicine.

If it's a profile, check magazines that run those or check that the magazines you're looking at run those, and if it's a feature, you're going to need more sources than just the one, because you were thinking of just interviewing the owner of this business, and getting into her education, and what she's learned, and all of this.

But if you want to run a feature article on functional medicine for local magazines, you're going to need to find maybe at least three people in that field in the area to round out your article. Otherwise, it comes off as an ad. Now, that doesn't go for profiles. If they run profiles and you want to profile this lady, then that's something you could pitch.

But if it's a feature, then you're going to need to round it out with more sources. I do think it's a really good idea because it's been huge. Functional medicine is huge. I've seen it in health magazines before, but your idea of localizing it is super interesting. Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. This raises an interesting question, and I'm bringing you all a link about this. The big problem with pitching most business profiles is that it is so easy for them to come off like sleazy PR, and editors are really turned off, because what you have to remember is while you're pitching them and other writers are pitching them, one thousand million PR people are also pitching them solo profiles about their clients.

You should write a profile of this business. They're really amazing. It's what I used to sarcastically call when I was a B reporter and used to get all these pitches, look at this business, aren't they neat? Because everyone thinks their business is wonderful and

amazing. I like the idea of spinning that into a trend about chiropractors moving into functional medicine.

Linda Formichelli:

That's cool.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. If there is one, I think that would be very hot, and there'd be a lot of potential places that could go. Chiropractic trade magazines...

Linda Formichelli:

Trade magazines.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, and maybe even general health magazines like to feature chiropractic also. Do you do functional medicine, or maybe there are other kinds of alternate providers that are moving into it, and you could do several kinds, and I think that one is more of an interesting trend story. It sounds like you had something happen to you that's easy to happen where you met this business and you fell in love with their story. That they're really awesome and everything.

But now you have to flip it and think about the reader and how it provides the best service to them, and it's probably not in a profile of this one business doing it, unless they really are like the first one in the country to be doing it, in which case you have a news angle that makes it not a PR piece. That if they truly are incredibly groundbreaking, that would work.

Linda Formichelli:

Cool. Listen to Carol on the profile idea, but yeah, the trade magazine, that's an awesome idea. So should we move one?

Carol Tice:

Yeah.

Linda Formichelli:

So Latonya, hey, you are in Durham. I am in Apex. Hello. Anyway, the headline is eyewitness, supporting the forgotten victims of tragedy, and the background is that 2016 will mark the 20th anniversary of an accident my family was involved in that killed eight people, including my husband. I don't have any memory of the accident, but I doubt those who witnessed it can forget it.

The angle is I see this as a reported essay or a roundup of how different states support eyewitnesses of traumatic events, and markets could be Reader's Digest, New York Times, and Oprah, and first I have to say I'm really sorry to hear about this tragedy. If you were thinking about doing a reported essay, the key word is reported, meaning it has to have some kind of service or how-to for the reader.

So your angle on an article on support for witnesses of traumatic events would be super interesting, as opposed to just writing an essay about the tragedy itself would be interesting in a different way. You can use your story quickly as an emotional, anecdotal lead and then go into the advice from the experts, and then maybe a sidebar on the state support, as you mentioned.

I'll bet a lot of people have witnessed traumatic events, but most media focus on the victims, not the eyewitnesses. You don't really think about the people who have seen it and how it affects them. So I think that's a really interesting angle. It could be a really strong article, and Carol had a suggestion.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, I don't know. My reaction to this was that that story is so heart wrenching that I feel like it almost pulls my attention away from...

Linda Formichelli:

Overpower.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, I almost feel like it's overpowering and that it might be better to simply use your experience as what makes you interested in this topic and report the story and just put it in your tagline.

Linda Formichelli:

Like in your credentials paragraph?

Carol Tice:

Yeah, in your credentials at the bottom, and it sounds like there's some interesting stuff that is potentially going on out there in terms of helping witnesses to horrible crimes, and I think that is what the story is about, and yeah, I worry that it's just kind of detracting.

Dena has a question about double dipping in the chat, and I'm sending you a link because I just wrote about this because I get asked all the time to do this, and I can tell you that the business world is teaming with businesses that will do anything to get their name in the media, and they do not care if they destroy your career in the process.

So you need to understand the ethics of it, and that's what we go into in 4-Week J School. We have a whole hour on journalism ethics, but for now, read this post, and steer clear of anybody who's saying I'd like to hire you to pitch this to your outlets. What they mean is they want to exploit your relationship and have you pretend they are a news story.

And then you're going to get paid by the publication, and you're going to get paid by them. That's called double dipping, and it is not okay, and you will be found out, and you

will get in a giant mountain of trouble, and really, there will be markets you won't be able to work for. Forbes has been firing people in droves on the blog who they discover are accepting money for links and things. Yeah.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, God, that is a huge thing. I'm always getting approached by people saying will you write guest posts for these copy bloggers and places you've written for and include our links and we'll pay you? No way. No way.

Carol Tice:

That's it. Yeah. They ask that all the time, and they'll act like it's totally normal and you should do it and it'll be fine, but it won't be. So read that post. Anyway, let me move ahead here. I think we're up to Christine.

Linda Formichelli:

So we're on Christine's post, and I did get to this in the forum, but I do want to read this because it is a really awesome summary of an article. The headline is Yoga Rx, and the dek is Vinyasa junkie, Instagram yogi, yoga newbie. Here's all the info you need to practice yoga safely. Markets Yoga Journal, Shape, Self, Women's Health.

Now, when I first read that, I was thinking, oh, I've seen this a lot, but then the way she handles it next really seals the deal. She says there's a ton of praise for yoga as everything from a health elixir to an injury-prevention tool, but just because yoga may be good for you doesn't mean it can't also cause you harm.

This is particularly relevant with the growth of more athletic yoga practices, daily Instagram yoga challenges with over 9.8 million photos tagged with yoga, and the growing number of yoga practitioners. I would profile different types of yogis, who this is, what are some injury danger zones, and tips on how to practice safely, like a chunky article.

And for those of you who don't know what chunky is, it means that the article will be basically chunked down into maybe boxes. So each fact will be its own box on the page, and it's very visually appealing, and it draws your eye through the story. So I did take this in the forum, but I have to say I love how Christine took a been there, done that idea on yoga safety, and she freshened it up through interesting packaging, and the packaging is the way you want to format your article. In this case, chunky.

She has new statistics. She has info on the Instagram trend. So it's really nice. However, I would change the title, which is Yoga Rx, because it makes the article sound like it's going to be a basic piece on how yoga can affect your health, and editor might see Yoga Rx and be like, oh yeah, another one of these. So you want to come up with a really strong headline that reflects the coolness that is going to be this article. Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Good idea. Sarah M. had a pitch that's growing smarter through play. Why goofing off will not only make you smarter, but richer, and she has an alternate that was reignite your playful kid. Ways to reconnect with fun and grow smarter and richer. So first thing I just want to say is you want to try and not stuff too many ideas into a headline. So probably the first one is better where we just get it makes you smarter and richer. Not it'll be fun, and smart, and rich. I think that is going to be too many.

But her audience is...I think she's one of the ones who just said parent magazines or education sources. Yeah, we're not accepting that as a market. We want to know where exactly do you think this could go. I think the idea that play makes us more creative and productive and helps keep our brains elastic is really not new. So we'd also really want to know why you came to this idea now, why an editor would need to run it now.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, but she did mention that there's some recent research. So that does give it a little bit of a news hook. I think the idea is really fun, but the trick here...so another thing to think about...and we go over this over and over again. I know you hear this with every idea, but it's true. Service. You want service in your idea. Meaning you'll tell readers not just why this is interesting but what they'll get out of it and how they can use it.

You're going to tell readers how they can take advantage of this fact. Not just, hey, if you play, it's going to make you smarter and richer, and here's how. But you want to be smarter and richer. So here are some tips on adding play and incorporating play and these tips into your life. That's super important, but I think you're onto something with this idea if you really do have some recent news or recent studies. I like it.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Yeah, I agree on that. So Sarah H...to switch up to another Sarah...

Linda Formichelli:

We got three Sarahs here.

Carol Tice:

Has pitched as fall escapes, three easy drives from Cincinnati. Red River Gorge, Hocking Hills, and Yellow Springs. I'm not sure if you meant you were going to include those three destinations in the headline and dek, but I'm just going to recommend that you don't because then it's too much information. Like we don't need to read the story. We got everything out of the headline.

Three easy drives from Cincinnati. If we're stopping there, I think that was a serviceable headline, and good for you thinking six months ahead because many of you may not know that that's what you need to do for big, national magazines. So right now you're thinking fall stories. We often get a lot of summer pitches when we're holding a spring camp, and it's too late for anything that isn't online or something.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. Although, you know what? I took this one in the forum, and I really like the idea, but I'm wondering if there's some way to narrow it even further into maybe thinking of some sort of theme or something, because I'm thinking hikes don't come off as very special, and the idea of using fall foliage is really overdone. So is there anything special you can say about these places that make them super interesting? Because I feel like the idea is almost there, but it needs a little more oomph as I mentioned in the forums. You know what I mean, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. It's like are they three easy drives to little-known attractions that are sort of fascinating? Yeah, what's the twist you can put on it?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, but it's nice.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, it is nice. So Julie says who is your TV mentor now? A majority of boomer women grew up with Mary Tyler Moore. So who are the characters on TV now? She thought this might be something for O or for Purple Clover, a magazine I have to say I am not familiar with. I'm intrigued by this idea.

But I wonder who would be your expert on this? And I don't know if O is a fit. They don't really do any pop culture-y kind of stuff. I actually think of ARP more. They do a lot of movie stars and TV stars, and they're very celebrity driven. So it might be how roles have changed for older people online rather than women. Go Carol on The Walking Dead.

I mean, there are some great older women on TV right now. So I think you need to think about this, and my big question is who is your expert who's going to tell us who the characters are that people think of that way now? Who's the media analyst who has that data or something? Because I think you can't just make up, well, now I think this.

Or I mean, are you going to pull Nielson ratings and look at the most popular shows and the role models on them? I need to know more about how you're going to iterate that. So Julie had a few other questions, but I want to keep going to try and catch one of everybody. So let's go down to Nicole.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay. Can you...

Carol Tice:

Can I read that? Yes. It's how smartphone apps are helping people living with chronic health conditions manage their care and stay healthier, and for markets, she said general living magazines, health and fitness, chronic health...you know we're not going

for that. Yeah. Please repost and tell us some actual magazines. I feel like this has been done. This here's a bunch of apps that help you...

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. I've seen that in all the different health magazines, but...

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So the question is are there new ones, or how you would slant it so it's something fresh? People do love to write short, charticle type pieces like this, but yeah, the question is what's fresh? Are there seven hot new smartphone apps for managing chronic health conditions maybe that we haven't heard of yet? Something like that.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, or are they for chronic health conditions that maybe haven't had apps targeted toward them yet? So, yeah, I think you're definitely onto something, but I mean, I read all the health magazines, and I've written for health magazines for the last 17 years. So I've definitely seen this idea. So the editor's going to be asking what's new? What's next? What's fresh? We hate that word fresh because editors use it all the time, but it's true. I think you can work with this and play with it and come up with something that they haven't seen before.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So Beryl has an idea. Can common...I think mistakes. I think a word's missing. Ten common mistakes building your hotel's web presence and how to avoid them. For a niche magazine like Hotelier or Boutique Hotelier, which is certainly an appropriate fit there, but I guess my reaction is that they probably have web presence already. They're not building it now from scratch, and the magazines have probably done these kind of basics before. If they haven't, it's probably a fairly easy sell.

But the other thing I want to say is who's your experts for this? Because if your idea is that you are a web expert and it's going to be your tips, remember that you're not going to get paid, and they're going to assume that promotes your web design business or something, and you're positioning yourself out of getting paid.

So my assumption would be that you would be talking to a couple of experts in the hotel website space in particular who specialize in that, not just sort of general website basics and at least one hotel that recently redid it and is getting more results. You need to find that actual proof that these tips are real, but you could build it. I think there's a good story here. You'd have to go out and find it.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, and I really like the way she specifically is going for the hotel trade magazines. That's a really nice, tight angle you can go for and markets that a lot of people aren't pitching. So I think that's great.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Yeah, but remember that in trades, they like to hear from their readers. So they'd love to have some boutique hotel chain or two in that story so that their audience is really relating. So Steph has a couple quick ideas, and you know how to say the name of her town. So I'm going to tell you to say it.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. If you're on the line, Steph, tell me if I'm saying Leeuwarden right, because I lived in the Netherlands for six months, but it was a long time ago. So, anyway, she has a really interesting idea. I have some suggestions. It's new adult, clever marketing trick or more? Out of nowhere, there it was. New adult. It's kind of like its big sister, young adult.

So we're talking about books here. One minute there's nothing, and suddenly, it's there, but what is it? Is it just a fancy new name to help booksellers sell more books? It is aimed at those who feel left out by the young adult books and not yet ready enough for grownup books, or is it really a new genre? Possible market book section for The Guardian.

So, I have to say, I have not written for The Guardian. So if you are familiar with their book section and that sounds like something they would run, it could be interesting. Other than that, I'm wondering what the reader will get out of it. Outside of a book column, I'm not sure many people will be intensely interested in what this new genre is about unless it affects them somehow.

And I was thinking this could work as an article for a writer's magazine, like Writer's Digest, on how to make sense of all the genre tags. You know, all these writers are wanting to write these things, and they might not understand the difference between new adult, and young adult, and adult, and mystery, and thriller, and all these.

And it might be really interesting to do a roundup of some of these genres that you might want to be breaking into and maybe some characteristics of those genres and some tips. I think that could be really cool. Again, I'm not familiar with The Guardian and their book section. So if you feel it's a good fit, it's a very interesting idea to me. What do you think, Carol?

Carol Tice:

I love that angle of it. Yeah. I think that probably is the audience that cares about what is new adult. Book sections of daily papers, they just run book reviews. I mean, they don't run much in the way of think pieces about where the book world is evolving. So I think that's probably a better bet. So her other idea was Leeuwarden 2018, the place to be, to which I have to tell you that your news hook is in 2018, which means the earliest place for that is 2017. So we're a little early for that idea, but let's go onto Vanessa.

Linda Formichelli:

Where's Vanessa? There you are, Vanessa.

Carol Tice:

It's on her.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes, I know. I'm looking. The headline is parent shaming, teens post social media updates and video footage of their parents mid-rant. How to tackle this issue. Possible markets Your Teen, Family Circle. I have to say I love this idea. I remember several years ago one video where a kid baited his mom with a question that he knew was going to drive her crazy, and it was about religion.

Posted her screaming fit on social media, and it went viral, and I thought this is the most humiliating, horrible thing ever. My child is only six, but I and I'll be every single parent is worrying that this is going to happen to them some day. So I think it's awesome. I mean, something that scares the heck out of people, and you have a solution for it. Awesome. You do need to work on the title because parent shaming is just extremely basic.

So you're going to want to come up with something a little more clever, maybe with a more descriptive subtitle or a longer dek, but I think I love this. I love it, and the markets are good because Family Circle targets parents of tweens and teens. The unfortunate thing is there aren't a lot of markets that target parents of his age group. So the fact that you have two is pretty good. If you could find more, that would be great, but there are not a lot out there. Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Wow, so many questions. I think we're just going to keep rolling you guys and get to at least one for everybody that has posted hopefully. So Tori's headline was five surprising actions to take for eliminating anxiety before traveling. For Travel & Leisure or one of the travel magazines, or she said Health or Glamour. I don't know about there so much, but the trick is they'd really need to be surprising new actions we have not heard before would be the deal, and they're not that easy to come up with, but it would have to be really fresh. If it is, then that could be viable.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. I think it's a kind of cool idea. I definitely have that travel anxiety, airplane anxiety. You know, my usual MO has been to take a lot of Valium. So if there's anything beyond that, that would be pretty cool.

Carol Tice:

So Silvia has a fun to pitch. I love the headline, which is mind over platter, but it needs a dek, or maybe this is the dek. It's no secret that mindfulness and mantras boost your mood, but new research shows they help you stick to your diet too. Here's how to use them to ditch cravings, get in touch with your hunger, and channel your inner ohm. I think that dek would need to be boiled way down, and I think we all know that our state of mind affects us over eating. So the question would be is there really new research

about that? And if it hasn't already been written up in those kind of magazines, then that could be fun. Certainly a fun headline.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, that's an awesome headline. There was a book that came out...I mean, it's got to be at least five to ten years old called Intuitive Eating where she goes into this a lot. So it's not a new idea, but the fact that mantras help you stick to your diet is something I have not heard before, and I'm big into this field of writing. So that could be an interesting slant on it, and it could work for maybe a yoga magazine too, but if we're to stick to the mantra side of it, that could be really interesting if there's enough there for an article, because mindfulness has been done a lot.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. That was my fear. So Breje's idea is birdwatch your way to health. Birding is enjoyable outdoor physical and mental exercise, and her markets are health, aging, travel. We want real magazines, and what don't we know about how birdwatching is a healthy outdoor activity? Because I feel like we already know that. So we need to know what's new there? Are there some exercises you could do while you're birdwatching or something? We need to know something new here, or it's just an evergreen that we already know and I don't think editors are going to bite.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. I think if she can come up with a more unique angle to it, I think birding...and we have to tell you, a lot of these ideas...don't get discouraged. They are seeds of ideas, and most ideas that we come up with are not ready to go right off the top of our heads or even with a little bit of work. Sometimes they take a lot of work of doing research and searching for angles, and all of a sudden, you've got the gold. So that could happen with this.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Absolutely. I've blogged for Forbes for three years like four posts a month, and my idea file is 60 pages long. I collect a lot of string about little bits of ideas, and then you keep finding little news items until they add up to a story. So, yeah, often people...when you're new to this, you think, oh, I found a piece of research, and now I have my story.

But usually it's just part of a story and you need to go further. Learn more. Find another study to compare and contrast it with. There's something else. There's something more that's going to be added that's going to make it that thing the editor hasn't already seen, because they probably already saw that study too is the thing to keep in mind, but you are the person who spins it another way.

Just to give you a quick example, one of my last posts that I just did for Forbes, I had seen a piece of research that came out that was like, the most capital, efficient unicorn. A unicorn is a billion-dollar startup that's privately held. These venture capital people call those unicorns.

And that made me wonder what are the least capital efficient unicorns? In other words, the venture capitalists have put in a billion, and the company's only worth a billion. They haven't leveraged any profit out of it at all. It's a totally bad investment. So that's the story I wrote. I wrote to the research company and said I see you did this top 10. Do you have the bottom 10 data? And they sent it to me.

So that's what we mean about push a little farther. Work a little harder. Think of how you could flip it over. Combine it with something else, and turn it into something fun. Anyway, you want to take Vanessa's?

Linda Formichelli:

Here it is. You know what? I was hoping you could take this because it's sort of a business idea, and I'm not quite sure I understand what designed thinking means. Do you know what that means?

Carol Tice:

Not sure I do, and I've been covering business for 25 years. So that's probably a problem. That if you're building that into the headline, you probably have to build your headline a different way. Five companies using an innovative new approach to become more profitable, and then in the body of it, you'd start explaining what designed thinking is, and when you talk about potential markets, Forbes, they do write some about international companies.

I see you're in Belgium. I don't know who you're thinking of, but if you're doing a roundup of five companies, probably most of them need to be in the U.S., just to give you a heads-up on that. Companies outside the U.S. that they write about are usually mega, mega successful. Alibaba or something, the biggest site in China, and beyond there, it's mostly U.S. centric.

Linda Formichelli:

But if you do want to just post this in the forum and give us a little more of a description, because we're not sure what it means, what designed thinking is.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Looks like Elena's is also a business one. How women entrepreneurs can use the old boys club model to enhance business growth, develop new connections, and shorten the learning curve, and I see that you want to do it for the Forbes blog. So I can tell you that their idea headline is eight words long, and you're going to need to think here.

And they have actually created a thing in the dashboard now where you cannot write a headline this long. It will cut you off. They have actually limited the headline length where it is impossible to do one that's too long for Google now. So the idea of women entrepreneurs using the old boys club isn't too bad.

I'd need some really fresh information about women who are doing that, and I'm not sure you've pitched it that way. It says a look at how women can use boys clubs techniques. You're going to look at why half of women entrepreneurs today have a mentor, why women are better suited for this. It sounds all very speculative. I'm going to interview business coaches and find their tips for finding a mentor.

That's not what Forbes goes for, the simple sort of you should do that. What you're going to need is women who are using the old boys club model to build their business. You're going to have to find those real women. It can't just be advice from experts on how to do this. We need proof that using the old boys model rocks and we should do it. So that's my thought on that.

This is apparently for Northwestern Mutual Voice, which, it's like a brand journalism project that appears inside Forbes. It's a sponsored content section, but their style and their attitude is identical to what's on Forbes itself, and those are my thoughts on that. It could be a fun story. I kind of like that. Women, old boys club. There's a nice contrast there, but you'd have to find that story really happening out there.

Business magazines are all about proof, and yeah, you're telling us your company's amazing, and what was revenue last year, and what do you project it will be this year? And if they won't tell you, you move on because they're not going to print it. They're not going to drink the Kool-Aid, buy the spin from a company. They want proof, proof, proof, because they get spun a lot, and they're very wary about that.

So Rohi's headline is what the experts aren't telling you about how to lose weight or the surprising way to lose weight, and I feel like maybe we saw this from you last week even on my call, Rohi, but these are evergreen topics, and the question is, is there something new that experts aren't telling us about how to lose weight?

Linda Formichelli:

Well, in the description, it's mindfulness again. So, as you could see, we've already seen this on the call. So a lot of people are pitching this, and it's been done a lot. So you need to come up with a twist, something people haven't seen, and one thing we talked about a lot in last week's call is the idea of doing a roundup. So maybe five surprising things editors aren't telling you about losing weight, and some twist on mindfulness can be just one of the ideas.

But you would need to come up with four others, and this is where research and talking to a couple people comes into play. You might do pre-interviews with a couple of weight loss experts and say, hey, what are people not saying? What do people not know out there? What is surprising and new? And they would be happy to tell you what they would love to get out there that's not getting out there that they've learned about weight loss. That's the trick.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So moving onto Jacqueline's comment here.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. Five weird ways women treat their broken vaginas. I imagine this as being a chunky 400 to 500 word piece discussing the strange way women deal with vaginal pain and pain during intercourse. Some of these treatments would include injecting Botox into the pelvic floor muscle, vaginal icepacks, and receiving acupuncture. Could potentially be an interest piece for some but also informative for women dealing with pain during sex.

Market, I have my heart on Cosmo for this one, but could potentially work for other women's magazines like Health. If you have not, post it in the forum because we have a health magazine editor in there starting tomorrow. That said, I don't understand why we are getting so many ideas in these last couple of weeks about down there problems, pelvic problems, kegels. There's something in the air.

Carol Tice:

It's like our third or fourth one, and I think they're a reasonably hard sell.

Linda Formichelli:

But you know, I haven't heard of these, and instead of being five weird ways women are doing this, you would need to turn it into a service piece because it has some potential there. Five surprising new ways to deal with pain during intercourse, assuming that these aren't just weirdo ways that don't work. There's something there if you can make it surprising and new, because that is a perennial problem that women are always looking for new ways to deal with.

So the headline I'm not sure would work. It's a little long, and I'm not sure I've seen vagina in many headlines, and if you were going to go with the idea of five surprising ways women are dealing with pain during intercourse, then the headline would need to change anyway, but you're onto something. Keep working on it, and if you haven't already, we're still going through the forum, but post it there, and I will try to direct our new editor to it for you.

Carol Tice:

Awesome. So Barbara, who is calling in from Slovenia...awesome.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh my Lord, that's awesome.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I love the international class that we have here. So she says raising a bilingual child may have been done to death, but her idea is you are the bilingual parent and either chose not to or failed to teach your child your language. There is no headline with this pitch I just want to say for starters, and I think the problem we think it has is it's just too tiny of a market. Her idea was women's or parenting magazines, but there's such a small percentage of those readers who would be a bilingual parent who then also failed

to teach their child the language. I don't know where you place it. So think about that one...

Linda Formichelli:

I feel like she's onto something there.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, think of that one some more. Maybe there's some kind of magazine for bilingual parents somewhere. It wouldn't shock me if there was. So do some market research.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. I mean, there's got to be some markets for it if you think unique about it, if you look outside the normal box of the regular parenting or women's magazines. There might be a good market for it. There are probably a lot of magazines for example for Hispanic parents or Hispanic families this might work for. So keep thinking on it.

Carol Tice:

So Helene's headline I had seen in the forum, but I don't remember now if I responded. I don't think so. It was doggy see, doggy do will do as I do have handlers jumping through hoops, and then her dek is we've seen a dramatic shift in recent years toward positive or force-free methods as dog trainers move en masse away from these domination fear and pain to control our canine companions.

Today's pet owners and world-class sport competitors are using rewards-based training with great success. I'm not sure where this dek ends, but that all can't go in a dek. I don't know anything about this technique and whether it's been written up before in these magazines. If not, it sounds like it might be...

I think the head and dek need to be a lot more concise and strong to help us understand it, and if we don't know what do as I do is and that that's the name of it yet, like we said with that other pitch about designed thinking, you might want to not put that into the head and just say there's a technique, and then you're going to explain it in the story.

So, believe it or not, that actually just brings us to the top of everything we got before this call started. So everything else is yet to go here. I personally can go for about another 15 minutes, and I'm happy to do so, and I want to hop in and see if I can see where we left off here so that we can pick this up. Okay. We've done those. We've done those.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. So read it out loud to me because I'm not sure where you're looking.

Carol Tice:

Sure. No, I don't. I see people who I recognize here. I don't recognize Mimi's. Stopping bullets with bracelets. Seven Wonder Woman surprising tactics to protect Americans from gun violence. Wow. If those are real, if there are real women's self-defense tactics

that are maybe wearable tech and stuff that we don't know about yet, I think that sounds like a really hot story. I'm not sure I agree on your magazines where you say YES!, Mother Jones, Christian Science Monitor, or Ms. I was thinking Wired or something, one of the techy magazines.

Linda Formichelli:

Well, you could always slant it both ways, you know?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Yeah.

Linda Formichelli:

I saw the bracelet on Facebook.

Carol Tice:

Oh yeah?

Linda Formichelli:

So it's getting around. So you need to move fast.

Carol Tice:

Linda P. wants to write about the revitalization of the Space Coast for Forbes, Business Week, or Fortune, or an airline magazine. Well, the trick with airline magazines is pick ones that fly to the nearest major city to the Space Coast because they all only write about places they fly to. She says Florida lost jobs after the space shuttle program, and apparently it sounds like now there's some kind of renewal going on.

Sounds like it could be a fun travel...it's more of a travel story to me than a business story. The big nationals don't do a ton about revitalization of particular neighborhoods unless they were super famous. I mean, I'd see it as a long shot there, maybe more of a travel story. What is there to see now on the Space Coast?

So you want to take one of these allergy ones from Loretta?

Linda Formichelli:

Can you read it? Because I don't know where you're looking at.

Carol Tice:

Oh, okay. Are your allergies preventing you from losing weight? Recent research says it's quite possible. We need you to flesh this out and tell us who you think it's for.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, but yeah, I think that's really interesting. What I'm wondering is, is it the allergy medicines, the steroids? Because if so, that's not really new news. That's been around for a while, and I can't really tell to much about what the idea's about just from that

headline, but it's very promising if it's new information because that's something I have not heard before.

Carol Tice:

So Kathleen Pool pitches climb, little girl, climb. Specific Mayan pyramids to climb to build risk-taking skills, strength, and fun. Unless this is for like, American Girl, but she's saying parents, endless vacation family fun. It would just be climb, child, climb, not just girl, because they're for both sexes. I don't know what you think about this. It's like how many readers are going to get to climb Mayan pyramids?

Linda Formichelli:

It's super specific. It's super specific. Sometimes people go too broad, and sometimes they get really super specific, and you have to think how many readers in my magazines' target markets are going to be interested in or have the chance to do this? One cool idea could be a roundup of common vacation spots that are super helpful for you and your family, for example. That would broaden it a little bit, but yeah, keep thinking on that because it's cool, but it's narrow.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I wonder how stair climbing is good for your kids, and then you could do six awesome places to climb steps around the country or something.

Linda Formichelli:

That's kind of awesome.

Carol Tice:

Isn't that awesome?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. That's truly awesome.

Carol Tice:

We have a couple of really crazy stair climbs here in Seattle, is what makes me think of it. So Christine had a question about re-pitching an idea to an editor if you rework it. I wouldn't. I'd find another market to pitch it to.

Linda Formichelli:

Unless they gave you some feedback that this would work if you tweaked this, and then you tweak it and send it back. Yeah.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So Robert is pitching a six-pack of cool, San Diego craft breweries chosen by the experts. I love it. Who's it for?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. I love the title.

Carol Tice:

San Diego Magazine, Sunset, San Diego Union Tribune. I would also think about the craft beer magazines. There's all kinds of hobbyist craft brewer type pubs where...and are they cool, or are they the most award winning? Are they the emerging hot, hip ones? I don't know if cool is actually the adjective you want there, but maybe they all won a contest. Figure out what your qualifier is going to be where you can prove the case that they are the six cool ones.

This is something I'm confronted with all the time on my Forbes beat where I want to say these are the best franchises to own, and you're always looking for data or awards. You don't want it to be subjective because then someone else is going to say I think you screwed me over, and I'm going to sue you because we are one of the coolest ones. You really want data to back you up on it or yeah, expert opinions, but yeah, sounds like something fun there.

Linda Formichelli:

I was going to say I love the six-pack title if you came up with six of them. That's totally awesome.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I love it. So Joyce says I understand we're not to interview family or friends, but does that include Facebook friends or people/companies we follow? I've never personally met them. I think we think that they're not really your friends, we hate to say, but we think they don't really...

Linda Formichelli:

Friends of friends...yeah, you got to draw the line at what's acceptable and what's not, and it's really kind of gray. So go with your gut on that. You know what I mean? I mean, there's no hard and fast rule of second removed is not okay, but third removed is okay. So, yeah.

Carol Tice:

Madeline is pitching three reasons I don't need fitness apps. That sounds much more like a blog headline to me than an article headline.

Linda Formichelli:

Well, I could see working with this. Three reasons to ditch the fitness apps, and all the technology, and all the weird little tools out there and just go back to basics. There could be some benefits to that. That could be a really cool opposite idea because everyone's pitching the fitness apps right now.

Carol Tice:

True. Yeah. I feel like it needs something.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, it needs some work, but you could definitely work with that.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Debbie Freeman says she has shitty ideas, literally. Striking gold with feces-related inventions.

Linda Formichelli:

That's awesome.

Carol Tice:

Who is this for? Yeah. Who is this for?

Linda Formichelli:

You know what? Oh my God. There are kids' science magazines...and I remember writing about bacteria that eat garbage for one of them ages ago. There are kids' science magazines. Kids love poop stuff. I have a 6-year-old. He would totally go for this. Think about the kids' magazines. They are fun to write for. There's Odyssey and all those other ones. Take a look.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Absolutely. Hang on, my system wanted to flip on me.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, I got kicked out of the chat.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. We just had a system glitch. We warned you that could happen. Hang on here. I'm going back, back, back to where I was. Wow. There are so many ideas here.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, I can't get in.

Carol Tice:

Well, I'm in. I can read questions.

Linda Formichelli:

There we go. There we go.

Carol Tice:

Hang on. Oh boy here.

Linda Formichelli:

Colleen says please skip me. I have to run. Colleen, put it in the forum if you haven't, and we'll do it there. I know we're running a little over. Thank you for bearing with us.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I'm kind of overwhelmed. I'm excited by all the ideas. Okay. Here I am.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, and they're all workable. It's awesome.

Carol Tice:

So Amy is working on her 10 surprising romantic date spots, and now she's thinking instead of the apple picking, got the date night doldrums? Try these 10 surprising spots to rev up the romance.

Linda Formichelli:

That was my headline.

Carol Tice:

I kind of liked the apple picking.

Linda Formichelli:

Well, you know what? There are a lot of posts on that in the forum. We've been going back and forth on it with me, and I think also Heidi has weighed in on it. So there's a lot going on in the forums on that one.

Carol Tice:

She says so far she has apple picking and indoor surfing. Any other ideas on how to do newsgathering for this type of piece? Call the chamber of commerce about unusual attractions. Call their tourism bureaus.

So Joan says summer fun, not summer fat. How do fix your healthy eating plan while going to barbecues, and out for ice cream, and all that.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. You know what? Yeah, it's a little late to pitch a summer idea right now, but hanging your article idea on a seasonal news hook works well. For example, I did one for Health called Summer Bummers, and it was about summer health woes that you often get like bug bites, and jellyfish stings, and sickness from eating the mayonnaise at the cookout, and things like that. So that could work.

It's a little late to do it now, but that's definitely an evergreen idea that the health and fitness magazines run a lot. How to avoid getting fat over Thanksgiving. How to avoid getting fat over Christmas. How to avoid getting fat in the summer. So you might even want to try to give it a slightly more unique slant because they are going to see that a lot from writers, but it's a good, solid idea.

Carol Tice:

Rachel says what does climate change mean for western powder? A new study reveals the most detailed information to date on how snowfall patterns are changing. She's thinking Outside magazine, Freeskier, Powder magazine.

Linda Formichelli:

Interesting.

Carol Tice:

A lot of people don't think climate change exists. This is probably the kind of story...if you have a journalism background, and you've done investigative before, and fully reported controversial issue type stories, and there is a new study, then I say got for it. But otherwise, I think it's going to be a tough one to assign because they're going to worry that you don't understand all the ethics around how to do this kind of reporting.

So Melinda says why even the museum averse will love Crystal Bridges. Ten ways the \$800,000,000 Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville will blow your mind. It's been open for three years. Opening this year is a Frank Lloyd Wright structure they have moved and restored from the East Coast.

While new exhibits are always good, these are pretty tough to get because there's usually an arts critic on top of that, and I didn't see any markets pitched here. So bring this to the forum so we can talk about it more, and tell us where you're thinking that would appear.

Yeah, okay, Beryl, I guessed right on your headline. I see that.

Paul says burger biz faces naked truth. It's about Carl's Junior and an ad campaign for Ad Age or Adweek.

Linda Formichelli:

Does it say what about ad campaign?

Carol Tice:

They're doing an all-natural, no-steroid burger. There's a ton of chains that are already doing that. Bring that to the forum because I need to learn more, and we need to delve into it more.

Michelle's is how to save face while having a panic attack in public. I don't know. Where's the market for that?

Linda Formichelli:

Lots and lots of people have panic attacks. A huge portion of the public has panic attacks. I'm one of them, so I know. It's like, what, 40% of the population has had a panic attack or something.

Carol Tice:

Really? Wow.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh yeah. No joke, and a lot of people it's misdiagnosed as heart problems and stuff. How to save face when you're having a panic attack in public. So that then narrows it down to people who are having regular panic attacks in public, which narrows it down a little bit. Wow. It's super interesting. I'm wondering are there markets there, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah, that's what I don't know.

Linda Formichelli:

If there are no markets there, if you can find markets that this would be relevant for, that is a very, very interesting idea. I'm just having a little bit of trouble wrapping my head around it. It's super interesting. Put it in the forum. Let's get into it there because I like it, but there's something bothering me about it, and I don't know what it is.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, I don't know. I guess...

Linda Formichelli:

Two people have said they would read this article. Yeah.

Carol Tice:

I want to know if it's new. Are there new things we can do about it?

Linda Formichelli:

But you know what? The thing is I don't think I've ever seen anything on you are having a panic attack? You're in public. How can you...I mean, it's embarrassing because you can come off like you're going crazy. You could be throwing up. I mean, it's awful, and you really want a way to mitigate that in public. So if there are tips for how to do that...if there might be anything new to say about it, but I think it's a new idea that hasn't been done, and that can make it okay.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, that could be groovy. Delphine's is about how to communicate medical information to patients. To market to health magazines or trade pubs. You're going to need to flesh this out. How to communicate what? What magazine is it for, and how will it be more than very basic, 101...it doesn't sound like it's for health magazines. It sounds like it's for trade publications for physicians or nurses. So I'm not sure...

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. If you could come up with some surprising things, surprising new techniques for communicating with patients health information, because I'm sure that all of the medical and health trades have...that's a very basic, evergreen idea. Now you need to put a spin

on it. What's new? What's surprising? Is there a theme around it or something like that? It's the seed of an idea. It's pretty solid I'd say, but it's very basic. So it needs something.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Absolutely. Next up Loretta says if you're allergic to ragweed, what foods can cause cross-reactions and make you sick?

Linda Formichelli:

Can you read that again? I was in the chat.

Carol Tice:

I guess this isn't the headline, but an idea. If you're allergic to ragweed...and who isn't? What foods can cause cross-reactions and make you sick? You might be surprised to know. For Allergic Living or...

Linda Formichelli:

Is honey one of them? I think honey is one of them. I've seen this, but if it's surprising ones, that would be cool. I've seen honey. I've seen this idea done, but if they're surprising and new ones that you haven't thought of, that could be really cool.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So you'd have to do some research on what's already out there. See how groundbreaking what you have is.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. Can I say, I want to go back to that panic idea for a second because Chris posted public is a relative term. The article could cover various situations, like you're having a panic attack at work. You're having a panic attack on the bus. You're having a panic attack outside. That is a very interesting way of treating it too. I'm loving this. Thank you for that, Chris.

Carol Tice:

So Sarah has a salad dressing pitch that she's thinking of for Costco Connection. I think it's really hard to get into their recipe/food side. I think they really pre-plan it. It'd be really hard to predict what they're carrying next winter. I don't know how else you would do it.

Linda Formichelli:

Can you read me the idea? Because I have some market ideas for it.

Carol Tice:

It says a wintery mix. DIY salad dressings and seasonal combos to heat up cold days. Creative and seasonal ways to keep getting your greens and to use up your Costco bounty in fun ways.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay, because Carol was saying she knows Costco Connection. She's written for them. However, there are a lot of custom published supermarket magazines. Hannaford has one called Fresh that I have a friend who wrote for. She did recipe development for them. So some of those could be very good markets.

The only thing is, for the purposes of this class, we want you to come up with an idea that you're going to do interviews and reporting for and that you're just not the expert for. Otherwise, you're not going to get a lot of out the next lesson. So think about that, but I do think it's a cool idea for the supermarket custom pubs.

Carol Tice:

Hang on a second while I rebuild this event to be a little longer. Oh, they're not going to let me. This is going to cut off in three minutes because we had a 90-minute length on it as a max.

Linda Formichelli:

All right. So we should wrap it up and check the forum.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I think what I'm going to do is scoop up everything that we haven't gotten to here that's posted, and I'll bring it to a forum thread in general questions, and we'll hash it all through there. This has been mind-blowing. I'm really excited by how energized people are. Hopefully this has given you a great idea of how tough this is to really get a specific enough idea that's not too specific for a specific publication that it is really right for. So I'm hoping that this provides a lot of inspiration for folks and that we can take it all over to the forums.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, and one more thing. Everybody, look at everything in the forums, not just your own thread. Interact with one another. Get to know one another. Post ideas for each other. I see this happening in the chat with the panic attack idea, and I'd love to see more of that in the forums because you'll learn a lot that way and also can help one another, and that would be awesome. Thank you. Thank you.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Thanks, everybody. I'm copying and pasting, and I will see you over on the forums. Thanks, all.

Linda Formichelli:

Bye, everyone.

Carol Tice:

Terrific ideas and terrific questions.

Linda Formichelli:
Bye.