

(Note: Many names are phonetically transcribed)

Carol Tice:

Hi everybody, and welcome to our one-month accountability call for Pitch Clinic. This is your chance to ask some final questions of me and Linda Formichelli, who is also here.

Linda Formichelli:

Hello.

Carol Tice:

And to check in about whether you've been sending pitches, and what kind of responses you've been getting. We are here to help you overcome whatever obstacles are standing in your way. And we also have a massive dose of inspiration for you as we have many assignments to report that students have already received from sending out their pitches this month.

We said when we set up the refund offer that you didn't have to get an assignment in the month of May, because we know how it can take editors months and months. But we have been blown away by the number of immediate responses and assignments that we have seen with the students in this class.

We're definitely keeping the requirement to send out eight pitches in the month after class, because this has made a big difference in how many students take action after class and get into the habit of sending out pitches regularly.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. So I just want to say, it was amazing to see how much success writers have when they actually send out pitches. I mean, it seems to me that the sticking point for a lot of writers isn't, "I don't know how to write a pitch," it's that, "I'm just not sending them."

Because as soon as people start sending them they're getting assignments. And I want to say, "Congratulations" to everyone who's gotten an assignment, and hopefully everybody else will too. We're going to be doing an announcement talking about the assignments that people got during this month.

But first I have a few comments for you based on just what I've been seeing in the queries. Whenever somebody bcc'd me and Carol on a pitch I would actually read it and give comments if I noticed anything that could be changed for the next time. And I just wanted to make sure that everybody was trying their best, and I did have to push back on that a couple of times.

But I do want to say, I loved seeing how many students pitched niche markets like local parenting mags, and trade magazines, and small businesses and so on, and that really

shows you're doing your research and expanding your sights beyond those newsstand magazines and those huge businesses that everybody else is pitching.

I also wanted to say that I love it when I see a pitch that doesn't work for me, I'm like, "Oh, I don't know about this pitch," but I remind myself I have to keep an open mind, that there is more than one way to do a pitch, not every idea is going to appeal to me personally, and you never know what an editor will like. And I've actually seen a couple pitches in this class where I had suggestions for improving it or I was like, "Oh, I don't know about this," and then they actually ended up making a sale.

So that's always a good reminder to me, and it's also heartening to know that there's room for all kinds of ideas, and writers, and pitches, so that's great. On the downside, I didn't like seeing almost every single, I'm talking like every single magazine or blog LOI included the statement, "I went through some of your back issues and have a couple ideas that might be interesting to your readers." And I know this was something that we wrote in our sample LOI, and I think people just kind of took that wholesale.

And there were a few other issues I saw with lack of personality and creativity as well, like some stilted writing style and people using our sample LOI as a template. And I want to remind everybody that as a writer you're not just someone who puts words on the page. There is no template, otherwise nobody would need you.

You put words on the page in a way that no other writer can do, otherwise why would an editor or client hire you and not one of these 1,000s of other writers who can also sort of write in a template standard format? So I'm hoping that after this you will start to expand yourself and think creatively. Editors want to hire you and not a robot who puts words on a page, so do not be afraid to let your personality show. Carol, do you have any comments you wanted to mention?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. My philosophy about this, and I feel like when you get this and you incorporate it into your brain everything gets better for you. And the thing to remember is, when you're sending a query letter, when you're sending a letter of introduction, it's a writing audition. So every word really has to count, and really needs to ooze your personality, and fit their style. And I just always think of like a chorus line, and the dancers auditioning and having to really give their all and put it all out there.

And it's like that's what you're doing on that page instead. And so whenever people say to me, "Oh, well, I've created a template I'm going to use for my LOIs," I'm just like, "Stop." Because just replicating a template, I just don't know anyone who gets good results that way.

And honestly, if any of you wrote that, that you looked at their back issues, and you didn't really, I'm not happy, and you could really end up being embarrassed by that. Because what you're pitching might be something that appeared six months back. So

don't say it if it isn't true, and really make the words count. Really make it happen. I think...

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, make the words yours. I mean, you need to say, "You know, I have some ideas for you," but there are so many millions of ways that you could be saying this in a way that sort of resonates with your own personality. So should I go onward?

Carol Tice:

Yes.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay. So some exciting parts. I've been keeping a tally on who has sent eight different pitches out, and here are the results so far. We have 21 writers who have already sent out their eight pitches, and I'm going to tell you who they are, and I want you to forgive me if I mangle the pronunciation of your name. We have Alex Owen, Alan Taylor actually sent out 10 queries, Ananda Wye, Belinda Cianci, Bena Joseph, Carol Kool, Cora Lydon.

Cynthia Beauman actually did way more than eight pitches but only sent us her eight best because she was challenging herself. We have Debbie Sullivan-Reslock, Emily Matres, Kendall Gagy, Leanne Bonin, Maureen Mackey sent out nine, Michelle Croyle, Rachel Brophy.

Rebecca DeFauss, I am so sorry if I do not get your name right. Renee Moyers, Rowe Shetty, Sara Teak, Stephanie DeGuss, another one I can't pronounce, and Suzanna Shorrack. And we need to set interviews with all of you for the class case studies, and then you will get your refund. Congratulations.

Carol Tice:

Yay, woo, I just want to put some applause in. Yeah, it was awesome to see. Yeah, as I said, it was kind of a surprise to us. Many of these writers have already received assignments. We thought, oh, you know, it'll be months, and the wins will trickle in this summer. But instead, quite a few red hot pitches resulted in an immediate response and an assignment.

And these wins are proof positive that you can leverage way more than the price of this class with the knowledge you get in Pitch Clinic. We felt that should be true, and it actually is. And that your great idea gets you in the door even if you don't have a lot of clips.

I want to start with Debbie Sullivan-Reslock, who got \$1,000 trade pub article assignment off her pitch. She said she was never getting responses before this class. And Vanessa Rombok sold her Hip in Ghent idea, which went through many drafts in class to b.there, the Insight magazine for Brussels Airlines. "I wrote this one and was not surprised to see it sell once it got hammered into a final shape." Linda?

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. And yeah, we have Melinda Schneider, who got two \$500 article assignments from a niche magazine for fans of King Airplanes. Her query got approved, and while she had the editor there she sold him another idea, on an aircraft museum she was going to visit. So that is a nice quick \$1,000. Awesome. Maureen Mackey got a 1,200-word assignment at .25 a word after she summoned her nerve, as she put it, to send out the LOI she worked on in class to a coffee trade pub. That is an awesome foot in the door.

Louisa sold a \$150 blog post to Midwest Living, which she's hoping will be an entrée to more gigs on the print side of the magazine. And she also sold her Moms and Guns pitch to Jezebel for \$250. Linda vanKeuren got her first paid assignment ever as well, from Carolina Parent. And Stephanie in the Netherlands sold her idea on the New Adult Genre to Schrijven Magazine in Holland.

Carol Tice:

We knew there was a market for that somewhere, but we were all scratching our heads. Obviously it was not in the US, so I love that. I loved that Moms and Guns pitch. I'm totally unsurprised to see that sold, too. So Cynthia Beauman last I checked, though I haven't checked e-mail this morning so there may be more I think, Cynthia Beauman had gotten four assignments off her pitches for a total of \$650.

One is on the Celtic Arts Revival, in the August issue of Celtic Life Magazine. Way to find a niche magazine and pitch them a topic up their alley. Cynthia also let us know today she got hired from an LOI she sent to a furniture company to be their writer at \$150 to \$250 a blog post on a topic she knows well, twice a week. This is a nice ongoing gig. And she received a response to a pitch she sent to a magazine six hours ago, and they said they were interested.

And moving on from Cynthia, Bena Joseph got an assignment from Pace Magazine for her Malaysian Jungle Safari idea. Ananda Wye just today got an assignment from Pacific Horticulture magazine for a pitch he sent out two days ago. God, now I just saw the topic. I'm going to find the topic.

Linda Formichelli:

It's the orchids one.

Carol Tice:

Oh, that's right. It was about the people who travel around collecting orchids, and they totally loved it. Jenny Chen was offered a full time copywriting job in California based on one letter of introduction she got, and we think she's going to pitch them back to do freelance for them. But I think that that is a new high for any of our classes, ever. I don't know that we've ever had anyone get a full time job out of stuff they did for the class, so that was pretty amazing.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, I'm getting a little teary just reading these.

Carol Tice:

I know. It's pretty incredible.

Linda Formichelli:

Well, I have another one. Chris Buar, I hope I pronounced that right, Chris, got in with Library Journal. They asked for more pitches and said they would send him assignments, as well. Rohi Shetty was asked to go ahead and submit his article for Naturopathy Magazine, and he also made a connection at uruguay.com and is setting up a meeting with them.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. People are talking in chat. I just want to say, I don't know if this is a comprehensive list. This is just the ones that have been reported to us and that we've managed to log in. I think most of these came from the top takeaways, so there may be more buried in our spreadsheet that I haven't even unpacked.

Nicole Sutter Graham has a go from VFW, Veterans of Foreign Wars magazine, for her first article there. I'm not immediately recalling the idea, but I just remember that I just thought it was great, and she worked really hard on it. And yeah, if there are other assignments that have happened that we didn't mention and you're live here on the call and have stuff for us, please post it in the chat. And please post it in top takeaways when you are done with this.

How many total people got assignments? I don't know, we haven't tallied it up, and they keep coming in. But at the end of the week maybe we could do a final. Rachel says, "I was doing an interview this morning," and the interview source wanted to give her a job. Nice.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, my God. Yeah, what's the job, Rachel?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So I think we're up to questions, and it looks like you have pasted some in here, Linda, into our strip.

Linda Formichelli:

I pasted them all in there, that were there as of like 10 minutes ago.

Carol Tice:

Okay. So let's get started. And by the way, someone says, "If these are off-topic, ignore me." This is open to any freelance writing topic here. This is our final call. Whatever you need to know that we haven't managed to hit, just ask away. So Ananda says, "What's a good way to determine how much to charge if you're asked?" And I think related

question, "Do we negotiate pay on our first assignment or just accept what they offer if it's not too low?"

I'm going to assume you're talking about publications in my answer, because it kind of works differently with businesses. With publications I try and get them to tell me what they pay, and if it is half decent I usually take it on a first assignment. And then blow their minds with my first assignment, and negotiate up from there, has been my general philosophy. What about you, Linda?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, sorry, I'm answering somebody else's question.

Carol Tice:

No problem.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. Sorry, what was the question? Oh, you know what? Yes.

Carol Tice:

Oh right, Sarah Hawkins reminds us that she got an assignment in a day flat writing a short piece for Backpacker.com at .25 a word. Thanks for reminding us on that. Yeah, I know that some have slipped through the cracks here that we didn't get into our announcements. Alan says, "I've had some callback requests and have an interview appointment set for later this week." Awesome. Yeah, I remember that they wanted to like sit down with you, so usually assignments flow out of that, so that will be awesome.

Linda Formichelli:

By the way, can I mention something?

Carol Tice:

What?

Linda Formichelli:

I neglected to mention that Melinda Schneider also has her eight pitches in, and she's the one who was in King Air.

Carol Tice:

Really?

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. Ding, ding.

Carol Tice:

Okay. Awesome. That's right. I remember that.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. That's what I was doing when you asked the question, sorry.

Carol Tice:

Okay, no problem.

Linda Formichelli:

I'm also fielding e-mails and stuff.

Carol Tice:

So Rohi asked, "When is the next Pitch Clinic?" Because you're dying to go through this torture all over again? You actually can participate in future Pitch Clinic classes at no additional charge, just something awesome we do. I know a lot of gurus who make you pay sort of a reduced fee that you have to pay again if you want to take the class again, but we don't. The next Pitch Clinic, we're thinking it's in the fall, but nothing confirmed yet.

He says, "I would like some more help with writing the article after my pitch has been accepted. Best resources, post e-book courses." Well, we do a pair of them, and our Four-Week Journalism School one is going to sell an audit this summer, where you get the materials only. And then we think Article-Writing Master Class turns up again in January 2016.

But I mean, in general, writing the article to me is like, write a lot of articles. But yeah, if you want this feedback, we've got classes. And study the magazines that you want to be in, and look at how they construct their articles.

"At what stage after acceptance should I ask an editor for a contract or about payment and rights if they don't mention it?"

Linda Formichelli:

Right away.

Carol Tice:

Yeah.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes, you cannot move forward without knowing how many words you're going to do and what you're getting paid for it, and editors always leave that out. In fact, somebody today just wrote to me with a win they had where the editor was like, "Yes, we want it," and they didn't mention anything about pay, or deadline, or word count. You do need to get that straightened out right away.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I guess people feel nervous, like they think that there's some magical process here, and they don't what the process is, and like they're afraid to say anything. But the

process is, editors are really scatterbrained and going 1,000,000 miles an hour, and sometimes they just forget to say, "Oh yeah, I'm sending a contract. It's, you know, this many words at this pay."

I actually just did that with my Forbes editor. I'm just right now doing a profile piece for them, and yeah, he wasn't telling me how much it was going to pay, or the word count either. So you just have to ask.

Linda Formichelli:

I can answer this next question. "Should I use my Gmail e-mail ID or the one with my name, rohishetty.com, when pitching editors? So far I've used the Gmail, because it's more convenient." And you're going to find this amusing. I actually interviewed a whole bunch of editors on this a couple years ago to ask what they think about different types of e-mail addresses.

And they kind of look down on Yahoo, and AOL, and Hotmail, and all those other free ones, except Gmail was somehow acceptable. I think it has this sort of panache as being more technically savvy. But the best, on top of everything, is using your own domain name e-mail address if you have one.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. It comes up more professional.

Linda Formichelli:

I use Gmail, though.

Carol Tice:

So Suzanna says, "Are there better and worse times to send in pitches?" We just really like people to not get obsessed with trying to figure out if there is a magical moment that's better to send a pitch in. Just send them.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. I've had responses over Christmas, I've had responses on the weekend, I've had responses at 10:00 at night. You never know when somebody's sitting there. And the magical thing about e-mail is, it doesn't matter when you send it, it's going to be in their e-mail box next time they open it up.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I just think once you start that second-guessing game, it's just sort of an insecurity thing, and you're just sort of, "Oh well, now it's, you know, that week between Christmas and New Year's." "And now it's a three-day weekend." Suzanna was saying she sent a bunch of hers over the long weekend, which I actually hadn't noticed. I was like, "Look at that."

Linda Formichelli:

Lots of people did.

Carol Tice:

He was like, "Is it better to e-mail first thing in the morning rather than at night or over the weekend?" Yeah, just don't be like that. Just send it when you are ready to send it. I tend to not send some things at 10:00 p.m. or something, because I don't want people thinking I work at night.

I don't want them to think I'm doing this 24/7. But just yeah, send them when they're ready to be sent. Honestly it's a sad commentary on our society, but there is no not-work time any more. People are on all the time now. I may not be happy about it, but it's a reality. So it's just something that's out there. I see that chat is sort of beach-balling to just hang in the stack. And if it doesn't come back for you just go into Q&A and put things there. That's fine as well.

Linda Formichelli:

And I can answer Cora's question.

Carol Tice:

Go ahead.

Linda Formichelli:

She says, "Have you ever successfully negotiated with a magazine on the rates, and if so do you have any tips for trying to secure a better rate for a feature?" I was Family Circle magazine's highest-paid writer several years ago when I asked for a raise and I got up to \$1.50 a word.

And what I like to do, and Carol might have some different suggestions, is I like to do a good job a couple of times, and then I send a very nice e-mail saying, "You know, I've written for you a couple of times. You like my work, your readers like my work, and I was wondering if you could go to bat with me with the editor-in-chief," or whoever their boss is, "to get me a bump up in pay?"

And often that is a yes, and sometimes it's a no, and then you have to decide, do I want to continue writing at this pay, or do I want to politely say goodbye? What do you think, Carol?

Carol Tice:

I also have negotiated pay. First they have to be someone who loves you. You have to have written for them more than once, and they have loved, loved, loved that you've gotten letters to the editor, or tweets, or whatever they need to be happy. You've really knocked their socks off. And that's the time to go in. The thing is, if you ask for more and they won't give more, the other thing you can negotiate is payment terms. With some magazines they're awful.

I used to write for a local city magazine that's owned by a big chain, and our joke was that they paid half-past when the messiah comes. Literally, one piece I got paid like nine

months after I wrote it. And it's just ridiculous. And so I negotiated that I got 50 percent on acceptance and 50 percent on publication, to protect myself against, "Oh, we decided to bump this to another issue of the magazine." And it just was getting longer, and longer, and longer, and longer, and longer.

And that to me was almost as good as a raise. Because when they're taking six months to pay you, I call that Bank of Carol, that it's really my money. I've earned it already, and you're going to keep it for six months, and earn interest on it, and use it to run your business, and I hate that. I'm not a bank, I'm a writer. So you can negotiate the terms closer. I've stuck with magazines who just did that for me. You want to take Renee's question?

Linda Formichelli:

Yes, I do. Renee says, "What are the rules for editing quotes? How much, quote, 'cleaning up of a quote,' can you do before it stops being a quote?" We actually talk about this in our upcoming J School quite a bit. And the answer is, you can edit a quote for grammar, and you can fiddle with a quote as long as you keep the meaning of what the person said intact.

So for example, I've done interviews where somebody will give half a thought, and then they'll kind of ramble on for a few minutes on something different, and then they'll give the other half of the thought. It is okay to take those two and stick them together into one quote, for example. And you start to develop a sort of sixth sense for when a quote is getting to the point where you really need to paraphrase. Do you have any tips on that, Carol?

Carol Tice:

I just think if it's boring you should paraphrase it. Quotes should be fascinating. There's a reason they're in the quote, because quotes are set apart. They're like, something interesting should be in there. If it's something that you feel like you could just as easily take the quotes off it, and it's just sort of factual information that's being conveyed. That's something that we saw a lot in draft, was that we'd have quotes, but they were quotes that should have just been paraphrased. They weren't that fascinating.

My closing joke with most sources, they'd say, "You know, I hope you're going to take out all my umms and uhs." I'd always say, "We clean it up and make you sound totally legit, at no additional charge," and they were always so relieved and happy to hear that their quotes would be refined by you. So they are expecting that. Just don't change the gist of the meaning of what they said, and you won't have a problem.

Linda Formichelli:

Cool. And Suzanna has a good question. She says, "Can you two elaborate a little bit about what level of income is realistic after a few years of freelancing? It feels like it would be hard to get and complete enough assignments in a year to patch together a decent living. We've got other revenue streams, but when you are just relying on article

writing, after five years of it how many features and other pieces were you writing yearly?”

And that question is really hard to answer, because it just depends very much on how fast you write and what your hourly rate is. I think people get really stuck on the per-word rate, but one thing that helped me be successful very early on, my first year I made \$30,000, second was 50,000, and I think my third year was \$80,000, and I did not have my classes or anything like that at the time. It was all magazine writing and copywriting.

And I think what really helped with that was that I could write pretty quickly, and that I was targeting not only these gigantic magazines where you think, oh my God, I have to make \$2 a word to make this work, but smaller magazines and companies where your hourly rate actually turns out better. So you're probably thinking, oh my God, if I'm going to write for Redbook, sure they pay \$2 a word, but it's going to take me like two months to write the assignments.

Well, \$2 a word sounds pretty good, but if you were writing for a smaller trade magazine where you could write much more quickly and they didn't make you go through six months of edits, then your hourly rate could actually be higher. And you want to really focus on those kind of bread and butter clients that are giving you a really good hourly rate.

I think that's the main way I did it. I was writing for a lot of trade magazines, a lot of online magazines, and every once in a while I would write for Family Circle, or Redbook, or Health, but they were more like the dessert that gets you nice clips, gets your name out there. What do you think, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I have pulled up my post that is an analysis of my 2011 income, which was the year where I really didn't have a lot of income yet from my blog, or teaching, or anything. And I earned 100K, or 96 or something, just from freelance writing entirely and did a whole analysis. Here, I'll put this in your chat thread, which is backup. Sorry about the crash-out again. Really, we're not thrilled with Instant Teleseminar these days, and we are looking at other possible options.

But I was looking to see how much of it was editorial. The big picture answer, Suzanna, is that most of the people I think we know, and ourselves, that earn well, that are in the six figures, that earn a mid-five figure and higher freelance writing income, don't write exclusively for publications. Or if they do, they have a stable of ongoing publications who assign them like three assignments every issue.

I went through a long period where Entrepreneur was like that for me, where I would get like three article assignments from them for every issue. If you can build those kind of deep relationships that works, but mostly we've got a mix. So my mix included, about a

quarter of my income was just blogging on Entrepreneur's blog three times a week. That was sort of my big client that year.

And then I had a financial services company, oh, this is American Express that I did a bunch of big reported features for online exclusives that were two grand apiece, as I recall. I did a government contract and wrote a couple annual reports. And then I think I was blogging for Lending Tree, and I did some interview-based blog posts for another media company. I don't even remember who this is. Oh I know, this is BNet, which is gone now.

Carol Tice:

I was on a paid contract to write some book chapters for the first book I did, How They Started, so I had some income from that. And then another financial services company I did some blogging for, and I think I was still writing for AllBusiness.com, which is a sort of magazine-ish online business info portal. I had some small business blog clients and a software services client. I think Linda also wrote for that same client, as I remember.

Linda Formichelli:

Which one?

Carol Tice:

It was that software guy that we both wrote for. They saw us on Copyblogger.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, God. Oh my God, I totally forgot.

Carol Tice:

Remember him?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, I do remember him. Oh, my God. I can't remember like half my clients.

Carol Tice:

I know. Well, this is four years back now. It's a lot of clients ago. I wrote a recruiting package for a local hospital, and then I had a couple other small business blogging clients. And then, this is when I was writing for Costco Business Services newsletter, I did a few pieces for them. And then I wrote a few blog posts for, I think this is for Rogers in Canada. They posted them on their Facebook page, I think. And then like five percent of the income was some miscellaneous one-off projects.

So it was about 14 clients that I worked on at various points in the year, and Entrepreneur I would count as a magazine. So I'd say really a quarter to maybe a half of this could be considered kind of editorial, and the rest was on the business side. And I first got exposed to this when I was writing for a special section of the Seattle Times, and I asked one of the other reporters who else she wrote for.

And she said, “Oh, Ford,” and my jaw was on the floor. I didn’t know you could do both until that moment. I was just like, “You write for Ford Motor?” and she was like, “Yeah, yeah. I do all kinds of, you know, they send out things to the car owners.” And that was sort of the beginning of the light dawning for me that you need a mix of kinds of clients to make a really stable and lucrative business, and you need clients with ongoing work that...

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, Suzanna wants to know what kind of hours you were putting in at that time. I mean, I didn’t have any kids when I started, and I would say at least 40 hours a week.

Carol Tice:

I was putting in 40 on that and then going upstairs and working from 8:00 to midnight on the blog after my kids went to sleep. I had two little kids. Four years back my kids were like grade-schoolers. So anyway...

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, by the way, let me mention I put up a post. I wrote on Copyblogger on how to earn \$250 an hour, and that’s in the chat.

Carol Tice:

Cool. I don’t see it.

Linda Formichelli:

Well, it’s up there now.

Carol Tice:

The chat is grumpy today. I’m sorry. But hopefully we can get back in and see it. I’m attempting to do that now. But take Suzanna’s other question, about how early to send seasonal stories.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, she said, “How early is too early to send a pitch, like sending something linked to a holiday almost a year away?” I’ve had students do that, and I’ve done it myself, and if they’re interested usually they say, “Can you send this to us again in six months?” So you could do that, but it probably makes more sense to wait until it’s about six months away so you can get an immediate response and an immediate assignment if they want it. Carol?

Carol Tice:

Cool. So Linda has asked the classic question, “If you haven’t heard back from an editor, how long should you wait before submitting another pitch to them?” You may know that I am not a fan of waiting in general. Probably if I have several ideas for them I’m going to do multi-pitch and send them in one pitch.

I have had a lot of wins with multi-pitch type pitches. I just feel like it gives them more chances to say yes to me, and I'd rather send them three thumbnails and say, "Hey, you know, let me know if you want me to flesh any of these out." But if you're just sending one query and now you have another query, what do you think, Linda?

Linda Formichelli:

I know, that's a really good question, because my thing is, I like to send things out as soon as I'm done with them. So if it's like three days later, okay, if it's a month later, okay. I don't think it really makes a difference as long as you're not hitting them with a query every single day and they're not responding. But after a couple times with no response I think I would just move on to another editor. Because clearly they're not responsive.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, I tend to do that too. Yeah, I'm like, "Hey, we're not clicking here, okay." Eliza, it take us two to three days to get replays and transcripts all organized. Vanessa says, "Is it too late to pitch for Thanksgiving?" Where are we, June, July, August. Probably not. But hurry up. Get it done.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, I think when we were doing this class, and one of our editors was from Health, she said, and this as like a month or two ago, that they were wrapping up the June issue.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I mean, Forbes I discovered works pretty close to deadline actually, because I think they want their news to be spanking fresh. But yeah, I mean, it depends on the magazine.

Linda Formichelli:

Okay. And let me answer Linda's question. I love this. She said, "I exchanged a couple of e-mails with an editor. She said she couldn't use the story now but to feel free to submit other ideas. Is she just being nice? Should I mention the first query or our dialogue in my next pitch to her?" Let me tell you, editors don't have to be nice. If they say...

Carol Tice:

Editors are not nice naturally.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes. If they say, "Please send me more pitches," I call that a nice rejection, and it is opening the door to a relationship. And one thing you have to realize is that a lot of times your query is just not going to hit it for them, but they like it so much that they want to see more from you, and you end up getting something else later.

And believe me, if an editor did not want to hear from you again she would not invite you to pitch, because the last thing I think a busy editor wants is people pitching them that they have no interest in publishing.

Carol Tice:

Absolutely. Yeah.

Linda Formichelli:

If they specifically mention this... Oh, go ahead.

Carol Tice:

They're not patronizing you. Yeah, they don't say that to everybody. They say that if they want more ideas from you. They're not kidding. And I would probably mention that you had chatted on e-mail, I wouldn't necessarily dredge up the other idea because you can end up assigning it. What do you think, Linda?

Linda Formichelli:

No, but you could just say, "You know, I pitched you in March and you suggested that I get back to you with more ideas."

Carol Tice:

So Alex says, "Any good tips on keeping motivated now that we don't have a pitch clinic keeping us accountable?" Yeah, you need to find an accountability buddy or come up with a system that works to keep you on track. I don't know if you're in Freelance Writers Den, but over there we do monthly goal-setting, we find writer accountability buddies. And in my new Den 2X level we have monthly Skype Masterminds with like 10, 12 people.

Find a writer friend if none of those options are available to you, and yeah, call each other once a week, and tell each other what you're supposed to be doing. Some of us are pretty self-contained and we can just set some goals. I need to send two queries every week. That's what I'm doing. It's tough to prioritize the marketing, but we have to.

Linda Formichelli:

Suzanna says, "Will the forum still be open so we can exchange ideas and info?"

Carol Tice:

Yes. The forum's not going anywhere. Your access if you have paid for this class and/or paid all three payments for this class, depending on which you did, you're set, and we don't expire things and lock people out of things. We think that's mean.

And yeah, feel free to keep networking, and talking to each other, and meeting up, and finding buddies, and forming Masterminds, and yeah, feel free to sort of, in an after-party over there and help each other out. That's a great idea. We were actually just talking to someone about creating that for our classes, and you guys could pioneer that and just keep growing.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, especially a forum just for our graduates to network in, what we're thinking of doing.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Yeah, that's what we were talking about. But for this class I'd say it's wide-open. Feel free. So Sarah says, "Do you have any classes or short seminars on pitching trades?" Our whole formula for pitching trades is inside of Pitch Clinic. It's really rocking that LOI hybrid.

I don't have more on that, it's really all packed into this class. Oh, are the pitches themselves posted in top takeaways? You know what, I would love it if people would do that. We're going to be doing some on case studies, so we'll probably be including the drafts in those, so they will appear...

Linda Formichelli:

That's a great idea.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, they will appear at some point. Thanks for, yeah, that is a superb suggestion.

Linda Formichelli:

If people give us their permission we would love to have them in there.

Carol Tice:

Awesome.

Linda Formichelli:

And what I love about that is just seeing the total diversity of styles and ideas, and how they all work. They all work, obviously, they got assignments.

Carol Tice:

So Michelle says, "Is there a good source for trade pubs besides TradePub.com? I don't know. I think that's pretty much the headquarters, and just using the Google. Myself, I don't go on there anymore, I just Google like, jewelry trade magazine, and you get everything you need. Google's really good at turning up publications. And you can also flip to the news tab to get press releases about things in trade magazines. They sometimes put out press.

So they're really not hard to find, even though they're not on the newsstands. And the other thing I used to do to find trade pubs all the time is, when I'd interview a source in a niche I was interested and I'd say, "You know, I'm wondering, what do you read in this industry to kind of stay up on the news?" and I'd get them to just give me the names of the pubs they read. Or if you were going in person I would look in their waiting room. What are they reading? Writers Market does have some trade pubs as well.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah. And a lot of people online have created directories for industries. For example, I had one mentoring client who wanted to write about tiles and flooring, and she didn't know where to find trades. And I looked up tile trade magazines, and some organizations in the flooring industry had put together a list of like six or seven trade magazines just for tiles and other types of flooring. So it's pretty easy to find.

Carol Tice:

Bena says, "Will we get to see all the individual case studies?" We haven't decided. We have quite a few we'll be doing, and we were just talking this morning about, are they going to all be one giant report, or are we going to make them into several, are we going to make them a list of individual ones where you can download the ones you're interested in? We don't know yet.

We haven't done this before, so we're going to see after we've done the case studies kind of what we think the best way would be to make them accessible. But that's a great idea. We could go ahead and post them for this class session so people could see them. You guys should certainly get a copy. Yeah, Alex says he found out for his brewing pitch by popping into pubs and saying, "What beer magazines do you read?" Yeah, exactly.

Linda Formichelli:

Awesome.

Carol Tice:

Just ask the people who would be the intended reader of that trade pub, "What do you read these days?" And did you find like tile trade magazines there, is that what you said?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah.

Carol Tice:

People just do not know how many trade publications there are.

Linda Formichelli:

Alex, did you have a success story that we do not have in here? I feel like we did and I don't have it in here. Let us know in the chat if I missed you. If I missed anybody, let me know, because my e-mail's like full of pitches I've been getting in the last couple of weeks has been crazy.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, it's been so helter-skelter with all the pitches coming in, and wanting to take a look and make sure they're groovy. Kat says, "Are we still part of the case study even if

we don't send LOIs in until later today or tomorrow?" The deadline is Friday, midnight Eastern. So oh, it did not sell. Okay.

Linda Formichelli:

It will. It will, Alex.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, I thought it was pretty nice. Keep sending that around. Yeah, if you have sent a few and you haven't sent your eight different pitches out yet, I think there are a few people who have sent some but have not sent eight. Yeah, you have a few more days.

Linda Formichelli:

Yes, we have till the 29th.

Carol Tice:

Sarah says she was inspired by our urging to ask for big name interviews. She e-mailed a New York Times bestselling author, and he responded the same day. Yeah, authors dying for publicity. So Chris says, "When magazine guidelines state submitting to a specific e-mail that's not for a set editor it's best to ignore that and use an editor's e-mail?" Yeah, just ignore that. This is all a personality test, where they want to see how interested and creative you are.

And we did see several people give up and send things to slush pile type inboxes, and they said, "I couldn't find anything." And honestly, Linda and I have never been presented with one of these where we couldn't find it within about 10 minutes. We want people to keep trying, because it really helps you get gigs if you can get out of that e-mail@, editor@magazine.

Linda Formichelli:

Is there another question?

Carol Tice:

I don't know. I want to go back over to Q&A. I think I have seen everything that was hanging around in chat.

Linda Formichelli:

Oh, Renee says, "Will the case studies be text or videos?" Wow. We were thinking text.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, text.

Linda Formichelli:

That's kind of cool, though.

Carol Tice:

We have not required on-camera time. Sorry about chat, Carol. Yeah. It's not in a good mood today again.

Linda Formichelli:

We've got to find a new system.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. We are exploring other options, because they really have refused to address our issues with chat, nothing's stable.

Linda Formichelli:

Michelle says, "Reader's Digest, I even called, and they only gave me the slush e-mail." And that's where you start looking at the masthead, calling after hours to see if that person is still there, looking then up on LinkedIn, looking them up on Google, looking them up in business directories, contacting them through LinkedIn, asking if you could pitch there.

There are a lot of ways. I mean, I can't remember a single time that I've e-mailed the slush pile. I have just found a way, and as a journalist, or as a writer or reporter, you need to develop this ability to sort of sleuth things out and figure things out, and uncover facts that maybe people don't want you to uncover.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So "I'm new to LinkedIn." So you just e-mail the editor and say, "Can I pitch you?" You actually InMail the editor in InMail then, LinkedIn's internal e-mail system. I've also hit people on Twitter and just said, "Hey, are you the right person to pitch for X?" Here are the steps. One, go on LinkedIn and search for that publication and everyone associated with that publication, and you will probably find some editors' real names. And then, yeah, InMail them.

Pick the likeliest candidate and say, "I have a pitch about X, are you the right person?" I find that's a very innocuous question, where people tend to be willing to throw you a bone and say, "Yeah, it's not me it's Joe Smith" or "Yes, it is me." Michelle says, "The sad thing is, there is a character limit." No, Michelle. It's not sad that there's a character limit, because you don't want to stuff your entire query letter into an InMail on LinkedIn. You just want to use it to connect and...

Linda Formichelli:

We're talking about Twitter, but yeah.

Carol Tice:

Oh, on Twitter, yeah. I can fit it into 140 characters, yeah. I have a pitch on X topic, are you the right editor?

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, I've been in contact with somebody over Twitter that way, and I actually ended up getting some really sweet gigs writing for a hospital.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Jenny says, "Should we shoot an e-mail to ask an editor what the rates are before taking the time to pitch?" No. You're never going to get a response to that. You're going to have to just get it done.

Linda Formichelli:

Which is sad. Yeah.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. But once you have a name then you can go on Google and go, contact editor name magazine, and see if you turn up a bottom of post where they said, e-mail them at this. We have a handout in this class called Seven Ways to Get Editors' E-mails, and we want people to open it up and really, really use it. Because honestly, this is an era of like zero privacy, and this is the upside of it.

We all hate that, "I have no privacy anymore." But this is where it works for you. You got to keep going until you find a real name. And you can use Linda's trick where you look at the advertising side and just see the e-mail convention, and then find a name, and just plug it into that convention. If there's a joe.smith@magazine.com and you get a name...

Linda Formichelli:

I don't know how new it is, but there's this free thing online where you can enter in e-mail addresses and they'll let you know if they work.

Carol Tice:

Oh yeah...

Linda Formichelli:

And I can't remember what it is, but it...

Carol Tice:

...we saw that tool.

Linda Formichelli:

...should be easy to find, and you just try different addresses until one gets through.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Yeah, Alan says he had Googled editors' contact info. There's also a tool on Twitter where you can search through to see e-mail addresses within someone's tweet string to see if they've ever given it out to anybody. I'm forgetting the name of that one, too. Let's see if I can turn that one back up. Because I remember using it and seeing

how I could find people's e-mails. I'll have to look that up. But just Google that, like, look up e-mails on Twitter, and you'll see, I'm sure there's more than one tool.

Tools@Email-Checker, yeah. That's the one, that tools@Email-Checker is the one where you can tell if it's an e-mail that's live. But then you can also search through someone's tweet stream to see if they've at some point said to somebody, "Yeah, just e-mail me at here." Yeah. Then there's also looking at if you're connected to that person through your LinkedIn connections, and you could get an introduction. But there's so many ways to attack this.

And the thing is, it's all a personality test about how much of an eager beaver reporter you are. They want to know that you are going to hunt down a source. If you need a source you're going to be unstoppable, and you're going to get that source. And when you hunt down their e-mail that they don't put on the website, and they've just got the editor@ one, then they know that you're a cut above the average bear of what they're seeing.

So Bena says, "Apart from class and future Pitch Clinic students will the case study be sent out to any others?" Yeah, it's going to be widely available when we are selling Pitch Clinic, to show people what goes on in Pitch Clinic. So yeah, if anyone has an objection to that, they may want to not be a case study and not do the refund program. That's totally your choice. But yeah, the point is that these case studies will be widely available to inspire and uplift people.

Oh, using all my tweets, that's what it is. Yeah, good, Michelle. Yeah, you search through all my tweets, is the tool that pops up. I remember I tested it on Linda, and I found her e-mail. So full time shocker for e-mail addresses. Yeah. You just have to get them, and it's just not that hard once you get a little clever. I'm always Googling. I'm going to put this in chat, like, contact editor joe smith magazine name. I mean, that's what I'm putting.

Linda Formichelli:

John says, "I've had luck with helpful switchboard operators who are in many cases happy to give editors' names and e-mails if you call and ask."

Carol Tice:

Yes, it's amazing how just breaking down and calling the publication, and just asking for somebody's e-mail, if you're nice often people will just do that. And meanwhile I feel like people spend hours and hours running around in circles online all sick and nervous about trying to figure this out, and giving up. And yeah, I mean, don't ever give up without at least trying to call the publication and find out. But I mean, it's so easy now.

I just am not sympathetic, I have to be honest, when people tell me, "Oh, I've tried and tried to find this contact" or to learn about this publication, and in my head I'm just thinking, "No, you haven't. You have not." You have not tried and tried, because it's just

not that hard. Call the publication and ask for a sample issue to be sent to you. Tell them you're a writer.

Go to your library, see if they have it in a data base. There's so many tools. I date to the days where when I wanted to identify publications I had to get off my butt, drive to the library, and get out a big, giant book called the Gale's guide. And it had this tiny boilerplate about like every publication on earth that you could read through, 1,000s of pages. And it was so laborious compared to how it is now.

Bob says, "I called and the admin said she would forward it to the editor I wanted, is that trustworthy?" Hopefully. I don't think they'd lie about it. But it's still not as good as having their e-mail so you can follow up. How are you going to follow up on that query if you want to? Yeah, Vanessa says, "You can download nearly every magazine these days." There's some that are behind a paywall, but almost everyone has some free content. You could see a list of topics in an issue. You can get a decent amount.

Reference USA, good tip, Rachel. Yeah, and you left the editor a voicemail, Bob, that sounds good to me. It sounds like you've done what you can, if you didn't sleuth out an actual e-mail. But I think what I want people to do is just develop, much like we made you develop the eight pitch muscle this month, just develop the muscle of getting these contacts.

Because it's a habit you get into. It never occurs to me to like, "Oh, I guess I can't find this editor. I'll just send it to this one main e-mail." I never do that, because I have the habit of finding them. This is your chance to be Sherlock Holmes. Find the e-mail. It's kind of fun, it's kind of a fun little sleuthing thing if you're into...

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, with the Reader's Digest I think it's just a matter of looking at the masthead, making your best guess at the type of editor that will be good for your pitch, and then testing out different e-mail addresses until you find one that works. And if you go to Reader's Digest sales or media page you can probably at least find their format, like Carol was talking about, and try plugging that in.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Resource librarians are probably the most underutilized resource in America, honestly. They know stuff. Ask them. Ask them to help you. Rachel says, "I've done more to further my freelance career in these two months than all the rest combined," and Vanessa says, "Same." That's awesome. How long was the rest of your freelance career? I'm almost afraid to find out.

Linda Formichelli:

And look, I just found out that the e-mail format is firstname.lastname@rd.com. So yeah, just pick an editor...

Carol Tice:

Yeah, you don't want to tell the two of us that you don't know how to find an e-mail, because we're going to find it like in 90 seconds, while you watch, and it's going to be embarrassing. So don't tell us you can't find an e-mail.

Linda Formichelli:

I'd test them out. I'd test them out, you never know.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, test it out on that tester one that we just talked about.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, that one's in their media kit.

Carol Tice:

Nice.

Linda Formichelli:

But you know what? Let me tell you, we've been doing this for like 20 years each, so don't feel bad.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Let's see. Carol Colt says, "I used one of those contacts thewriter@emailaddress for Money Magazine, but got an immediate, "We'll give your e-mail to the right area of our company" reply that made me believe it was a generic slush pile. Yeah, certainly.

"I checked with other people the company had and tried to match that style, and checked on MailChimp, because I have a newsletter. And then I resent it mentioning that I feared it had ended in the slush pile." I don't know if you want to call them out about having a slush pile. I don't know if I would do that.

Linda Formichelli:

Whatever. They know they have one. We all know.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I think I've pitched Money too, and never gotten anywhere.

Linda Formichelli:

Yeah, some magazines are just completely nonresponsive.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I mean, let's just take a minute to say that some of these magazines don't use a lot of freelancers and are really stuck on the 10 people they've been using for 10 years. And one of the reasons that they're not giving you an e-mail is that they don't want to hear from you. I mean, that's always the other possibility, is that they're not that hot on

hearing particularly from new writers. So yeah, so if you query those kind of folks and you don't hear back it's probably just not an approachable market.

I feel like people get these big, big markets in their heads, and they really want them, and then they get really crushed when they don't get a response, instead of realizing that like nobody gets a response from these people. I mean, I pitched Parade, and they did get back to me, but they passed. Some magazines are really hard to get into. And if you take anything away from our class I hope it's to look at the wide world of markets.

I mean, in this class we're pitching businesses, we're pitching trade pubs, we're pitching consumer pubs, and that's the mix we want you to come away with, is that there's a lot of different markets out there. And don't be limited in your thinking, because there are a million clients in the world out there. So that's probably about the end. Kat says, "Did anyone who sent the eight pitches send the same pitch to multiple places?" They may have, but those other pitches didn't count in their eight.

Linda Formichelli:

She just wants to know if they did it, and I think you should do it, definitely.

Carol Tice:

Yeah, Vanessa says she sent her Ghent query to 12 publications. Excellent.

Linda Formichelli:

Anyway, wow. Well, thanks everybody for doing Pitch Clinic. I'm really excited about how many assignments people have gotten.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. This has been just an epic class. I feel like really we learned a lot in this class about how to make the class more...

Linda Formichelli:

Motivate people.

Carol Tice:

...impactful and motivating, and how to help students get better results, that we will definitely be using going forward. So thanks for all of your input on it, and excited to just talk to people and round up some case studies starting next week. I think we're done.

Linda Formichelli:

Awesome. Are we all set?

Carol Tice:

You can bring us some more stuff back to the forum. Thanks, everybody.

Linda Formichelli:

Bye, everyone. Thank you.