

Carol Tice:

Hello. We are here to take your query questions and any lingering story idea questions, clear up any confusion people have about what's going on. Just off the top I'd like to say that we are seeing many people posting their idea and then posting the revision of that idea in a new thread and another revision of it in another thread and we're ending up with three and four threads about the same idea, and we would just like to beg you to not do that. Please post your revisions in the same thread so that we know what other editors have previously already said about it. There's just a lot of duplication of effort that is happening. So, that would really help us out.

And I think the most popular question we get is how do I know if I have a green light? You know if you have a green light on the story idea because one of the editors or Linda or me says, 'This is good to go. Look forward to seeing the query. You have a green light on this.' Words along those lines. Otherwise, if you see something like, 'Tell us what the market is for this and we'll see if there's a match or can you talk to your experts and see if this idea is really going to be validated.'

Yeah. Jenna just said hers said, 'Onward.' Yeah. That's your que that please develop a query. Otherwise, keep working on your idea. It's really _____ (1:47) and refining. Linda and my ideas also need this same exact process. We do it too.

Charlene says, 'If I got a green light on two ideas should I develop _____ (2:02) queries on both?' I think just one but feel free to develop the other one for one of your eight in the pitch challenge in November.

Yeah. You can make this chat box full screen and you can also use the little gear in the upper right hand corner and click on that and click on font to make the font bigger, which is like the first thing I do when I get in here because, yeah, I don't like reading teeny, tiny type. So I recommend everybody do that. I'm going to...yeah. I can make this bigger too for everybody. And I think we're just here to get to questions and we're going to start with the ones that are in the forum unless Linda has more thoughts for me.

Linda:

No. I think we are good. I just want to remind people, Leslie mentioned that we critiqued her idea on the call and she's not sure if she has the go ahead. I mentioned on the call that everybody should post their idea in the forum and let us know that this is a revise based on what we said on the call so that we can take a look at it there. Thanks.

Carol Tice:

Right. Yeah. Thanks for reminding me on that. So, I want to get to Christy's comment in the Den thread for this event for starters. 'Finding sources is really hard. What is considered an expert? I read in Linda's book that one of the editors was happy to see the writer not resorting to her own pediatrician which shot my original source out of the water.' Yeah. You don't want to use people that you have a personal connection to. I'm having trouble finding sources that respond and if they do they don't provide as much

info as my own pediatrician.' I have a post on this that we can throw in about source finding and I think Linda may have one too.

Linda:

Yeah. I think I have some.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. And I mean the big thing to know about sources is there's a million sources in the naked city and if the first three you try don't get back to you, you just keep going.

Linda:

And also she mentioned that I guess she had a local pediatrician she wanted to interview but then I noticed that you did interview a bigwig-sounding pediatrician in Texas. I don't know if the two you're talking about and if so it's not that we don't want you to ever interview anybody local it's just that we want you to think big. So you don't want to think about your pediatrician with like five patients who lives next door to you. You want to think bigger. So if that happens to be in your town that's fine but you don't want to just go for the easiest.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. True enough. Ryan, I'm not sure what you mean about get a link to the session outside of this class frame. I don't know what you...it won't look a whole lot different on ClickWebinar, which is where we're doing it. It should look roughly the same I think but if you want while Linda takes a question I could grab you the other link for it. Linda, you want to take another question.

Linda:

Sure. Ewe. Yes. Yeah, so Susan actually mentioned that she was contacting sources and it sounded like they were vetting her for credentials, and a lot of them do, do this and there's absolutely nothing wrong with it. So if they ask you who you are writing this for and you don't have an assignment, I wouldn't say, 'I don't have an assignment yet.' I would say, 'This is a pitch I'm working on for X, Y and Z magazine.' Then you name like the biggest ones that you're pitching.

And if they ask where you found them and who you are you just answer those as best you can because sometimes they have limited time and they really want to use their resources where they're going to get the best return from. So you shouldn't be offended if they're vetting you for your credentials or who you're writing for, or whatever. It happens all the time. And if they say no, again, like Carol said, there are tons and tons of sources out there who would be willing to talk with you.

And then Tanna says...one of the first clips I ever got, meaning Linda, was for the Journal of the Modern Language Association, and I actually used that to get my first assignment in a print magazine. She's in a similar boat and is wondering the best way to include them. And one thing I want to mention is that when you send a query to an editor you typically will not include your clips in any way. If you send an attachment and

the editor did not ask for them or doesn't know who you are she's likely to delete your email for fear of viruses.

So what I usually do is say, 'I've written an article for this magazine. Let me know if you would like to see it.' And a lot of times if the idea is good enough they just are happy knowing you've written for somebody and they don't even ask for it. If they do ask for it, if there's any way that you can scan it and send it as a pdf or send them a link, it's fine.

And as I mentioned on the last call one of my tricks I like to do is send the word file of the original article as I wrote it, which shows the editor what your writing looks like before it goes through the editing process, which is really nice for them because a lot of times they get a beautiful clip and it actually ends up it's more the work of the editor than the writer. So a writer can get pretty far writing a crappy article, editor makes it look beautiful, use it as a clip, get another assignment. So, there's that.

Carol, can you answer this question about how research for articles differs from academic research or do you want me to go on?

Carol Tice:

No. I can definitely talk about that. The thing about academic research is that you can cite paragraphs of it and put a footnote at the bottom of it and none of that happens in articles. And the other thing is that a thing you're quoting might be some PhD's research paper and that isn't generally the kind of expert source you would go to for an article. If you follow that link I posted about how to find out facts and make sure they are true, that guest poster goes through all of the basic places you want to look, academics, like professors, heads of research, facilities, governments, heads of associations and organizations.

And if you aren't finding an expert like that pediatrician you definitely want to ask at the association level. You want to go up and contact that association and say, 'I'm trying to find a pediatrician with this particular expertise. Who can you recommend to me?' So, we really, really recommend going up the chain rather than like I'm going to call 15 different individual pediatricians, and go to an organization where they know lots of pediatricians and can steer you in the right direction.

Most professional organizations have a speaker's bureau where they have a list of people who they know like to make time to talk to the media. They're into that and so you'll save yourself a whole lot of time that way, and usually get somebody who may be willing to talk with you even if it is unassigned. And the other big ask to make when you're talking to sources just for a query is that you just want five minutes of their time or ten, not that you're going to take up 40 minutes of their time. So, that's another thing that I think gets more yesses and more buy in from people. Hopefully that helps.

Oh, and but we were talking about also about research. I guess I answered that question by talking about the kind of sources we use in articles. And the trick is in the citation of that you're going to just sum up in a sentence and cite right in that sentence

where that came from. You're going to say, 'But a recent Pew American life study of 20,000 people found that only three of them find this topic interesting.' That's it. That's the citation. There's no footnoting. You're not going to get into a whole long explanation. I think what I left out was the date it happened, you know, conducted in September, found this. So, I'm looking at Tanna's question.

Linda:

Hey, can we get to Ray's idea that we accidentally missed on last week's call? I have it right up here.

Carol Tice:

Sure. Go for it.

Linda:

Okay. So Ray's idea was wine making has reached the heartland. Texas climbs the ladder of top American winemakers. Publication Food & Wine magazine, Wine, Spirits & Decanter. Audience is American adults looking to explore new wine varieties and learn about the origins of great wineries. And the news hook is that we have all these tried and true sources of great wine but the High Plains of Texas, believe it or not, they produce some of the best wine in the nation. And the story would explore the backstories of winemaking practices of four of the best wineries in Texas.

And I have to say I really like this idea but one thing is I think these food and wine magazines get tons of queries that are like, 'Oh, yes. We think of Napa and Sonoma but nobody thinks of my area where actually there are a lot of great wineries.' I know this because I see students pitch all the time so whatever area they're interested in or they're in has wineries and they're like, 'Oh, this is surprising. Nobody knows about these. We always think of Sonoma.' So I like your idea but I feel like editors will have seen this spin on it. So what do you think, Carol? Is there a way to kind of work with this for the wine magazines?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I gave Ray a ton of feedback on the forum and...

Linda:

On the wine one?

Carol Tice:

Yeah.

Linda:

Oh.

Carol Tice:

So, possibly right after the call if I realized we hadn't gotten to it. I think it's because I thought I have a lot to say on it and I thought it would just be better to put it in _____

(12:45). I want to circle back to...and so if she gives me a link I will do it again. I will look at... _____ (12:55).

Linda:

Yeah. I guess I'm looking at an older one.

Carol Tice:

I commented on it again but I think the system may have been eating a couple of my comments. So, the one thing Tanna asked that I want to just go back to is, 'The one thing I've been notoriously bad at through all my years of schooling is coming up with good titles for my papers. Do you have any tips for coming up with good headlines?'

Yeah. We've got tons of them starting with study the headlines of the publication that you're writing for and learn what their headline style is and then write the strongest headline you can. The fact is in print pubs the editor is going to end up writing the final headline so it's not like you have to kill with it but you need something pretty strong that gives them a pretty strong sense of what this article is going to be about to get in the door.

And I wrote school papers with titles like 'How to Gain Weight,' and think about something that makes people smile or scratch their heads. It's worth investing a little time. And with writing headlines for proposed things you're flesh out into a query, what we're really looking for is getting definition on the idea because we're getting a lot of headlines like two-word headlines that are sort of mysterious headlines and you don't really know what it's about, and that doesn't really work very well in this format.

It's almost a daily newspaper, old-time headline where a deck is going to come along and explain it, but a lot of online websites and a lot of magazines don't use that format. So study the format of the publication you want to be in and write a headline that they can envision being in their magazine. So it's kind of a little art form but I think it's really worth a time investment.

So, Maria, I saw you on this a call. You said, 'When I'm researching magazines to pitch my idea I come across some blogs that seem just as enticing. How do you proceed with this? May I pitch to both?' I'm not sure what kind of blogs you mean. Are these like online magazines that pay? For Pitch Clinic we're looking for you to pitch paying markets, so we're not taking people's pitches for I want to try to get in the Huffington Post or whatever. Have you gone on Alexa and looked up the ranking of those blogs and seen if they have any kind of an audience? In general, we'd like to see you aim for the best paying magazine that your idea is a good fit for. What do you think, Linda?

Linda:

I'm sorry. I was dealing with a chat.

Carol Tice:

Oh. She was just talking about pitching magazines, pitching blogs. I mean in general magazines are going to pay better but there are exceptions.

Linda:

Yeah. I saw her question actually and that's exactly what I had in mind. If you have some way of knowing that the blog pays, for the purposes of this class at least, we would like you to pitch places that pay because the whole purpose of this class is to get you paying gigs.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Right on.

Linda:

And Tanna says...or I guess Frank says, 'My articles aren't linked so the only way to do it is pdf. I guess I understand the not attaching pdfs to an email but I also don't want to ignore the editor's request for clips.' No. We don't...did you say not to ever attach pdfs?

Carol Tice:

My philosophy is don't ever go attaching anything to a query letter.

Linda:

Unless they ask for it. I mean if they ask for it I attach things, yeah.

Carol Tice:

Sure. If they ask me to send them something, super.

Linda:

Yeah. So you say in your query, 'I've written for X, Y and Z. Let me know if you'd like to see clips.' Then they write back and they say, 'Yes. I'd like to see clips.' And then you write back and say, 'Great. Here they are attached.' So it's not coming out of the blue like here's a bunch of attachments from a stranger that you didn't ask for. So, yeah. Yeah. No problem. You can definitely attach pdfs.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. If they ask but otherwise...

Linda:

So Thomas says, 'I'm referring to the writers' guidelines for submissions that say include pitch and two clips.' Well, in that case I guess if they get an email from somebody that has two clips, two things attached and it says they're clips then I guess that's not a problem.

I've got to tell you, you have to go with your gut on a lot of this stuff. We can't give you a black and white answer that's going to apply to every single situation out there and as a writer there's so much gray area. You know, one editor wants this and one editor wants

this but you said not to do this. So really just go with your gut. How can you make this work for you?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. When they say include two clips and I'm emailing them, I'm going to paste them in the bottom of my email message in the body of the email so that I'm not attaching anything. The other way to include your two clips is links to where they live on your writer's site that once again you're not attaching anything. I mean I just come at this from 12 years of working in newsrooms and watching picture editors and associate editors run through their email, which might have 100 emails in it, look for attachments, look next to the name and delete them if they don't know who that is. Delete. Delete.

They just go in and like that's the first thing they do in the morning. Go in, look at everything that has attachments and delete them all because they just have too much risk with viruses. They are building the newspaper on their computer desktop and they can't open things from people they don't know because it could take the publication down. So you just have to understand like this from the editor's side of the desk.

Yeah, Ava. We're not looking for anybody to pitch any blogs or sites that pay based on page views or based on ad clicks. In general, that adds up to tiny pennies and is really not a game for pro writers to be in except under some real specific circumstances.

Linda:

Yeah. And people are asking how to know when and whether certain blogs pay, and it's the same with magazines. Sometimes it can be so hard to tell. With magazines I always say if you have the pitch already written up in other markets in mind that you might as well send it anyway even if you don't know and then you'll find out if they want it whether or not they pay, but it's difficult if you're writing a pitch specifically for one publication or one blog and you have no idea if they pay. Carol actually has a post on my website all about this. Right, Carol? I'm going to look for it.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Look it up and throw it in.

Linda:

She's like, 'What? I don't remember this.' Six smart ways to find out if a magazine pays for freelance and probably some of this will apply to blogs. Let me stick it up there. All right.

Carol Tice:

So Sally had a great question. 'I'm interested in finding out more about how writers pitch contributed articles to editors where the business is your client and then you do the PR work of getting that article place in the Daily Journal of Commerce or whatever.'

We actually have a whole Freelance Writers Den bootcamp about that, that our moderator, Sharon Baker, put on how to make big money in PR, and so I've got like

three hours of information on that over in the Den, and the Den will be reopening at the end of this month. So, just to say. And the kickoff _____ (20:27) is how to make \$1200 an article and it's all about write it as a placed article instead of...and you have the business for your client instead of the magazine. It can be a real nice niche. Sharon makes really good money doing that.

If you've never done PR and you've never pitched editors as a PR person, I don't know if it's a niche for you to get into because that's what you're doing is being a PR person. It's really a PR role. There are scenarios where you get to ghost the article and you're not the PR person who's pitching it around. Sometimes they already have a relationship with that pub so that's not on you but that's just sort of one caveat on that is that it's a PR job, and you have to know how to price it so that you get paid even if you don't get a success pitching it around if they don't already have a thing already done. Linda.

Linda:

Oh, sorry. I'm responding to a bunch of people in the chat and actually Christy has a really good question. I actually answered this in your thread today and I was saying...by the way everybody should go look at...people are starting to post queries and they are looking very good. Some need work which is completely normal.

Christy had a really great one that I suggested that she send not just to her original market but to as many parenting and pregnancy magazines as she could and she was concerned about the idea of simultaneously submitting. And let me put a link in here that I have a whole blog posted to discuss this issue. But it's true. A lot of editors do not like you to send to more than one place at a time. They want to have an exclusive. However, as freelance writers trying to make a living, my experience in the last 18 years has been that editors can take anywhere from a month to forever to get back to you. A lot of them, if they're not interested, they don't even bother responding.

So, if you sent one at a time like a good little writer, by the time you sell it...well, it might never sell. It will go stale before it sells or if by the time you sell it it's just...you just can't make a living that way so you have to do what's right for you. It's like I'd be happy to give you an exclusive look everybody, but if you're going to never get back to me if you don't want it I cannot feasibly make that happen and you starve.

Oh, I love this. Heidi says, 'What happens if two mags want it?' And I love that question. Yes. We get it every single time because writers are like, 'Oh, I'm never going to sell my idea. It's never going to sell.' And then they're like, 'What if I sell it to two magazines at once?' So, that rarely happens but when it does you can just go with the first one that wants it and the second one you say you've already sold it and you pitch them a different idea.

This happened to me years ago. I sent the same idea to a bunch of women's magazines and I can't remember which it was but I think it was Family Circle bought it and then a week later Woman's Day wanted it, and I said, 'Oh, I sold it to Family Circle.' And the editor said, 'Oh, I should have been faster. I'll be faster next time.' And I ended

up writing for both of them for several years. So, I would not let the idea that you might sell to two places and then they would be angry keep you from pitching because it is so hard to get a response from just one person. You can't even let that get in your way.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Just don't...it is funny how we both have the fear no one will ever like our idea and the fear that two people will want it at once. But I just find that most ideas have a home where they belong and that's where they're going to end up. So, yeah, totally don't worry about it. Yeah.

We have someone on the forum who said...maybe this was in the Den. He said, 'I'm going to wait three weeks and then pitch them again.' And I was like, 'They all want you wait six to eight weeks so what's the point of waiting three weeks? Either don't wait any weeks or do what they ask you to do, one or the other.'

So, I'm not going to read this all out but Sherry Rose has been working on this idea about a Adullam House where volunteers take care of babies whose mothers are in prison, and she has a couple of possible leads. I don't think you're actually at the point of a lead. I think we're still trying to approve the idea of it. I don't know if you're here on the call but I wanted to read out these two leads because I thought they form...oh, good. Sherry is here. I thought they...oh, she has a tour set up for next week. Okay. Fantastic.

So she wasn't sure she was going to be able to physically go there and my point was that when you want to write a heartwarming story about babies of prisoners you're going to have to physically go so you can describe this to us. So, it sounds like we got that taken care of. So, that means that you have a green light then to go forward on this I believe. That's what I recall correctly.

Linda:

Yes.

Carol Tice:

I think I said this is a go except you have to go there is I believe what I said. So if you're going there then I think you're good to go. And I just want to read these two leads because they point out some important stuff that I want everyone to be thinking about as they start writing their queries. So she had a couple of openings. The first couple of sentences of the first idea is, 'Each year 10,000 babies are born in America's prisons. Most are taken from their mothers within 24 to 48 hours after birth.'

Linda:

That's nuts, a nut graph.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. This is more of a nut graph. The second one sounds to me more like ad sales, copy for this program. In women's prisons where births are induced, where women give birth in shackles, where babies are taken from inmates 24 to 48 hours after birth, where

inmates are not allowed to breastfeed their babies, where common sense along with the cries of hungry babies scream out for humane treatment. Adullam House answers their cries.

That's like a brochure for Adullam House and both of these are not really lead material because leads start with the small. They start with a small example that brings me into the subject and helps me understand it. The one baby that was born to the one inmate that is now being rocked by a volunteer, and you know, you need to tell us how this sounds, feels, smells. Where are we? What are we looking at? What are hearing? What are we smelling? That's what makes a good opening lead.

I'll give you an example from a Seattle magazine piece I did. It was like Cindy Jones still remembers the first moment she realized that she was homeless. She was waiting for the bus and the bus came and she realized she wasn't going to get on because she had no money and she didn't know where to go. She had nowhere to arrive at and she sat back down. And I mean I can link you to that piece if you want.

But what you want is sort of small scale human drama in a story like this and then we're going to go bigger. Each year this baby, Baby Joe, is one of 10,000 babies that are born every year in America's prisons and now we're following along. When you just kind of throw stats at people off the top they just glaze. They don't know why they should care or they don't know who to believe.

And also you can't say each year 10,000 babies are born in America's prisons without telling us where you found that out. According to what? And most are taken from their mothers within 24 to 48 hours after birth. Where's the study data on that, on how few remain with...? So you're going to need to cite your sources but that's all as Linda said, nut graph stuff.

So I just wanted to go over that because I think what a lot of people avoid, what we see in this class is they get to the query and they're still not talking to anybody and not going anywhere, and then they try and write a lead and it's always just kind of uninvolved and it's because they haven't done the leg work that you need to do to make a great query.

Linda:

They've got nothing.

Carol Tice:

They've got nothing and it shows in the query. The way that you break into new markets and the way you get editors excited is by taking them there and showing them that you've put in the leg work and you know where the sources are on this, and then they feel like, okay. This person is executable.

So Paula had asked about approaching sources also. I think we kind of covered that. Yeah. We give you an exact strip in our training of what to say for pre-interviews. So please, take a listen.

So, Caitlyn says, 'I'm struggling to know the difference between good idea recycling and bad idea _____ (29:29) creativity versus self-plagiarism.' Well, I'm a big fan of self-plagiarism. You can feel free to retool your own ideas all you want. So, she had read Linda's 'Want to reuse your writing to get gigs? Sorry,' post. 'So now I'm weary of idea rejection.' I don't what's in that post.

Linda:

Yeah. Let me take a look at it. Do we have a link? Let me see. Want to use...what was it again?

Carol Tice:

I have a link for you and I'll pop it in.

Linda:

Yeah. Because definitely spinning new ideas off of old ideas is always great but you don't want to take the same thing and just basically tweak a little bit and send it somewhere else. It has to be 100% different, different sources, different wording. You can be inspired by an old idea and you can write the same basic idea for different markets like a men's magazine and a women's magazine, but you definitely don't want to be like I'm just going to warm this over a little bit and send it somewhere else because I did that not knowing and I was burned.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. But the other thing to know is that just because you see an article covered in a publication doesn't mean now that idea is dead to you and you can't do anything with it because, in fact, many stories are written about for many, many markets, and I have a post here where I take the example of Angelina Jolie gets a preemptive double mastectomy and show how like a dozen different markets would all write about it for their particular audience.

So, people who are reposting pitches we're still on the questions that were brought in ahead of time. We are going to get over to you pretty shortly. I think we're almost to the end of this list. So she's been wondering of idea replication. How does it work when combined with simultaneous querying? If you've already written one article you could check in with the editor you wrote for about recasting your idea elsewhere. You usually don't want to do that. They're going probably just say, 'Don't.'

But if you're pitching one _____ (31:37) three different ways to three different magazines what if they all accept it? Yeah. That's not going to happen as we went over. Don't worry about it. Charlie said, 'How do you write a good lead?' Hopefully we just went over that.

Linda:

And it's in the lesson.

Carol Tice:

He just says, 'Does it always have to be an interesting statistic or a personal anecdote?' What it always has to be is something that makes me read the next sentence. The job of the lead is to make me read on.

And several people had the how long is too long for a query? And there isn't...this is a 'how long is a piece of string' question because there really isn't an answer. When Linda and I compared notes when we first started teaching together we discovered that I am a big believer in keeping it on one print page or that length, or thereabouts in an email and I found that, that worked really well with all the business magazines I pitched, but Linda found that the women's mags wanted much longer and more complex. They kept asking her to flesh it out more and more.

Linda:

Yeah. And Tanna mentions if you look in Linda's query book there is a really long query and one that's less than a page, and it's true. It's we always say it has to be as long as it needs to be to get your idea across and really sell it. And for the women's magazines, yeah, they want some gigantic thing where they know every single thing you're going to do, whereas if it's some magazine that you've written for a million times and you want to send an idea to an editor that you know, then it could be a sentence.

So, yeah. Definitely know...but whenever you see 'queries must be no longer than one page,' I've been calling BS on that for since the Renegade Writer came out like 13 years ago.

Carol Tice:

I don't know if I've ever even seen that, queries to be X long in a writer's guidelines and as Linda's surveys have found, most editors don't even know what's in their writer's guidelines. So, if you think it needs to be longer...I mean the key thing to know about queries is one of the big things you're proving is that you know how to be concise. So you really don't want to be rambling. You don't want to have side tangents. You want to convey that you have an awesome story that is a perfect fit for their audience in the fewest possible words. That might take two and a half pages or it might take four paragraphs. That's the job of it.

Linda:

I was going to say I like how Charlene says, 'Interesting about the differences between the markets.' Yeah. And you know we have been doing this for like 40 years between us so this is something you will get to know the more you research your markets and the more you pitch, and the more you study and the more experience you have. It's going to be second nature to you where you know this type of market likes and this type of market likes this, within certain downs. I mean some editors have their own preferences that you can never guess at but this is all stuff that with more experience will become second nature to you.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So Christina had a question about interviewing people and that actually reminds me, someone up top had a question about whether you need to get a release from people that you interview for articles, and the answer to that is no, but she said, 'I have some hearing issues. I need to use all my focus just for the conversation so it's better if I can record it and not worry about taking notes.' Bad news there you need to take notes because recording technology can fail. You don't ever want to 100% rely on the idea, oh, I'm recording this so I'm all good.

Too many sad stories. Linda and I know of people who made that mistake and maybe had a source that they could never get again, a movie star, somebody really prominent and you're never getting it again. She says, 'I read your advice to record the interview.' I don't know whose advice that was because I do not record. I have learned how to type fast but Linda records.

Linda:

I record. I would take notes like just quick, sketchy notes as we're talking but then I would also send my recording to a transcriptionist.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So she does that deal, and yeah, if you are recording it is good form to notify that person that you are recording the conversation. I believe that does put you in compliance with the law. You are not allowed to tape anyone in this country, in the US without their knowledge.

So, I like Mike's question. 'All things being equal, what pushes a query letter to the top of the stack?' Linda, you got some thoughts? I have a few.

Linda:

What pushes a query letter to the top of a stack? I mean, I say two things. One is a lead that really hooks the editor because you always read these stats like an editor has 15 seconds to say yes or no to a pitch, or whatever, so if you don't grab them with that lead it just goes into the reject pile.

And the second is, and you learned about this in the last lesson, we had a bonus on it, is the news hook. If it's something that has a really compelling reason that the editor needs to run it right now it goes to the top of the pile, whereas the ones that are like, oh, my news hook is that the obesity problem has been going on for a long time or you don't really have a good news hook then they can run that any old time so that would go to the bottom, in my opinion. What do you think, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Just having had editors and seeing the man-high stacks of maybe idea piles on their desks. The trick is you want to stay out of that maybe pile. 'Oh, this is kind of a good idea. Maybe we can run it sometime,' they say, putting it into the maybe giant mountain, and then it rarely comes back out of there.

Yeah. I mean you really have to grab them with really perfect market fit. This is exactly what my people want to know about right now. Oh, my god. I can't believe no one else has pitched this to me yet. I need it, need it. I'm emailing you right now.

You know, super good market match, and again, writing that when they look at it it's dramatic, it's fascinating and they can envision it. You totally have the style of how they write in that magazine. They can envision this article right in their magazine between the headline and the lead. They're like, 'Yeah. You get us and this idea is for us, and I want to jump on it before another editor of a competing publication does.'

Linda:

Hey, can I look at...oh, sorry. Are you done?

Carol Tice:

I guess.

Linda:

Yeah. Dawn said something really interesting. She said, 'Since I'm new to freelance writing I'm worried that if I send my first query letter to editors that I want to work for and it's no good they will not want to look at my future ideas. It makes me want to play it safe and pitch to smaller publications for practice as I'm getting started. Is this just being cowardly?' First I want to let you know that the fact that you pitch something and it's not accepted rarely means they don't ever want to hear from you again. If you have a good idea and your writing is good but for some reason it doesn't fit often they will invite you to pitch again.

And I have a blog post on this. I'll have to find it but in my opinion the purpose behind a pitch letter is not necessarily to land a gig right away, although of course that's what we would like, but it's to build a relationship because sometimes you kind of have to get a feel for the editor in the magazine and you're sending pitches and they're not quite there but they see you have something, and they invite you to pitch again and you're building a relationship and that's how it starts. So don't worry if your first idea is not spot on, 100%, gets accepted immediately.

Second, I don't want you to put yourself down or put small magazines down because those can actually be really great markets. I did a lot of writing for Redbook and Woman's Day and Family Circle and Health, and those are really great clips to have but they're so difficult to break into. It's so hard to build relationships. You always have to pitch every time you want to write for them, that most of my income came from trade magazines that paid 30, 50, 60 cents a word, a lot less, but they paid at least as much per hour because they were so much easier to write for. Once you get in they start giving you assignments. So don't look down on the small magazine or don't think it reflects on you badly as a writer if you write for smaller markets because they are good markets. Carol.

Carol Tice:

Well, and some of those smaller markets if they're interesting niche markets where they can't get a lot of writers pay really good if they have a good audience that's got lots of money.

Linda:

That is also true.

Carol Tice:

An example is the business journals, all the business weeklies tend to pay pretty decently. So Mike had also asked, 'What are some surprising or fun ways that you've spun dry ideas into winning queries?' I feel like this is Linda's forte.

Linda:

Oh, yeah. Where is that? Yes. I actually have a blog post on that also, you know, how to take some idea and spin it all different ways into really interesting queries. I'll have to find it for you and I feel like we went over this in Pitch Clinic somewhere, but yeah. I have a whole bunch of tricks. For example, the opposite idea that I'm always talking about where you take, yeah, what looks like a dry idea, everybody knows about it. Well, what's the opposite of that? What is counterintuitive? What goes against what everybody is saying now? Editors love that stuff. Yeah.

Carol Tice:

Who hasn't been interviewed yet about this thing? Who's involved in it? The voice no one had heard yet.

Linda:

Yeah. And then I want to mention, one of the tips I always give and I have to kind of clarify this a little bit, is that you put the word surprising in your title and Monkey mentioned...one of our instructors mentioned in the thread that, that makes it look like click bait and you don't want to see that, and I always say but I think people ignore this part, that you can do this in your working title so that as you're working on your idea you know that you are trying to come up the most surprising, the most interesting, the most unique never heard before tips or ideas or information, or whatever.

And that is something that makes an idea fresh is, hey. I'm going to go at this from an angle or with information that you've never seen before. You don't necessarily have to have surprising in the title because what we don't want to see is 150 people in this class sending out eight pitches each with the word surprising in the title. Try to think of a different adjective. You're a writer but the idea is to make it surprising.

Carol Tice:

Yes. Unique, unusual, little known. Yeah. Most creative, newly emerging is our point is that one adjective thrown in there will help them to see that you understand that this is a topic that has been done and that you're going to bring them something fresh with it. I actually was just doing that with a blog post I want to do about tools for how to research

a company to know what to bid on a writing gig and I think I wrote eye-catching, or yeah, eye-opening tools.

Linda:

Oh, by the way, I found that post on 'How to turn your idea from meh to wow,' and it's actually one I posted here last week. So, if you didn't read it go read it right now or after the call.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So Mike, also this is the final one inside the forums and then we're going to get onto live questions. He said, 'What are some of the reasons given if your query letter is being rejected?' Well, the number one reason we all get is nothing. We get no response. But I mean I've gotten, 'I love this but it's just not right for us at this time.'

Most editors are not going to hold your hand and kind of walk you through a lot of it. If you get one that gives you real specifics on like, 'This would be better for us if it was X,' like that's like a goldmine. You want to pitch that editor again because it means they like you. They spent some time to figure that out. So, I'm now going to scroll to the top of chat.

Linda:

But I have to mention...what was I going to say about that? The reason they were rejected...oh. I mean, sometimes you just can't account for what an editor is going to say. I have one mentoring client who is getting this close to the women's magazines and she's getting...she'll go back and forth with an editor and they'll finally say something like, 'You know, this is a little too service-y or this is a little earnest.' And it's like what do you do with that information?

But I've heard from editors that the most popular reason for getting a rejection is that it's something that they've run pretty recently in the past which is a good reason to be researching your markets and you could do it so easily online these days. I mean there's just no excuses for not knowing your market. I used to ask my neighbors to leave their magazines if they were going to recycle on my doorstep. I used to go to the hair dresser and cart away her old magazines once a month. I mean it is so easy these days. Do I sound totally old, Carol? I sound old.

Carol Tice:

Please. I used to go the library and look in the Gale's Guide to find magazines.

Linda:

Me too.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. And then I'd have to hand write down their address and people have no idea. It is such a breeze now to find markets and to find out what they pay. Yeah.

Linda:

Yeah. I spent a lot of time at the library.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I spent a lot of time at the library. When people tell me, 'I tried to research this market but I can't find out anything about how big this business is.' I say, 'You know, I don't want to be rude...' and I don't usually say this to their face but what I want to say is, 'You're lying because five minutes online will get you what you need if you know what you're doing,' which is why I just put this post idea of how to qualify how big a company is on my blog post list because I just feel like that's a really common question I get.

People are like, 'I put it in Google and nothing comes out.' Yeah. You have to be a little bit more sophisticated than Google searches to find out if it's a good prospect. So I'm doing a post on that. Anyway, I want to get to Ann Louise's idea about landmine day.

Linda:

Oh, yeah. That's way up here now. Where are you?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I went back up to the top or tried to. I think it has a market fit problem. She's actually...

Linda:

Oh, here it is. Did you find it? I can read it for you.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Read it out.

Linda:

April 4th is Landmine Awareness Day. Rats trained to detect TNT by smell have helped ...thinks it's Mozambique become landmine free and now they're heading to Cambodia. Rats are also trained to identify TB. Dogs detect dangerous mold in the home. Dolphins detect underwater mines. I'll share with your reasons, three or four or five surprising ways that trained animals are using their acute senses to help humanity. Target magazine could be YES! Magazine, Discover or others. What do you think, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So, well I wasn't sure there was a market match because I think landmines and mold and stuff is pretty depressing for YES! Magazine which happens to be based here on the island where I live so I know a lot about it. I don't know about it for Discover. I'd have to study that one a bit more.

But Siema had an important Pitch Clinic technical question. 'I was wondering when to start posting other ideas once one has been greenlighted for the eight-pitch challenge?' In general, we're greenlighting one idea per person. We're not greenlighting eight ideas for the eight-pitch challenge. The idea is that you are learning through the process of

doing your one idea and your one query, and your one LOI and the revisions to your query and LOI.

How this works, if there is time towards the end of class when things tend to get a little less insane we will look at additional ideas for people who are thinking about doing for their eight pitches. You can post more ideas whenever you want but if we're skipping over them it's because I'm looking at a que of 100 new posts right that I haven't seen yet.

Linda:

Yeah. And when you're doing your eight pitches, assuming you make through to the pitch challenge, when you do your eight pitches we're not going to be like, 'This one doesn't count because we don't like this idea.' At this point after you've been through so much to make it through to that challenge you should know enough that your ideas will be pretty good.

Both of us know that we don't have a lock on every idea in magazines so even if an idea we don't think is perfect there's probably a match for it somewhere, and basically I'm just going to be pushing back if I see something that looks really lazy or half-assed like it wasn't worked on very hard. So, other than that you don't need to have all your ideas approved by us.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. True enough. God. Comments are like disappearing here from the top of this. A couple of people had questions about using a friend as a source and about finding real people sources. That's what I lost here.

Linda:

Oh, I have a blog post on that.

Carol Tice:

You have a blog post on finding real people sources that you could pop in?

Linda:

I'll find it. You can talk while I find it.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Start working your networks. I love LinkedIn for that. People love to refer you people. You know, I'm looking for someone who panicked and sold all their stocks in 2009 when the internet went down, you know, when the stock market went down. I ended up using an editor's sister for a real people source for one of mine.

We think of places like Harrow as a last ditch place to find a real people source but you might. They're real people too, those PR people and they know people and sometimes they can refer you to a real person too, but start asking everyone you know. Ask early. Ask often.

Linda:

Yeah. And Jenna says, 'Linda, you've written on everything.' I have to say when we do these classes and we tend to get the same questions over and over again then I try to write an article on it. So I'm not going to tell everybody that if you read all thousand posts on my blog you wouldn't ever need a class again, but it's easier to have it done live.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So Brian says, 'Are you still reading and checking module one _____ (49:26)?' Yes and we will look at them throughout the class, but as we move through the modules we will prioritize the module we're on and kind of then go back. So your time will get a bit longer and if you've got a greenlit idea we would like you...we would advise you to work on your query rather than throwing more ideas up on the forum.

And he says, 'I'd love to do the query letter but I need to know if I'm headed in the right direction.' Yeah. You need a green light from an editor and if you haven't gotten one...

Linda:

Wait. Whose is this? Brian's?

Carol Tice:

Brian. So feel free to throw your link in here. I'm going to download the chat log from this and if you haven't gotten feedback and it's been more than 24 hours...

Linda:

Yeah. I told him I would ding you. It's been like 22 hours. So, I told him I would ding you on it because you were the person to originally respond to it. So, yeah.

Carol Tice:

Oh, okay. Cool. Yeah. I literally have a tool, an admin tool, and I go in and look at the oldest post first so that hopefully we aren't overlooking anything that is getting older and older. We're trying to get to everyone sort of first come, first serve so no one is like a week later they got nothing and someone else got an answer five minutes later.

So Amanda says, 'I've always pitched with about three paragraphs in my query believing less is more. How many paragraphs do you need to fit into your template?' I think we kind of went over this. The number needed to tell your story is what we need.

Linda:

Hey, Mike has a couple of good questions. One is...where did it go Mike? You're one up above. Oh, it was when we talk about you don't want to do something that a magazine has already done recently, what do we mean by recently? A year, two years, 10 years. What do you think?

Carol Tice:

I think I want it to be two years old. I sold an article that I saw Entrepreneur had done two years back. I resold them a \$600 online feature on it, on how to _____ (51:23) your business.

Linda:

Yeah. And I wrote an article for Women's Health Magazine on being a self-help addict and one of my mentoring clients mentioned to me that she pitched an idea on being a self-help addict to Women's Health and they almost accepted it. So it's like four years later. I don't know if they don't remember that they ran it or they don't care or they wanted to run it again, or what.

So I think it really varies. I think you have to go with your gut and see did they run this same kind of evergreen thing every month and can I put a new spin on it or is this like a one of a kind giant feature that they ran two years ago and probably wouldn't want to tackle again?

Carol Tice:

Right. So, Ann Louise had a question regarding citation. She said, 'I bet it's a good idea to keep close track of your sources so you can submit them to fact checkers.' Yeah. Every magazine is going to ask you to submit a complete list of your sources, phone number, email, often street address, the website of the company. Yeah. You should be just automatically collecting all that information as you go. You are going to need to be able to prove your sources are real. Okay. Now I'm scrolling down a bit.

Linda:

Hey, Susan posted, 'So we need to get greenlighted otherwise no one will work on mod one with us.' I'm not quite sure I understand if she means mod 2.

Carol Tice:

No. Mod one is the idea.

Linda:

Yes.

Carol Tice:

Mod one is where your idea greenlit and then you develop your query and post it in mod two and then you do some rewriting there until we think it's pretty close and then we ask you to post a final in a revision form.

Linda:

Yeah. And there's also an LOI going on there.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. And then starting next week you're going to be learning about letters of introduction.

Linda:

Yeah. And Sue Ann and Susan, I think you got some responses today to your pitches. So, take a look and let us know if it's been a while and you haven't heard back but basically I noticed in some cases we're waiting for people to get back to us with revisions. When the editor said, 'This is a really good idea but you're missing X, Y or Z. Please circle back.' And then that's it. We don't hear back from them again.

So you need to circle back hopefully, preferably in that same thread with your revised idea and a lot, a lot of people are getting the go-ahead after they work with an editor on their query. I mean I think of Siema in particular. Siema worked her butt off on her idea and she revised it and tweaked it and turned it this way and that way until one of the editors was like, 'Yes.' And then now she's in mod two.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. If you want to look her up as a member and look at posts she's posted on you could easily find that because yeah, that was a good example. She started with foods that give you more energy and it became drinks and we decided some of the drinks didn't fit into it and some of the foods were spices and not foods, and it needed work and she worked it until she found really, I think, a great set of bullet points for it.

So, Evie, this idea on food addiction...oh, you haven't sent it in the forums. You sent it via email. Well, we do not review ideas on email in Pitch Clinic so that means none of us have seen this. So be sure to post it in a forum in the pitch ideas, module one forum on Pitch Clinic so that an editor can see it.

But it's food addiction, dieting versus dating. Food addiction is controversial in the fitness world while traditional experts say sufferers just need to show more self-control. _____ (54:51). How old are these books? I would like to know. Say sugar and wheat are just as addictive as alcohol and drugs. That's all kind of stuff we've seen and I've also seen the whole belly addiction thing debunked as well.

Linda:

Yeah. But also we critique this either on the call or in the forum, or I might have like had notes for the call and posted them in the forum. I know that I have some ideas on this. Let us know if they're not there.

Carol Tice:

She said she found it now.

Linda:

Oh, okay. But Fredrick says, 'I want a different topic than the one I initially submitted because they want the entire article. I'm going to post another one. Okay.' I'm a little confused because I don't know what you mean who is they and that they want the entire article. Do you mean the editors want the entire article or could you post...? Here. He's typing right now. I don't understand what you mean or did you pitch it somewhere and

they want the entire article like to a magazine because you could always pitch it somewhere else.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Sue Ann, I'd like to what your 'Should I fear death for calling the police' article, what market do you think that would be for?

Linda:

Oh, yeah. And also _____ (55:55) responded that she thought that was a little too touchy for most of the markets she wanted to pitch because what can you get out of that besides, you know, I need to be really scared when I get pulled over, kind of thing. So she wanted some more information on that. I'm not sure if you posted it.

Oh, he said, 'Women in Engineering want the whole article. I sent it to them yesterday.' So I'm a little confused because I didn't see your actual query. So what happens is you post your idea, we greenlight it, you write the query, when we greenlight that then you send it out. So, but it sounds like you kind of jumped a little bit but then you got a good response which is awesome. So you're going to write it for them is what I'm getting and then you want to do another idea for this class, which I think is okay. What do you think, Carol?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. If you ended up just sort of whipping something out and selling it, and yeah, maybe pitch us another idea because now...

Linda:

Yeah. Go for it. Let us know in the forum. Yeah.

Carol Tice:

And it sounds like you didn't give us the query or it was something where you had to just turn in the article. Yeah. So that's sort of outside of the scope of Pitch Clinic. So, just give us another idea. I am scanning, scanning. Oh, Anna says, 'What are some tips for new writers with no clips?' Write an amazing, amazing query letter because as Linda said, if you do they may just not even ask or care.

Linda:

Yeah. I think we're going over the same ones twice, Carol.

Carol Tice:

Oh, yeah. Every writer once had no clips. That's the thing to remember.

Linda:

Yeah. I already posted the link to an article I wrote all about clips and what to do if you have none. So I think...are you scrolling up or down?

Carol Tice:

I'm trying to go from the top.

Linda:

Oh, yeah. I think we got to a lot of these.

Carol Tice:

People keep posting more things.

Linda:

How dare they.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Let me see. Oh, Casey said, 'Are you saying it's okay to call in-flight magazines to ask for an editor's contact info if we can't find it online?'

Linda:

Yeah. I got that one.

Carol Tice:

You hit that too? That kind of phrasing scares me where people want permission to do things. You need to just be doing stuff. Don't be worrying. Oh, didn't I post that Angelina Jolie post? I thought I did that. Hang on. Yeah. It's right above...it's that garnet story idea published. That's the one where I take that and pitch it for 12 different magazines.

Linda:

Yeah. And Frank mentioned you might have to write for free or almost free for a local pub to get a clip, and that is a valid reason to write for free. I have a post on that. Don't laugh at me. I just posted it in there. It's called 'Why you should write for free and like it' and it's the few instances where you would actually maybe want to write for free even though we're always saying, 'Don't write for free. Don't write for free.'

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I mean write for free very strategically. Like does this clip pave the road to a paying magazine you are targeting? You know, don't just...you know. Yeah. So I don't know if we covered this with Dawn but editors will not remember if you sent one query and then later you send another one. She said, 'Am I cowardly? I'm worried they won't want to look at my future ideas.' They won't even remember.

Linda:

Yeah. We've done all these, Carol.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. We've got them getting like 100 pitches a week every single week.

Linda:

No. I mean we responded to her already.

Carol Tice:

Okay. Good. It sounds like you have monitoring the forum.

Linda:

Courtney says, 'Is it okay to use the same source in different articles?' Yes. Absolutely. You're eventually going to develop a database of sources, your sort of go-to sources that you will use in various articles. The only thing is you want to make sure not to overuse them especially for articles for competing magazines. They can get really picky about that where it seems like you're just kind of rehashing something and not doing the work to find the freshest and best that you've already used for a competitor but I've definitely used...when I wrote for Nutrition for example, I used to interview Joy Bauer all the time. So, yeah. It's fine.

Carol Tice:

Okay. Well I am just looking through here.

Linda:

Yeah. Deborah says, 'Can you answer questions regarding our first pitches?' Yeah. If you want to post here we can answer them.

Carol Tice:

Paula says, 'What do you use to keep track of your sources?' I just write a source list at the bottom of my note that says every set of interview notes and what I'm doing. Then I guess if I wanted to reuse them again I'd probably look back into there. When I have sources I know I'm going to want to reuse, I do put them into my regular contacts rolodex so that I am sure I have an easy way to get them.

I loved how Duncan showed that, that landmine type of story showed up in the Globe and Mail. It's much more of a daily news story.

Linda:

But she asked...I don't know if you saw this. She asked what if she flipped it in a positive way. Like, hey, look what these cool critters are doing to keep us safe kind of thing. Would that be okay for YES! Magazine or is it still too depressing?

Carol Tice:

I think it's still too depressing. I don't know. Yeah. I think it's for a pet magazine or just like a kids' magazine like Boys' Life or something where they just like cool things pets do because, you know, I think there's other markets for it just not that.

Linda:

Oh, yeah. Definitely. It's very cool. And by the way, Jeremy asks about being able to send LinkedIn InMail for free. I'm not sure if this is what Carol was talking about but they do have a LinkedIn for journalists group and once a month they put on a free training and once you get that free training you then get a special code where you can sign up for a free year worth of LinkedIn business or premium, or whatever it's called, and that

include free InMail. So it's quite awesome. So you might want to look up LinkedIn for journalists. I'll find it. Hold on.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So someone was asking...yeah. It's LinkedIn for journalists. They're pretty picky these days. You need to be writing for some print markets to get there.

Linda:

I'll find it here.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. It's unfortunately not as easy as it used to be. Sherry says, 'Are we to continue pitching ideas after green light approval?' No. Please move on and write your query letter and if you're all on track with all your other homework and find yourself bored and you have more ideas you'd like to put up sometime feel free but we will be increasingly prioritizing looking at the queries.

So, had a question from Jeremy about who needs to greenlight your pitch. Any of us. Any of the six of us. Editors and writing coaches can okay it, but like we say, give us 24 hours since your last revision to hunt it down because we have a ton of stuff that we're dealing with.

Deborah says, 'Can you answer questions regarding our first pitches?' Do you have questions regarding your first pitches? I saw that you had posted your story ideas in the query module so I moved them back to ideas because they're still ideas and I believe I responded because they had no markets. They just had things like this will be for a teaching magazine and we're not accepting that.

You have to do some market research and tell us specific publications that you have looked at that you feel strongly have not recently run your idea and we need a market match before we're going to bother with the idea because as we talked about in what makes your query jump out of the pile, market match is super important.

Linda:

Terry says she posted her idea in the thread for today's call. Why am I not seeing it? She said we stopped before we got to her.

Carol Tice:

I thought we took them all.

Linda:

Is there a second page on here? No. Hold on Terry. I'm looking.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. We'll take a look.

Linda:

Am I on the right thread? Module two query letters. Leave your query letter questions for Tuesday's call is the one I'm in.

Carol Tice:

Yep.

Linda:

Yeah. I don't see it. Can you post it here, Terry, please? Because I'm not seeing it. Nope.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. I've got a sync problem going on.

Linda:

Oh, wait. She entered it...wait. You entered it in chat. Oh, yeah. You can put it in chat. Go ahead. She entered it after the call and that means I have to refresh.

Carol Tice:

Oh, okay. _____ (64:23). 'Are new establishments enough of news hook for a travel article in a bigger publication like Midwest Living?' Yeah. They totally can be if you've got...if there a dozen new garage breweries in downtown Seattle where people are making beers out of their homes, yeah totally. Yeah. We love new. That's why the word news has new in it, is because we love new stuff.

Sherry says, 'Would it be tacky to take my husband with me to tour Adullam House while I do my interviews?' Yes. That would be inappropriate. Do not bring wingmen with you to do interviews. 'I also plan to have a list of questions. Good or not?' Yeah. Absolutely essential. You'll have more as you go, but yeah, have some basic ones to start.

Linda:

Ava is always on the ball. Terry, I found it in the thread. Oh, wow. Ava is always posting good resources for people too. So Terry's idea is 'Delight at the museum, a roundup of current Washington, DC museum exhibits even the most jaded tourists will enjoy.' For example...and it will be for DC Magazine, Baltimore Magazine, Southwest, American Airlines, Sky Magazine for Delta, things like that.

The news hook is two or more of the exhibits will be time sensitive. The National Building Museum which has 12 doll houses. I remember you writing about that earlier as a different pitch, right? The museum has an interactive news room and the Ford Theater, the National Postal Museum. What do you think, Carol? Do you think that's like a roundup of the freshest and newest exhibits is okay or does it need something else?

Carol Tice:

I think it's okay. I think these are a pretty tough sell because these in-flight magazines get those press releases about new exhibits at museums all the time and they could easily spin that together themselves and the thing about being a freelance writer is that you want to bring them stuff that they can't do themselves.

Courtney says, 'Did you see my question on the forum about married booty calls?' No. I would definitely remember that. So I have not yet seen it. Oh, Renee says, 'When you're contacting sources for the first times would you say call or is email more appropriate?' You know what? It's totally individual. I tend to email people just because I type really fast and I like email, and I feel like calls intrude on people but I know other people who do it all on calls and just catch them on the fly and get to talk to them for five minutes. It's really about how you want to do it.

Linda:

Yeah. And you can talk to them right then which is kind of awesome. Courtney, I'm not seeing your idea here in the thread. Booty calls. I would totally remember that.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. She said it's on the forum.

Linda:

Oh, I did not see that one yet. When did you post it? Wow. I want to see that one.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Throw us a link. If it's been 24 hours...trust me. I'm going through every day what is a day old and that's what I'm reading. I'm constantly looking at the oldest posts. So, sometimes if a member replied it may look newer. We may get deceived that it has been more recently published. So, yeah. Feel free to alert us.

Linda:

Yeah. I'm not sure why my LinkedIn link isn't working. It's the same exact one as Mike's. Why is Mike so great? I don't get it. Why are you so great, Mike? Why? Wait answer.

Carol Tice:

No. I think we've done it here. Feel free...if you have a mod one story idea and it's been sitting more than 24 hours without any editor or Linda or me giving you any feedback, feel free to pm me. Send me a private message with a link to it and I will be happy to do that. Deborah, do that. Pm me and give me a link and yeah... she got feedback from a _____ (68:30).

Linda:

And if there's anything we missed here do post it in the questions and we or we have four wonderful editors also. Each one of them is on two days a week. Carol and I are on basically every day. I do need to let everybody know I am going on the first ever vacation I've ever taken, nonworking vacation, starting on Saturday for like 12 days. So that's why we hired an additional, additional editor.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So, they will be doing more. I'll be doing more and it may be just me on next week's call. I'm not sure or I may see if I can get one of the editors to turn up with me or maybe another experienced freelance writer friend. We'll just see if I have a special guest.

Lee Ann says, 'Where is the forum we're referring to?' That sort of worries me Lee Ann. I'm hoping that you have access to the Pitch Clinic forums. If you don't email help@usefulwritingcourses.com and...

Linda:

Lee Ann says, 'No. No. No. Oh, don't be worried.'

Carol Tice:

Oh, okay. Fine. Good. All right. Then you don't have to wait for Zach to get back to you on recent changes. What happens is each editor works days in rotation so another editor may come back at you, or me or Linda.

Linda:

Can I mention also if something...if an idea or a question looks like something that one particular person would be better to handle we email that person. I'm always emailing Sarah, 'Hey, can you look at this pitch or hey, you worked on this pitch with this person and she has a question for you or she posted a revise.' We're always emailing each other so you don't need the greenlight from a particular editor. But yeah, again, we are working in rotation and starting with the oldest first.

Carol Tice:

Yeah. So, we are doing our best, but yeah, if you have not heard from an editor in 24 hours feel free to pm me and I will make sure you get more feedback or get a greenlight.

Oh, I know. Someone had asked, 'How long will it take you to greenlight all of the story ideas?' Here's the thing. Some ideas don't fly. We're not going to be automatically greenlighting everyone's story ideas. We're greenlighting ideas that are saleable and have market match, and seem executable in 750 words and not a 5,000-word article or a book topic, and quite a few people have needed to submit another idea.

Linda:

Yeah. Some people have and a lot of people...don't get discouraged if we say, 'This doesn't quite work as is. Try X, Y or Z.' Try X, Y or Z and then post your revision because we're not just critiquing a million ideas until you magically find one that's a hit because that's not how it works in real life with writers. You're going to be revising and thinking about and tweaking your idea, like I was talking about Siema did earlier, until you come up with something saleable based on what you originally started with.

A lot of people are like, 'Oh, I found this cool thing or I have this piece of information I'd like to share.' And then we need to start thinking about what angle you want to take. What's the news? Who do you want to pitch? Then we greenlight things. So, yeah. As Carol said, don't freak out and start all over.

Carol Tice:

Sometimes people have markets that are just we know are totally not going to work with that idea and we're sending you back to look at other markets or talk to one expert and see if the story is real because we're skeptical, and yeah, it's about doing that and that is not us saying, 'This is a horrible idea. You should give us another idea now.' Yeah.

And the reason we do this back and forth and that we do this process is this is the process you're going to do with your editor. We do this with our editors all the time. We pitch an idea and they're like, 'Oh, you know, you had a list of seven interesting points but I think this one point actually should be a whole article and I'd like it to go this way, and you should interview this person.' This is a normal conversation that you have in the editorial process and that's why we're doing it is we're kind of simulating an editorial environment here.

Linda:

Yeah. Although that's usually at the point where you get to know an editor and you're throwing ideas out there, but I think a lot of people, you know, for a lot of us we have to do this on our own in order to make the best saleable pitch when we're not getting that editorial feedback yet because we don't have those relationships. Can we take one more?

Carol Tice:

Yeah. Fiona says, 'How about my story idea?' I haven't seen it, Fiona.

Linda:

Yeah. Okay. Because you answered that. That's what I was going to take because...

Carol Tice:

All right. Let's take it to the forums. Thanks everybody.

