



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Craft a Travel Content Marketing Pitch that Gets Attention

All right so today we're going to be talking about how to craft a travel content marketing pitch that gets attention. So in previous weeks we've looked at what types of travel content marketing gigs there are in terms of doing strategy versus execution or blogging versus Instagram or Facebook posts and different things like that. And in last week's call we looked at where to find these companies. Different ways, not just to Google or find them but how to qualify these prospects once you get them. And this week we're going to look at what to do once you've found those people, how to reach out to them. I know this topic of how to write a pitch of any kind, whether it's for a magazine article or if you're just writing in response to a gig you found online, forget about doing something completely cold like approaching somebody that you've just found on the Internet and saying, "Hey, I think you need help." These are some of the scariest types of writing where you have the blank screen and the cursor blinking at you and you're suffering from quote unquote, "writer's block."

So we're going to look at a formula that you can use to write these types of emails and then we're also going to do a couple live, out loud to show how to do it, so go ahead and whenever you have a question drop them in the questions box. If you have a scenario of a company that you've seen that you would like to reach out to that you would like me to sort of make up on the fly a content marketing pitch for, go ahead and drop that in there as well. So specifically what we're going to look at today, is first I want to get clear on what we need to achieve with this email. When we looked at sending pitches to magazine editors, I talked a lot about how the goal of your pitch is not necessarily to get an assignment but just to get a response, just start that conversation with an editor. And it's similar with these content marketing pitches but it's a little bit different because magazine editors are expecting pitches from freelancers but the people that we're approaching with these emails are not.

And then we're going to look at the six sections that you need to have, to have a really effective travel content marketing pitch email. And then I'm going to take- ... oops, sorry that's not the right one ... we're going to do live demos of how to write these emails on the fly.

I am a former magazine editor and work with a lot of magazines but I also got 95% of my income from content marketing for a long time because I realized when I was really looking to up my travel writing income, that that is really where a lot of the money is these days. While you can earn very well writing for magazines, you don't get paid until sometimes 60, 90, even more days after the article is published, forget about when you turned it in.

So travel content marketing I found really allows you to have a dependable, steady, travel writing income. So before we start looking at exactly how to craft your pitch letter, I want to



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talk a little bit about the approach. So I always tell people that before you begin any piece of writing, whether it's a simple email, a newsletter, a full feature article, a white paper, anything like that ... you need to start by thinking about who is the audience of this piece? Because that not only influences your tone, but it can also really influence your structure, particularly in terms of how you need to begin your communication to make sure that you grab and hold the attention of your intended audience. And also, what is the objective of the piece? Because that also informs a lot about the structure and also in terms of what you need to leave out, which I think when I see types of pitches like this, whether it's somebody applying to a pre-existing job or pitching a magazine, that these things often are not super clear on their objective in terms of, they have an objective but it's not an objective that really takes into account the audience. So we want to create those two things together.

So in this case unlike magazine editors, who as I mentioned, are expecting to get pitches from writers they don't already work with, when you reach out to a company or a tourism board to pitch them for travel content marketing work, they aren't expecting to hear from you and they may not need your services. And so, you have some very important goals around who your audience is because in this case, one of the primary things that you need to do is keep them engaged. You need to show them that this email is worth reading and that's something that I think a lot of us forget, whether we're pitching a magazine, which in that case like I said the editor's looking for these pitches. When you're writing, even to a gig that you've seen online, these people are looking for the right person. They're looking for the right thing. They're not looking to read every email or to hear from you so throughout your message you need to constantly keep in mind the fact that this person doesn't have to read your email and that can be a very sobering thing because I think often we really get drawn into our "why" of why we're writing this email and the story that we want to tell but especially with travel content marketing pitches you need to keep it entirely focused on the people that you are pitching and what is in it for them.

Also because these people aren't expecting to hear from you it's very important to keep it short and to make sure that you get to the point quickly because they're not going to read too many sentences, no matter how many engaged ... how much interesting statistics or things like that you put in there, they're not going to read too far unless they understand why you have written this email and why they need to keep reading it. So the objective here, similar to writing a magazine pitch letter, where we want to get them to respond, whether yes or no, to start working towards getting an assignment from that editor, here the idea is to respond but specifically to get them to respond that they'd like to talk to you more about what you've proposed and we're going to look at some language that can help with this later on in the call. So because our objective is simply to get them on the phone to talk to them more about what we'd like to pitch, in this email the focus is not necessarily on getting them to buy in



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completely to the solution that you want to sell them. The focus really is just on making sure that they're interested enough that they want to hear more.

So that means you don't need to outline an entire solution, as in you don't need to tell them all the steps of the type of content marketing that you're looking to do with them or all of the issues of their site that you'd like to fix, but just enough that they see that you know what you're doing. And so, the way that we do this we're going to look at later is to not be entirely focused on pointing out what's wrong with their site, but to do it enough to show them that we know what the better path is and that we'll help them to get there. But also in that vein, it's important that we don't layout enough of a framework of what the company or tourism board needs to change that they can go out and do it on their own. All right. So in terms of the formula for content marketing pitches, in a lot of ways this is very similar to the Perfect Pitch Formula that we would use for a magazine so I'm just going to go through that quickly for any of you who aren't familiar. So when you pitch a magazine there's really a pretty standard three-paragraph structure that you should be following.

In the beginning, you have the lead or the intro, which is really around getting the editor's attention and also showing off your writing skills. In the middle, you're going to tell them what the article that you're proposing will be about. This is also known as the nuts and bolts section. And in the third paragraph, you're going to tell them why you're the best one to write this piece. And so in the lead of a magazine article we often do a lot of picture painting. We try to show off our writing style. Sometimes you just want to wow the editor with a good statistic or really focus on the importance of this idea. Now this is going to be different in a travel content marketing pitch because we're not trying to sell the prospect on an idea in quite the same way. We are trying to sell them on the idea that they need to improve what they're doing but not necessarily on the specific solution. People talk a lot about this concept of features versus benefits. Have any of you guys heard this before? Let me know in the chat box if you're already familiar with this features versus benefits context but I'll explain it a little bit for those of you who aren't.

The concept of features versus benefits means that when somebody is selling something, which is what you're doing anytime you have a pitch email, you don't want to just tell them what comes with it. You don't want to tell them the sauna is 200 ft.², that it has three levels of benches, that it can heat up in 10 minutes ... all of those things are important to know but only once the person interested in purchasing is sold on the idea of the sauna. What that means is that sales people more typically would say, "10 minutes in the sauna a day can improve your health in ... " XYZ ways, "You'll have better circulation, which leads to less heart problems ... " and so on and so forth. People typically start with what is called the benefit because that's something that's easier for people to buy into. So when you're writing



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a magazine style lead, you don't have to think quite so much about that. You're really trying to sell the editor just on why this idea for the article is interesting. But in the case of a travel content marketing lead, you're trying to show why they need to make a change and that's quite different.

In the middle paragraph of a magazine article pitch, you're going to say what section the pitched article would go into, what types of things you would cover in there, and any research you've done in the past. The central section of a travel content marketing pitch is quite similar in a lot of these ways. We're going to show that we've done some research by showing what we've seen on the prospect's site or social media sites that we think needs to change, we're going to outline some ways that we think they should change it and we're going to really show them that we have done our research. Not necessarily just on the company, but in the field, by showing that we know how to do this and propose some solutions which, like I said, are a little bit more of a teaser than a full solution. Then in the "I'm so great" paragraph or the paragraph about yourself, when you're writing a travel magazine article pitch, you're talking about what background experience or prior research you have that's relevant to this specific article and what else you've done in the past. And that's very, very similar.

In the travel content marketing pitch we're, again, going to talk about when you've done this type of work in other settings, the biggest names you can draw off in terms of companies you've worked for and things like that. So this paragraph is probably the one that's going to be the most similar between the two types of pitches. Now, I talk a lot about how the headline is a very under-appreciated part of the pitch letter and when you're sending a magazine article pitch, this is actually a very simple section to surmount in terms of what you're going to put in your subject line for your email. You're just going to put the headline of what your article would eventually be in the word "pitch," it's very simple to fill in. However, this is an area that's super both different and difficult in terms of travel content marketing pitches because, like I said, these people aren't expecting your email so the subject line of the email needs to do a lot more work in this case. I found that ones that don't have all-caps, or rather a title case, like you see in the ones here, which are magazine article headlines, those don't actually perform as well because people who are not expecting your email might see something like that ... they immediately think marketing. They think it's a mass email and they don't think it's for them.

So you'll see later when I show a sample pitch, but I found things that are very casual and also in lowercase can often perform really well here. So something like a quick question about your blog ... like very, very simple things can actually have the highest open rates in this context. In terms of the format of your travel content marketing pitch, I found that while



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we're also going to have a similar three paragraph-structure, there are several more pieces that you need to use to construct your pitch letter. When we start, like I said, we needed to explain right off the bat why we are writing to this person and this is where you are going to include a little bit of what you've seen on their site. So this is where you're going to say, "It's so wonderful that you have 8000 followers on your Facebook page," or, "I love the images that you're sharing on Instagram. The one that you shared on ... " XYZ day of blah, blah, blah "really caught my eye." So you want to make it very clear in this first paragraph that you're not sending a blanket pitch, because this is going to be one of the first things that people are looking at when they're like, "Oh I don't want to read this," ... they're going to want to delete it.

They want to see why they should read it and if it looks like you have done your homework on them, they're much more likely to keep reading. The next thing that we're going to include, and I looked at a couple of these last week, are statistics. Because when somebody "doesn't know you from Adam" as the expression goes, they're not necessarily going to take your word for this so you need to include some numbers, some proof, that what you're saying about how they need to improve their content marketing is true. I showed a couple of those last week, I'll mention them again. I also want to get to this section of the pitch later, I'll include some other ones that you guys can use. The next thing we're going to talk about is what we notice negatively on their site or social. So once we've told them how important what we're reaching out to them about is, we want to show them how they're failing in service of showing them how they can do it better. And once we've done that, we're going to explain how we help you to help people to improve this particular type of content marketing and how our background qualifies us to do that.

So like I said, early on they're not necessarily going to take your word for it but once you've shown them that you understand this type of content marketing, that you have a solution for this type of content marketing, this is where you can talk more about yourself. And then at the end, we're going to give them a very simple question that helps complete our objective, which is to get them on the phone to talk more about how we can work together. Now, like I said at the beginning, there's a very strong natural urge as you write these pitch emails to really concentrate on you. On what you can do, on how you can help them ... and I use the word "you" a lot in that format there but it's very important that throughout each piece of this puzzle we keep the email language focused on them, on the prospect, on the organization as much as possible, so let's look again at how we can do that. When we talk about why we are writing and we keep it positive, we're focusing on their site. When we have the statistic, we're focusing on a lack that they have, on a way that they are not achieving their full potential.



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When we talk about what we've noticed on their site that they're not doing well, we're focusing on an area in which they can improve. Here is where you have to really, really keep the "you" in check. When you get to how you help people, you want to paint it as being all around the organization, of how you help the organization achieve the objectives, of how they will be getting four blog posts a week. Not so much you will be writing them, but they will be getting. These are little, tiny tweaks that you can do in your language that really help them to see why they would be interested in this as opposed to just thinking that it's one more sales pitch. Even when you talk about your background, you can talk about ... Obviously if you're pitching ... An example that I used last week that I'll use again this week, an Italian Villa rental company, you can talk about how well you know that part of Italy but adding that one extra phrase to say, "I'm very familiar with your coverage area, having spent ... " XYZ time "living there, and so I understand the needs of your customers who would be looking for a villa in this region."

Just adding that "you" in there a couple times and making sure that you bring everything you're saying back to the prospect is incredibly important here. Again, at the end when we say the very simple question about how to get them on the phone, it's not just going to be, "Hey, do you have a couple minutes next week and we can chat?" It's going to be, "Do you have a couple minutes next week when we can talk about how to help you get more leads from your blog?" So part of the way that we're going to accomplish this goal of keeping the prospect in mind at every turn is through something called story-selling. If you were on the call last week I mentioned this a bit. Story-selling is this really neat thing where you use some very age-old techniques of how to create a beginning, middle and end of a story around the issue that you see that the organization is facing but you paint yourself as an integral part of that story so that you're showing the prospect the golden land on the other side isn't possible without your help. And there's five steps to this.

My friend who came up with this concept who is a copywriter loves the alliteration of the five C's so he's called it the "5 C's." So as we go through each of the six steps that I mentioned before, laid over that is this arc, this plot arc of where the prospect is now, where you'll take them, how they'll get there and what it looks like once they're on the other side. And so the current state is something that we're going to explain in those two early points where we talk about something positive about the prospect's site or social media right now and also something negative. So we're going to show that there are some things that they're doing well but there are some things that really can be improved on. As we include that statistic where we show how important it is to have effective Facebook social marketing, they're going to immediately say, "Oh, well that does sound important but I don't know how I do it." That's the conflict that we're creating for the prospect.



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We want to show them that their current state needs to be improved but then they're not going to know how. So that's where we step in as the guide. When we talk about exactly what we propose doing, of course in an over-arching way so that they can't do without us, but the type of package or plan that we're proposing for them ... that's the climax. We're showing them what type of output, what type of content marketing they will have working with us that will allow them to reach that point illustrated by the statistic that we shared. And then in the consequences, this is where you talk about your past experience. I know obviously this is new for a lot of folks. We obviously haven't work with clients like this before, you wouldn't need to be on the call listening about how to do this but that doesn't mean that you haven't done work like this in other settings.

So for instance, I used to work at a university where I did a lot of writing projects. I can totally pull a statistic about how many people were reached by this initiative and how much more money this initiative brought in or something like that, even if it's not from my freelance career. So this is the kind of thing where you might want to get a little creative in terms of finding some impacts that you've had in other types of projects. Remember they don't necessarily have to be the exact same type of project but you just want to paint a picture of the type of proven results that you're able to bring. And in a conclusion, this is going to be that last line where we ask them to hop on the phone with us. The conclusion is that you should obviously work together and that they should just say, "Hey, yes, let's chat next week." So let's dive into the individual portions of the pitch and then, like I said, I have some examples at the end. I have one that's all written out that we'll walk through and then a couple of the folks that we looked at last week we'll do some live pictures there for them as well.

The first part of this six-step pitch is why are you writing? And this is the kind of thing where you really need, like I said, to check the "you" at the door and think about them. Think about the prospect and why they care. This is why it's very important to use this initial part to show that you've done your homework, show that you spent some time on their site and that this isn't just a cold pitch that you're sending to everyone. So here I like to start with something, like I said, complimenting them, because not only are people going to be wanting to know what's in it for them as you go along but it's really important to get the prospect on your side early on. So there's a prevailing concept of three steps that you need to do before somebody is willing to purchase something from you and it's called "Know, Like, Trust."

"Know" you're accomplishing just by sending the email. As soon as they open your email they know that you exist. So "know" is done and you're going to get more into knowing each other more deeply further on in the email and once you have a conversation. But for now, they know who you are. The next big hurdle is "like." "Trust" is probably the biggest hurdle



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and we're going to accomplish that in some of the other sections, but "like" ... how do you get somebody to like you in a very short email that they're not expecting, that they're initially defensive about? And this is why it's also very important to start with something complimentary even if what you're approaching them about, is about a flaw that they have that you would like to fix. Because you need to get them to like you from the onset. Because the saying goes, "people don't do business with people they don't like." Of course having Trump as president might be an interesting contradiction to that but typically, people will choose a brand that they like, that they have a good brand perception of or another brand or service provider, they may do the exact same thing or even cost less.

There is not a lot of studies about to this and it's often very counterintuitive but even if they have an opportunity to save money or get better service through another provider people will often choose one that they like and stay with them. I've seen this myself when I've been approaching prospects to do this kind of content marketing work. There was one woman who had worked with a small company that had screwed up for her several times in the past and she had started with them when they were very, very small and now they had grown into something much larger. She had just so much brand affinity for them because she was one of their first customers, it was somebody that she knew personally and so it took really a lot of screw ups on their end for her to even consider switching to somebody different. So when we start this email I can't tell you how important it is to make sure that you focus that very, very first sentence where you're showing them that you've done your homework and that you are familiar with this brand and that this is a personalized pitch, to focus on getting them to like you.

But not in a way that's artificial because people can smell that, especially when they're already superstitious about things like this. We accomplish that using detail. We accomplish it by pointing to a specific blog post that we saw on their site that we enjoyed. I've done this in the past. There was a company that I worked with where the owner of the company had put up a blog post about how they were having Thanksgiving in Italy and how they couldn't figure out how to cook the turkey because the ovens in Italy are very, very small and how they had to go into town and find a rotisserie that would make the chicken for them in the large oven and so on and so forth. So I opened the email to him by saying that we had the exact same problem when I was in Italy and I totally understand and I was highly amused that they were able to magically find a turkey in time. Before we go on to the next slide I have a couple questions in here that I want to jump over to.

Donna said that she pitched a social media management gig to a winery and they've already scheduled a call for next week so that's awesome. Let's all congratulate Donna on that because that's fantastic.



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And Bonnie is asking, “Do you approach the prospect differently if you’ve already connected with them?” For instance, she’s exchanged emails with the head of a travel board, a tourism board I assume, in a small town, and she knows the budget and they quote-unquote “need her help” ... I assume that they said that they need her help, and the tourism board also helped her get a press trip to the town and she’d like to approach them for content marketing work. So two things here that I want to point out. What Bonnie’s described is a very common and interesting case. You’ll often go on a press trip somewhere or be on a tour or something like this and find that the people that have hosted you on a trip need help and they might mention even while you’re there or they might come to you later and say, “Hey, I know you do this kind of stuff. We need some help. Do you think you can help us with it?”

And it’s very, very important if you’ve gone somewhere on a press trip and then you have been approached to do content marketing work or you are thinking about approaching them to do content marketing, to make sure that any journalistic-style writing that you were doing at that place has been published. So not just written but also published, before you begin any content marketing conversation with them otherwise it’s a large conflict of interest and the editor can withdraw the story or other things like that. So that’s a legal road that you don’t want to go down. If you are looking to work with a tourism board or company that has hosted you for something free in order for you to write about it in a journalistic capacity make sure that you do that before you work with them from a content marketing perspective. So to go to the overarching angle ... if you are writing somebody that you have worked with in the past, in this first section ... in the “why are you writing” ... then you would use that.

But again, don’t forget that we’re going to hit them with some negative stuff that they have to improve later so it’s still important to focus on the “like.” So in this case I would say something like, “Dear ... ” so and so, “It was so great to chat with you over email about what your needs are in terms of content marketing. I really respect what you’ve already done with ... ” blah blah blah blah blah blah, “and I have some ideas about how we can move forward.” So make sure that you don’t just say, “Hey ... ” so and so, “told me to get in touch with you.” Or, “I know that you need some help because we talked about the other day.” Make sure you also get that little back-patting, like-inducing nudge in there in the first paragraph.

All right, so let’s go on to the next section. We’ve started by telling them why we’re getting in touch with them and giving them a little compliment to sweeten them up before we go in for what they’re not doing so great. Before we switch from, “Hey, you’re awesome” to “Hey, you need help,” I like to show them that while we think that they have some good things going for them, on an industry level, there’s some other things that they need to be working on and this is a good segue. Rather than you saying, “Hey, I like what you’re doing but



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actually ... ” you can say, “Hey, I like what you’re doing but did you know there’s a lot of people who are getting much better results than that? I notice that you’re not doing ... ” XY and Z, “so perhaps we can start doing it.”

There are so many great statistics out there and I know that people are going to start asking me in the chat box where these things come from. The truth is when I was getting these for the call last week, I just put in a couple Google things and there’s a lot of repositories of quotes out there. I didn’t want to put too many specific links in here because the thing is that the quote that will work best for your travel content marketing pitch really depends on exactly what you are pitching. If you can include several quotes that’s also great. In the pitch I’m going to show you later, I have a couple different ones about how blogging can help your business. It can be good to have multiple quotes but you don’t want to water down your pitch by making it just like a white paper. All of the quotes or all of the statistics that you include should really have a purpose.

So for instance, something I want to point out here is, we talked about Facebook having the most engaged users, 70% of them log on daily including 43% who do so several times a day. But if you’re pitching to help somebody with their Facebook, a very important thing to include is another statistic that I mentioned last week, which is that currently posts by brands only reach 6% of the people following that brand until they’re engaged with and once the post either gets liked or comments, it goes on to reach more people, a higher engagement percentage and that can snowball very quickly. This is the kind of thing where you can use multiple quotes. You can say that Facebook has the most engaged users but in order for your post to reach the majority of your users and get that engagement, you need to get engagement very quickly and then you can move on to say that you have techniques of structuring social media posts that allow them to get X percent more engagement in the first Y minutes or Y hours, that allows them to reach more users. And that’s when you segue into what exactly you would offer.

Likewise, in terms of Instagram, it says Instagram’s per-follower brand engagement is higher than these other social network, however the issue that Instagram has is that unlike Facebook, where you can put a link in every single social media post you’re doing so that followers and users can very easily become interested in something and click through, Instagram has the hurdle where you can’t put links in each Instagram post. You can only put a live link in your bio. So this is the kind of thing where you can educate the prospect that you know that this is a hurdle so you include the statistic and then you say, “However, Instagram’s click-through rates are significantly lower because of ... ” XY and Z, “but I know a way to structure the text of your Instagram post ... ” blah blah blah. And that’s where you start to describe your solution. Likewise, for companies that are doing blogs. So four times as many leads, this is



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just super powerful statistic, however if you look at this, this is already pre-classified sort of say for companies that are blogging a little bit.

So many examples that we looked at last week that we're going to look at again this week are companies that simply aren't blogging at all or whose blogs have been more or less defunct for two or three years or maybe they only blog once a month. In this case, while this lead is awesome or this statistic, who doesn't want four times as many customers coming in, we need to find different statistics like this that fit people who are blogging in different frequencies presently. So HubSpot is a place that has a lot of those ... that has a lot of different statistics like this but like I said, whatever you need a statistic on, if you just look for brand Instagram engagement in Google statistics, then you'll find a lot of different things like that. And make sure like I said, that the statistic that you're using is really tailored to what you're trying to pitch because if you're just throwing different statistics in there about how the engagement can be higher, but then you aren't showing the prospect that you're going to help them with that, they're going to be confused and become disinterested and not see what's in it for them. That's something that we definitely want to avoid in these emails.

The third part of the pitch is where we start to tell them what they can improve. So here is where you're going to be less positive but you still need to show them something that will have a positive outcome in the end. So you don't want to just tell them, "Oh, I thought this post wasn't really a good fit for your audience." You want to say a problem and then a potential solution. So you're going to say, "I thought this wasn't a good fit for your audience. For instance, we ... " and we'll look at some in the next couple slides and give you some examples here, but you're going to say, "This post I didn't think was a good fit for your audience. If you do keyword research on this topic people are searching for ... " XY and Z "and I can help you craft some blog posts around those things." And likewise, saying something like "I didn't think this post was a good fit for your audience," is very subjective unless you include some statistics.

That was why I mentioned that you can pull in Google keyword searches and things like "you have this many followers but you're simply not posting that often" ... that's pretty hard to refute. When you take a statistic like the one I shared about blogging, that people who are blogging this often have more leads than people who are blogging that often, that's pretty clear. You can look at their blog and see how often they really are blogging and that's a pretty steady leg for you to stand on. So let's look at some examples. These are a selection of the ones that we looked at last week. In the case of this Tuscan House company ... so they are doing rent, again, villa rentals in Tuscany and they are posting super sporadically. They had, it looks like somewhat a regular post in 2015, one random post in 2016 and then one not



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pictured here here in January 2017. So it seems like they know that they should be blogging and they just can't get around to it.

So in this case, you want to compliment the blog post that they have. They also have a very, very ... as my husband would say, "fancy-ass website," so they're clearly investing in their website and you can also just compliment the general look of the website. I try to pick something specific to point to if at all possible because anyone who has a blog has seen these comments that come in that look like they might not be spam until you read very closely where they're like, "Hey, I love the idea that you've had here. It definitely deserves some further thought." So you don't want to have the type of praise comment, that falls into that category of an astrologer-style prediction that could fit a lot of things. So in this case I would look at this blog post they've got here in the upper left about the Canta Napoli seafood restaurant and I would look through and see okay, they discovered this restaurant in 2014.

So they're also writing about things that have happened pretty long ago and they say it's unusual to find a seafood restaurant this far inland but it should get every seafood lover's attention. So in this case I would say, "Huh, they found a seafood restaurant very far inland that they thought was really great." Okay, so let me turn back to my pitch and say, "Dear ... " so and so, "I really enjoy the sleek look of your Italian villa rental website and I thought the blog post in which you discovered a seafood restaurant in Cortona, in an area typically known for its mountain food was really enlightening." So that would be our positive part. Now when we get into the negative part, we're going to include a statistic similar to the one that I showed you about people who blog 11-plus times getting more leads than people who blog four to five times, a simple poll on this for people who blog once a month rather than people who blog never, once every six months or something like that. So I'll include that statistic and then I'll say, "I notice that while you've got a really nice layout for your blog, you're blogging very infrequently." That's all you have to say here because they do seem to have an interest but it's just not happening frequently enough.

The other example that we have also, I pulled two villa rental ones here because they're very different. Here's a company that does do blog posts. They haven't blogged in a while but they were doing it pretty regularly before that but their blog posts are really lackluster. They're the type of things that you would find anywhere, they're really click bait and they really don't show anything about the company. 6 Tips on How to Rent a Villa, A Short Guide To Val Di Chiana, 5 Great Farm-To-Table Restaurants. There is a really big backlash right now against websites that have this kind of content on their blog that people say is just contributing to the clutter of the Internet. So in this case, rather than just saying a statistic about companies that blog frequently, here I would actually use a statistic about companies that have insightful blogs or storytelling blogs or something like that because they clearly, even though they



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haven't been doing it for a little bit, understand or understood at one point that blogging frequently can have an advantage but it looks they stopped, and I would imagine because they weren't finding the advantages that they thought. And I think that their frequency wasn't the issue so much as the topic of the blog posts.

So in this case I might say, "Dear ..." so and so ... this is the first sort of complimentary sentence, you'd say, "I found the blog on your website and I just wanted to say that I was really impressed with the broad coverage that you have of different activities for people who are renting villas in Italy to do during their stays." I think we can pretty honestly say that they do have a pretty broad coverage. And then you would say your statistic and then you would say, "But while I noticed you used to blog quite frequently and haven't recently, it seems like the content that you were serving might not be ..." Let not say "might not" ... "isn't the best fit for the type of customers looking for a villa at this price point that you're trying to reach because of its general nature and you would be better served by some deeper storytelling." And then you would go in to talk about how when you work with blog clients you interview the villas and you get the stories of the villa owners and so on and so forth. Here's another case of Facebook rather than blogs.

So in this case, I double-checked again because I just want to make sure, this company has 61,000 Facebook followers and they have not posted since last year. Their engagement was very low even when they did. I don't know how they got 61,000 followers, I imagine that they may have bought some, but in any case they have them and they're not using them. So in this case I would say, "Dear ..." so and so, "I found your Facebook page and I was really impressed that you'd gotten 61,847 followers," and then I would have a statistic, like I said, about how "That engagement on Facebook can be very high but you only reach a certain portion of your followers" and say, "I noticed that you haven't posted since October and when you were posting your posting got ..." blah blah blah "... engagement. I think that given the size of your list or your Facebook following we can do a lot to improve that, using techniques like ..." and then you will talk about the things that you do that help people to get more Facebook comments and likes early on after things are posted.

Another thing that we looked at last week was Instagram because a lot of companies especially in the travel and food sectors are really jumping on Instagram but they have no idea how to do it and it's very difficult for them because having somebody who can actually do these things from their phone essentially often restricts them to having somebody's niece or an intern do these things. In fact, I'm not just making this up. I found a lot of companies and they say, "Oh yes, my niece said she will do our Instagram." So in this case, this company has very few posts, regular posts and they have amassed a great number of followers and they have some really lovely photography. So this would be a great place to



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tell them a statistic about how engaged users on Instagram are when interacting with brands but to mention also then a statistic about best practices. Because in this case, they've got a good number of followers but they're posting very inconsistently.

So we would want to show them how posting more frequently and using more diverse images would allow them not only to get more followers, but to get more customers. And so we would want to show that the user on Instagram are some of the most engaged but then we would follow up by saying, as I mentioned earlier that, "because you can't include direct links in your post it can be hard to get a return on your investment from the time on Instagram." And then you would mention the techniques that you use to get around this. So continuing on with the different sections of our pitch, number four, the section on how you help people. I've mentioned this a little in our examples before but this really circles back to what we talked about in the beginning of the call last week, which is ... what is your particular type of travel content marketing that you are going to do? This has both a geographic focus as well as a service focus. So that service isn't necessarily that you do blogs or that you do strategy. That service should be something specific and it should be something that you really think about, not just how it will work for you.

One of the other things we talked about in the last webinar was how frequently do you want to be in touch with the clients? How many rounds of edits do you want to do? How much autonomy should you have? So you need to think about your package in terms of that but also in terms of what is the client getting and how do we make sure they are getting a return on their investment? So this is the type of instance where you would want to say, "I do my typical starting package with clients that need to get some more leads coming through their blog is to start with one post every week around a keyword-oriented topic selected from the questions that you are getting from your customers to ensure that we're both serving your existing customer base and helping educate potential customers that are coming in through search. Brainstorming these topics is done collaboratively after an initial on-boarding phone call that we complete together to ensure that I have a complete understanding of your customers and their needs and once we've done that initial call then I would prepare the editorial calendar each month for your review so all you need to do is approve or give me suggestions on how to nudge things more in the direction that your clients need to see."

And so you want to make sure that you show that you have a process in place. But like I said, you don't want to make that process be something they can go and do without you so there's a little bit of magic in there, the way that you are creating this editorial calendar or the way that you are coming up with which ideas are the exact ideas that are going to be used, you're not really mentioning how that's happening but you're essentially showing them that they put in a little something, they talk to you at the beginning, they think about what questions their



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clients has and then you do some magic and then they get these blog posts. It's important to keep that little bit of magic out of the equation at this point because like I said, we don't want to tell them how to do it without us and we want to get a little tease in there so that they want to get on the phone with you, so they want to know more. Now, in point 5, where we looked at how your background uniquely qualifies you to help, this answer goes back to what we talked about last week about picking both the geographic focus and a service focus about what type of content marketing you're going to do.

And it's very, very important not to try with these not to shoehorn them, not to try to fit what you do into something that you have really no background in because in these cases, like I said, the potential clients are not expecting your email. They aren't on the lookout for somebody to help them with this so if you're emailing them and you are not super clear that you are able to do and have done and can produce results with this type of work, it's not going to work out. You need to be super sure about it and super excited about it or they're not going to be. And it really will show because if you are hemming and hawing a bit in your "about you" paragraph, then they're not going to be convinced and they're not going to respond. This is often one of the clearest ways that you can fix your pitches. If you send a couple pitches and you're not getting responses, this is often why. Because you've painted an interesting picture for them about why they need this type of service but not why they should go with you to do it. So this is why you have to think, like I said, about what you've done perhaps in other jobs or ways that you are qualified to do this that aren't necessarily really good to doing the work.

So for instance, if you ... is Tanya on this call? Yes ... So Tanya lives in Japan, Tanya traveled all over Japan. She's very familiar with different tourism opportunities in Japan and there, and able to get pictures and help find new ones so the fact that she lives in Japan is very advantageous to her working for instance with a Japanese tour company that's based in the US and brings travelers to Japan because she can get photos for their Instagram all times of year, even when their own employees are not in Japan. So that will be the kind of experience that you can bring that might not necessarily be demonstrable statistics about how you've previously improved other people's Instagram accounts but if you have wonderful photos and you show that you know how it works and you are there when the company isn't there, these are some little ways where you can get around this. And like I said, you can take things that you've done in other professions. For instance, if you have had a corporate job doing project management, you can say that you've previously had projects brought to you or you were able to optimize the system and produce 125% better results.

So in this case, you obviously don't want to lie. You don't want to create statistics that don't exist, but you should definitely draw parallels to other things that are not exactly what you



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are pitching them while making sure that your language is very, very clear. And again, not lying about what the statistic refers to. So like I said, if you have project management experience you would say you've "taken systems that were previously not producing optimal results and turned around in six months" or something like that. But that's not saying that you have had companies for whom you did Facebook optimization that you turned around in six months. So you're allowing your background to speak for itself without making the prospect any promises or including anything that could potentially come back and bite you. None of us want to be the Yahoo CEO that got fired because he said on his resume that he had attended Harvard but it was really Harvard extension school or something like that. Now the simple close, this I find is often the part where people falter.

You always, always, always want to make sure ... and I talk about this also in making magazine pitches ... that you end with a question that is easy for the prospect to say yes to. So what that means, is that you don't want to ask for too much. You don't want to say, "Does this sound like something you could use?" Because that's a complicated question. They'd have to think, "Well I don't know? How would this work for me?" ... which is something that you would rather address with them on the phone. You just want to say, "Do you have a couple minutes this week or next week when we can jump on the phone and talk about how to ... " and then make it something that has a clear benefit for them. So this is where you're taking it back to the beginning and what you first, first reached out to them about and talk about "how to get your blog turning out qualified leads, to bring more visitors to your site through Instagram marketing or to get more leads on your Facebook posts." So let's look at some of these companies that we've talked about and build some of these pitches live. There are a couple that I already started doing, sort of in bits and pieces before, so I might just skip through and choose one.

So this pitch that I have here is a template that's in the Six-Figure Travel Writing Roadmap and I wrote this before I knew about the concept of story selling. So I'm going to read you this one and then we're going to create a more story-selling oriented one around one of the companies that we looked at. But this is a good framework in terms of how vague you need to be about what you're going to offer versus getting into a lot of detail about exactly what the program is, which is going to make your email too long. So like I said, I keep the subject line very casual, in this case it says "A quick question about your blog." This is going to be for a company that needs help with its blog or they don't know that but you perceive that they need help with their blog. So "I've spent some time on your gorgeous website ... " and in this case you would say, "I particularly liked the story about trying to cook a Thanksgiving turkey in a tiny Italian oven, I've had that experience myself and I loved the way you handled it."



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And then you say, “I wanted to get in touch with you about how your blog can do more than just host testimonials from happy clients. It can actively cultivate future business.” So in this case the company had a blog, like a WordPress blog in place, but it was kind of ... a little bit of a company newsreel. They would have some random stories here and there, but they would mostly just drop in testimonials that they’d gotten from clients. And while those are useful, what I wanted to show this company is that there are a lot more different types of content we can include in there that would increase their leads. And so then I go on to say, “Did you know that blogs are the single most important inbound marketing tool for small businesses? And they cost half as much as outbound marketing per lead generated.” In this case I want to emphasize that you really need to speak the language of the prospect and so, like I said, websites like HubSpot that have these statistics, are often going to use those terms. So if you see something like inbound marketing or outbound marketing that you don’t know what that means, look it up as you’re working on these pitches because this is the type of language that the clients understand. This is the language that they speak in.

For them, inbound marketing is a prospect that is coming to them, as opposed to outbound marketing, which is when they are putting ads on Facebook or on Google or things like that, where they are reaching out to prospects. And so I go on to say, “Companies with blogs generate 67% more leads per month on average than their none-blogging competitors. And companies that frequently posts content relevant to their audience, generate 3.5 times as many leads as those with outdated or untended blogs.” So what I’m essentially saying here is that, by having a blog that’s not really a blog, that’s mostly testimonials, they basically don’t really have a blog at all and that they’re losing a substantial portion of potential business from the people who are coming to their blog. “Another thing I want to say, for a business of your size, it really means I recommend one to two blog posts per week on topics that interest your audience, i.e. not just testimonials, to keep both you and their next vacation front of mind for them. So here I’m not just saying that I want to write one or two blog posts a week for you.”

“I’m saying that by you posting one or two blog posts per week, not only are you keeping your audience thinking about you but you’re also keeping them thinking about their vacation, which for the company is very important because they want people not just necessarily be thinking of them as a service provider but story-selling themselves. They want their clients to be picturing themselves on that vacation and see this tour company as the solution.” So then go on to say, “I can ghostwrite these for you at a package rate for an initial two-month trial period to see how we fit together and help you start to experience the SEO and lead-generating benefits of an active blog.” So this again, I’m having a little nuts and bolts thing. I’m showing expertise by showing that I know that a trial period to see how people fit together is beneficial for both parties but then I also have the second part where I’m saying ... keeping it with them, that this period helps them to start to see the benefits of having an



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active blog. And go on to say, “I’m also available to advise you and your staff on how to effectively promote your blog to receive the best ROI in your marketing.”

This is really important because if you’re offering just one type of content marketing like blogs, what often happens is that there is another type of content marketing that’s not going so well that they need in order to maximize the type that you’re selling them. So in this case, “I’ve seen people have blogs but then nobody comes to them really because they don’t have great SEO in the first place, so there’s not a huge bump from having an active blog and so they really would need to have their social media going to have people start coming in to their blog.” Now I get into the more “about me” paragraph. So I say, “I’m a professional travel blogger who has covered ...” In this case I would say Italy ... “for Italy Magazine, Italian America, the Dewsbury News and USA Today and also I lived for several years in Italy, I attended university there and have worked to improve the lead generation through content marketing for several other boutique Italian concierge travel companies.” Well that’s what the next paragraph says. “So most importantly I’ve developed blogs, content strategies and share-worthy blog posts for countless clients based on my training in web writing.” And in this case I would maybe say my “training in web writing at MIT” or drop something else important there.

And then I said, “I’ve increased email newsletter open rates and Facebook likes by more than 10% for many clients.” So this is one of these areas where I’ve mentioned the statistic about the past but I haven’t necessarily said it was for other Italian boutique tour companies or something like that. Adjust it for other clients so these can be other clients in other industries. And then I wrap up by saying, “Can we schedule a brief chat? No more than 30 minutes needed, to talk about how we can work together to ramp up your blog and your business.” So I’m going to open this back up so I can see if we have any other questions. So in this example, it is a little bit long and the thing is that we are struggling when we write these emails between how to make sure that we cover enough ground to answer enough questions that they don’t have too many questions to write us back, while also making the email not get too long. So let me pick one of these to do a little sample live post, a little live pitch letter on here and if there is was one of them that you like throw that in the chat box. I think this one is good but if you guys want to see the Instagram and the Facebook one let me know.

So like I said, we really walk this line between making it too long versus having enough information. So if we’re going to look at this villa company, where they have not been posting for a while but they clearly saw the interest of posting but their content also when they were posting was not necessarily the best. Here is how I would go about it. So I did the intro a little bit earlier but I’ll just make up a new one again. So I’d say, “Dear ...” and I would find the name. So never say, “To whom it would concern ...” Or like, “Dear Tuscan



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Dream owner ...” Always go on the “About” page, go on LinkedIn, go on the contact page, go wherever you need to go to get the actual name of the person. So I’m going to pretend in this case that her name is Frederica. So I’m going to say, “Dear Frederica, I saw that on your Tuscan Dream website you have a blog that includes wonderfully broad information about the types of things that visitors to Tuscany looking to book a villa rental can enjoy during their stay.”

And then I would go on to use in these statistics of our blogs that are updated and I would say, “Did you know that while blogs can be a very effective content marketing tool, companies that have outdated blogs or blogs covering topics that are unrelated to their audience get 3.5 times fewer leads than those who update their blogs regularly. In particular, blogs that cover general topics, which can be found on other websites are less effective than blogs that use brand storytelling. Because of a new update to Google’s algorithm called Panda I’ve worked with several companies like yours who have blogs that are out of date to address this Google update through using effective brand storytelling to talk about the unique opportunities of booking villas through your company as opposed to others, by interviewing the owners of the villas represented by your company to tell their unique stories that entice potential visitors to stay with your villas as opposed to those offered by other companies. I typically do this in collaboration both with you as the company owner and the questions that your potential customers have to create an editorial calendar that addresses both opportunities around storytelling as well as more in-depth posts on the type of things that a traveler would need to know coming to Italy in one to two blog posts per week of the recommended length for SEO purposes, which is between 300 and 500 words.

And then I would go on to say that a similar sort of “About me” paragraph as I had in the previous one and wrap up with the same, “Could we hop on the phone for no more than 30 minutes to chat about how I can help get more traffic coming into your blog and more leads for your company.” So this one, like I said, I did on the fly. You want to have the right statistics for each place but it’s important to address whatever the shortfall of the company is. So even though, as I said, in the template that I outlined before ... even though there is a general structure that you can use, you really need to be adapting it for each place. You need to be including different statistics. You need to be slightly changing how you describe your service package to show how it affects this particular company. In this case, it’s not just that they need blog posts, but they need blog posts that have a different approach than the one that they’ve used before. In the case for instance of the City Sights, the Facebook posts, it’s not just that they need Facebook posts because they don’t have them, but they need Facebook posts that give them better engagement because they’ve already got a lot of people liking their company but those people probably aren’t seeing their Facebook posts.



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So you would really need to focus on ... in your package section, and also in the statistics, on how what you offer would increase the engagement, which would allow more of the followers they already have to actually be seeing the content that the company is posting. Likewise, in the case of the balloon company, they've also got a bunch of followers but they're posting really inconsistently. But we need to show them what the problem is with that. You can't just say, "You're posting inconsistently and so you're not getting the most bookings that you could from your followers." We need to show them why other companies that post more consistently are getting more followers and more business and show how we know that you can get business directly through each post that you put up on Instagram but you need to do it in a certain way due to the limitations of Instagram and we know about that and we're happy to walk them through that. And then, like I said, wrap up with a very, very simple question.

So depending on what type of content marketing you're trying to pitch, of course in the case of Instagram you need to have photography skills or in the case of Instagram or Facebook you need to be accessible in order to do social media updates for the company. You want to really make sure that you think about at least one sentence that you can add in that middle section about how you execute this, that shows that you have not just experience doing Instagram or doing Facebook that you have thought about or have experience of doing it for companies. And the picture that I showed you ... let me go back to that for a second ... I talked about how "I can ghostwrite these for an initial two-month trial period so that you can see the lead-generating benefits." You can also say, in the case of Instagram for instance, think about the process. You say, "I can use photos that you already have or take original photos and submit them to you for review two weeks in advance," or with social because the posts are going to be going live at a certain time, you would say, "I can work with an existing social media schedule app that you have or we can decide on the posts or we can agree on the post content in advance and then I will post them manually."

So you want to show that you have thought about not just what the content is that they need but also the process and how that process fits for different companies because that is what shows not just that you have the authority to do this but that you are a professional, that you are a service provider that is used to working with organizations. And those are the kind of touches, like I said, constantly taking it back to the company that you're pitching with every sentence that you write that make them have that last important factor of the "Know, Like, Trust," which is the trust. You want to establish through your paragraph, not just the paragraph about you, but also the paragraph about how you worked with companies, that they can trust you with this important piece of content marketing.



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If you've got any other questions about travel content marketing feel free, like I said, to respond to the email confirming your webinar or to shoot an email to questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com. Thanks so much again for joining me. Have a good weekend.