



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

This week we're talking about how to locate the people who need your travel content marketing writing. Last week we spoke about how many opportunities there are for this type of work and what the pay looks like, because the thing is that when you look online at the different job ads, they often quote very very little rates, and there's two reasons for that. One is that people often undervalue what this type of rating is worth, but secondly, something that happens often is that people who are willing to pay good rates simply don't put those rates in the job listing, because the people who aren't very good will all flock to them, because they see the great rate.

These rates are hiding in the job ads, but they're especially hiding in the jobs that never get listed. We're gonna talk today about how to find those. Specifically, the three main things that I want to cover today are that before you go out and start searching for companies to approach for travel writing work on your own, it's really important to figure out what work you are best able to do. We're gonna look at a couple different ways to do this, because the thing is that, you know, if any of you have had freelance travel writing gigs before, or even I'm sure you've seen this in your full time jobs. It often happens that something that kind of looks like a dream on paper, might not end up great because either the personalities don't match or the work isn't quite what you thought it would be, or there's something internally that causes the project that you're supposed to be working on to get canned.

I mean who hasn't had that happen to them right? It's really important from the get go to be incredibly clear on what you are offering to the client, so that everybody is on the same page when you get started, and this also helps you command higher rates. The next thing that we're gonna look at is, like I said, the three different types, or three different case studies of some inquiries that we got of different types of content marketing that people might like to do. We're gonna do different types both in terms of the variety of writing or content marketing work that would be involved, as well as different search criteria.

Then I'm going to cover, depending on how much time we have, three different tests that you can do, to make sure that when you do these searches, and you're finding people, you know if they are gonna be the type of people that you get really excited about, you email them, they respond, it feels like you have a great connection. You put together all this stuff that they've asked for and then they say oh, we could never afford that. You want to avoid spending a bunch of time investing your own time and resources into researching a company, and putting together a great proposal for them, that you know, they could very well go and do on their own. By weeding out the people who are never gonna pay or never gonna move forward with you in advance.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

Previously, before I went more deeply into magazine writing, I earned most of my income from travel content marketing gigs. Initially from ones that I found online, and then I quickly switched over to ones that I set up myself.

Because not only did I find them more lucrative, but they let me do the types of writing that I felt like, I was setting the content calendar and the types of topic for the blog posts as well as the style of the blog post, and so it allowed me to do so many writing that I would have had a hard time doing in a paid fashion otherwise. When we talk about finding clients, for you it really, for you is a big part there. The right type of client is gonna be different for everyone for a lot of reasons. It doesn't just have to do with what you want to focus on in terms of geography or in terms of the type of content marketing writing you like to do. It has a lot to do with the company, or with the organization that you want to work with.

One of the first things that you want to ask yourself is, is your ideal client an individual or an organization? Because these are very different types of workflows, and the amount of people or time involved in getting your work approved. For instance, I prefer to work with small operations, where I'm working directly with someone who is both a decision maker, as well as has interaction with the customer. Because then they can tell me the types of things that they're hearing from their customers, and then I can say okay, then it sounds like maybe we need to add this to what we're doing. They have the authority to say yeah, let's go ahead and start doing that, how much does it cost?

This is different for everybody. Some people, especially who have corporate backgrounds, enjoy working within that structure because they know it well, and it can be an advantage, because if you don't have a corporate background, it's hard to learn how to navigate those things. Likewise with them profits, we spoke last week, some attendees had questions about how different tourism boards are set up, and the thing with tourism boards is some of them are independent nonprofits. Some of them are technically for profit companies called DMOs or destination management or marketing organizations. Some are entirely governmental organizations.

If you have a background in working with nonprofits, I was just chatting or emailing today with somebody who is on the call actually and has a higher education background like I do. That means that you know the bureaucracy of how nonprofits work. That can be very transferrable to working with tourism boards that are set up in that framework. You know what, they can easily get money for and what they can't, and how to phrase your request and what type of people usually hand out what type of things.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

This question relates to the second question, are they for profit or not? This question, are they for profit or not, doesn't just have to do with the pay, although definitely, as everybody likes to say, nonprofits don't pay as well. That's true and that's not true. For instance, I used to work at MIT, and I have a friend who's looking for a new job right now, and she found a job at MIT. I said, well let me look at the job class code and tell you how much it pays. I thought it was hilarious. It's a VP of marketing position, and the potential pay range on that was something from like \$50,000 to \$160,000. So you never know in nonprofits whether it's higher education or otherwise. For the right role they often do have money. Especially when it comes to freelancers, because that comes out of a different part of the budget.

Now, are they local? Sorry, there's a typo there. Are they local or long distance? This is something that I've noticed increasingly can be really great, is to work with people who are in your area. Because once upon a time, I guess not really that many years ago, depends how old you are. Like 10 years ago, if you were freelancing, the internet in terms of searching for a job, just wasn't what it was. The infrastructure to work remotely wasn't what it was, and people really preferred to work with local freelancers. However now, that so many people are finding people online, I find that these local companies are often poorly served. I highlighted somebody last week in the webinar on what the opportunities are like, who lives in Hawaii and works for everybody she can get her hands on in her local area. She works for Hawaiian affairs organization, she works for the government, she works for the tourism board, she works for the Hawaiian leisure magazines, things like this.

Maximizing your opportunities locally can be really great, but if you're nomadic, you know that might not be an option. But if you're nomadic you can also work on maximizing your opportunities where you are right now. I have some people that I coach who are nomadic, and we've looked at the fact that since they spend a month or two in different places, that's a really great opportunity to set up and do the ground work in the initial onboarding with a new client while you're there, and then continue to work for them while you're on the road. For instance, if you traveled to a lot of these regular nomad destinations, like Bali or Thailand or things like that, there'll be a lot of English language tourists often as well.

It's a great place to find tour companies that might be operating in Bali or Thailand or Italy or whatever it is, but actually based in the US, but you might have a much harder time coming in contact with them in the US, even through internet searches. Whereas when you're on the ground, you'll see their flyers, you'll run into their tour groups or something like that. When you're traveling, it can also be a great way to find these companies. But then like I said, it comes back to whether you want to have your meetings with people in person or over the phone or over email, things like that.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

Now, what industry are they in? This goes back to some things that we talked about in the last webinar, that travel companies are a huge umbrella. There's so so many travel tech companies these days. There's, I mean, there's entire companies that just do booking, reward, airline tickets for people. They're typically based around blogs, they often have their own blogs already. But just to show you there's so many sub niches within travel, and it can be really great to dive into and become experienced with these further out branches of various travel industries. Because those are often the people who are less served by job boards and things like that, because they're smaller companies, they're newer companies.

Or they are a mom and pop shop and they've just been doing it the two of them forever. All of these types of smaller companies are great targets, because they don't already have people set up. But that doesn't mean that you can't do content marketing work for an airline or for a large tourism board as well. This segways into the next question, how long have they been in business? This is kind of a personal tolerance level for you. I know some people and you know, myself included, when I started doing this, really look at content marketing work as the way to have steady income, while doing other types of travel writing. For instance, the way to know that your bills are paid. If that's the case, it might not make sense for you to be looking at startup companies, because they're inherently a bit volatile and they might close any day or they might drastically change direction or things like that.

That would preclude you or make you more vary about looking through press release, to see what new companies are opening, that might be looking for help. That's why the method that we're gonna talk about later, doing google searches can be really useful. Who you report to is a question that is a lot related to the size of the company and how long it's been in business. But it's another preference issue that you should think about. Like I said, at the beginning, when we're talking about working with individuals versus organizations, you want to think about, and this factors into when you're looking for your companies and who to contact. What is the working relationship that you have in mind for these gigs? Because remember, we're setting them up ourselves, we can do whatever we want.

If we don't want to be having to talk to someone who is annoying on a regular basis, we don't have to work with that client. We can find somebody else. It really really is a big sea of people. Then we're gonna talk more in depth about what you do for them and how often you're available to those clients and how they pay you, are things that we're gonna talk about next week when we get into sending out contracts and things like that. Before you start looking for companies, there's the questions that I just went through. A lot of them are preference and fit and feel questions, but there's two main things that you need to decide. What is gonna be your geographic focus and what is gonna be your skill or service based focus.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

This is important for two reasons, because often when we go to look for writing gigs, we cast this very very very wide net, and we look around in what's available and we say huh, I think I could do that. But the thing is that the people who would be hiring you for this work, they're not out there looking for somebody who could do something. They are looking for a solution. They're not even necessarily looking for a person, right? When somebody posts an ad looking for writers for blog post, what they really want is blog posts. They want perfect blog posts, that are exactly what they're looking for, that come in in clean copy on time with minimal fuss. That's actually what they're asking for. They're not actually asking for people. It's very important to make sure that when you're out there looking for your own gigs, you're not trying to cast a super wide net of things that you could do.

Rather, you're focused on things where you are very clear about the solution that you're gonna provide to people. Because that's ultimately what the people who would hire you are looking for. The second reason why it's really important to do this thinking up front, is that otherwise your search can go on forever. Because if you're not super clear on who you're searching for, you'll spend a lot of time looking at people and saying, oh, maybe this could work, maybe this could work. And you have this really long list of people to reach out to, but they're all sort of what people in sales would call lukewarm prospects. They're a little warm, because you can see that maybe they need you. They're not entirely out of the blue cold, but they're only lukewarm, because they're not super super clear of a fit for what you are looking to do.

I'm gonna skip talking too much about geographic focus, because I think that's pretty self explanatory. You know, if you have a background in Italy, like I did, when I started working on this. That's a clear one, I've got some people in the Pitchalooza program right now, who are based in different interesting places. Someone's based in Lithuania, so she could be looking for people who offer tours in Lithuania. But you can also look at places that you know well from the past. I have somebody also in the program right now, I'm not sure if you're on the call Hillary, but I'm talking about Hillary Richardson. She used to edit a travel magazine in Ireland and spent a lot of time traveling around Ireland, getting to know Ireland, she really knows the travels stories and the landscape there very very well.

Even though she doesn't live there anymore, it's an area that she could really easily use as her base for her travel content marketing work. Since the geographic thing is a bit self explanatory, I want to move on and look at the different skills you can offer. Now, as we looked at last week, there's so so many different types of offerings, whether it's a service or something discrete like blog posts. That you can do under the umbrella of travel content marketing. The thing is that I think we often think of it in nouns. We think blog posts, or we think Facebook posts, or we think, you know, Instagram photos, something like that.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

Like I said, clients do think of it in terms of deliverables, in terms of that discrete thing. But when you're thinking about what you can and should do, think about it more specifically. Do you just write the posts, are you really great at getting them set up in WordPress and making them look great. Even helping the client set up a new theme and things like that. Are you really great just at writing, or would you also offer to help take on proofreading the other types of content marketing collateral that they have going out? Are you great just to curating photos on Instagram, or are you also great at taking photos as well? These are the kind of things, like for instance Twitter chats. We can offer to a client that we'll do their social media, but if you explain the benefits of a Twitter chat and say how you're really great at getting five tweets a minute out during a twitter chat and that you have typically seen growth of x many followers when you do twitter chats on your own, twitter referring a blog that you run. That's another type of thing that is a discrete service or skill that goes beyond just saying the facile description of I do Instagram or I do blog posts.

I'm gonna talk about how to set up a very specific offer, so that when you approach these clients, you're not just saying, hey, can I write blog posts for you, but you're offering them something that sounds too good to say no to. This is probably something that you can ask at parties or buy your relatives and friends who don't actually understand what freelance writing is. This question of what do you do in the travel marketing context, is something that you need a very clear answer to. For the reasons I talked about before, is that it helps the person looking to hire you say yes. It helps make it clear how you are better than all of the other people out there. It helps to give them ideas for things that they might not have thought of, that they would want to hire you for.

Let's do a little example here. When you approach somebody, and again, we'll talk next week about exactly how to write these emails and whatnot, but when it's important to think about this now, because as we're looking through people's blogs and Instagram accounts and whatnot, to find people we might want to approach for travel content marketing work. If you don't have something specific in mind, that you're gonna offer them later, then you're not gonna be looking for something specific that they're lacking right now. It will make it much harder to write your offer later. When you are gonna pitch them, you're not just gonna say I've run a blog for seven years and I know how to do it really well. You're obviously gonna say, I've grown it this much or I have this many followers and so on and so forth.

That's just the first part. When you tell them what you've done in the past, like I said, that's not super important to them. What's important to someone you're gonna reach out to for travel content marketing work is what you're gonna do for them. If you just tell somebody that you want to write blog posts for them. I literally have seen this happen. In fact, I've had people who have reached out to me through magazines that I write for, and say hey, a lot



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

about this topic, we have a blog that needs to be ghostwritten, can we hop on the phone and talk about you doing it for us?

Then in this conversation and you know, they reached out to me, so clearly they think I'm a fed and then I understand all the things that they're struggling with. Then they say something like, okay, I heard that these typically go for, and I usually hear a little higher than this, but a lot of times people think that the going rate for a well researched, a 1,000 word blog post is \$15 with photos set up in WordPress, perfectly proofread. You know, I hope that you're all laughing at home because we all know that that's preposterous, but companies out there really think that this is an okay number to ask. It's our job to educate them that they simply can't get what they are looking for at that rate.

Just a small aside about rates: I'm gonna mention a sample rate that you could say for a certain package of blog post related services in a second. But the rates that you should charge depend a lot on you. Don't start charging a \$100 a blog post if you've been doing a lot of work for \$20 or \$15 a blog post if you don't have the experience to back it up. Don't start charging \$100 a blog post, because you think that's what people pay. If you have a lot of experience and should actually be charging \$250 or more per blog post. Because here's what happens. I have a friend who has this wonderful strategy for working on oDesk, which I think is now called upwork.

This is one of these bidding sites where somebody puts up a project that they need done, and then people put in proposals and price ranges and then the client picks one. She puts together beautiful, amazing proposals and quotes a super super high rate. The client, very intrigued, says, I really like what you said, but everyone else has only quoted me a tenth of that. She says, yeah, I'm not surprised. Go ahead and work with them and then when they don't do what you wanted and you're at the end of your deadline and you just need it done, come back to me and we'll talk. You would not believe how often this works for her. Then what she does, is they come back to her and they say, oh my gosh, we need it in one week. She says wow, when I originally wrote that proposal for you, it was to do this project in two months. If you need it in one week, I need to charge you a rush fee. That's 2.5 times the original cost. But they pay it, because they have to, because they need the project done.

There's a lot of people out there charging low rates that suck. But there's also a lot of people out there charging low rates that don't suck. This is the issue with trying to charge a higher price than you're ready for. I've had some people apply for the travel magazine database writer position, and given them sample assignments at quite high rates. In fact, I allowed people to tell me what they're rate was, I looked at their background, and if I thought it made



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

sense, I gave them the assignment. I have to tell you, none of the people who quoted me \$150 or more, actually delivered. None of them were able to create, even in multiple drafts, an entry for the travel magazine database that looked anything like what we publish. It was shocking. But the people who were doing it for much lower rates, I actually didn't bring on anybody that was looking for \$20 or \$30, or if they did I told them to raise it.

There's people who quoted me \$40 or \$50 or \$75 or a \$100 who did it perfectly, unlike these other people. You don't want to be somebody who has a higher rate, which seems like it's an inflated sense of your own value. This is really tricky and it's something that you have to figure out for yourself and you should never work for a rate that you don't feel comfortable with. But you should also make sure that if you're getting into the territory where you're starting to quote rates that people go wow, that sounds like a lot, you are over delivering, and double, triple, quadruple checking everything that you do, to make sure that it's in line with the price that you have quoted. Okay, so circling back to this client who says, oh wow, I heard those typically go for \$15, would that work for you?

If rather than just approach them and say, you want to write a blog post for them, let's try something else. What if you said, this is sort of a sample pitch letter, but the pitch letter would have more things and we'll talk about that next week. What if you said, I offer custom content consulting services, designed to turn your website into a lead producing machine. The process is that we start with brain dump call in which I interview you to determine the types of things your perspective customers really need to know, and the types of information that will really make an impact, and moving them closer to becoming paying customers. Each month, in collaboration with you, I create a coordinated and balanced editorial calendar which covers the content that we discussed, along with it incorporates with your other marketing initiatives, customer booking patterns and information needs and trends in the space, so you're showing that you're keeping up on the trends in the space so they don't have to. That will perform well in search.

Finally, I provide clean proofread copy that I load directly into WordPress with appropriate images, with the correct legal attributions, tags and other metadata to help the content be found more easily through organic search. These packages begin at \$500 for one post per week and the final rate for your package depends on the length of the post requested, and the level of original research or interviews required. When you say something like this to a client or a perspective client, that creates a whole picture for them, of how they are gonna work with you. I have a friend who calls this story selling. You are telling the client a story in which they are the hero, they are the protagonist. You are showing them how you will be their Yoda and their guide, and you will lead them through the treacherous path of making sure that their blog posts perform, that they look good, that they're in line with what's going



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

on in the field. They come out on the other side with content that makes them look great for the win.

You've created this story in which your client is the center, but it doesn't work without you. Now they've bought into this idea, and then it's very hard once they start picturing this for themselves, for them to say no. This is the part where you can start to give them raise that they wouldn't usually consider, because they bought into the scenario that you've created for them. We'll talk more about story selling next week.

I've talked about a couple different methods to use to track down companies that you could potentially target for this type of work. One of the ones that I've mentioned off handedly is looking at press releases. I'm not gonna go too too much into that, and if people want to see that I can show that in a future webinar. I think it's pretty self explanatory, but if people have questions, let me know in the chat box and I'll add that to a future webinar. The thing is, if you're gonna do it with press releases, then you basically just scan through PR web or one of the other PR services, and you just see who is new. Who is a new company, who is a hotel that has a renovation that's opening, things like that. Then you circle back and do the same thing we're gonna do right now, to check and see if they need help.

The reason that I'm skipping the part of actually looking through the press releases, it is essentially the same thing as doing a google search, except rather than doing a google search for a topic, like what I'm gonna talk about right now, you just start by pulling the companies out of the press releases, instead of just doing a google search for an entire topic. But the way that we're gonna triage them is the same.

When you're starting out with travel content marketing, it's really important to stick with companies who have already set up whatever it is that you want to do with them. Because it's a little tricky, you might get a company that seems like it would totally benefit from having a blog. You talk to the owner and they agree, and they tell you they've always thought about having a blog, and it seems like it's gonna go great. Then you run into all this annoying BS, because what happens is, they have a website structure that's really awkward. To add a blog platform to it is this whole project, and somebody has set up their blog or their website in their first place and they don't even really have the code and they don't know how it works, and it's very difficult to get WordPress attached to it, so then they ask you if you can hard code the blog, and then you say oh my god, I have no idea how to do that and no interest, but by now you've already said you're gonna work with the company.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

The potential issues that come up, logistically, bureaucratically, in terms of permissions, all sorts of things. Setting from scratch up, anything from a technical perspective, from a company, can be very lengthy and off putting, and that negatively affects your rate. Because if you're getting paid to produce things once this thing is up and running, you're not gonna get paid until it happens. Unless you include in your packages that you will do the setup for them, to start their social media accounts or to set up their blog, and you've discussed that with them in advance and they do have the infrastructure for it.

I really, really recommend only reaching out to folks that already have things set up, but are doing it badly. All right, I've three examples that we're gonna look at. One is around blogs, one is around Instagram and one is around Facebook. For these, we already did the searches so we don't have to flip back and forth between the web. I've just got some screenshots to show you, but there's a couple different things that I want to highlight. Because the point when you're doing the searches, whether it's through google or you've pulled somebody out of a press release and now you're looking at their website. Is to check not just that they're failing at whatever that you want to pitch them, but also that they have an interest in doing it and just aren't able to handle it, and they have money to pay for it. This is a very difficult thing to ascertain and sometimes people have money to pay for something, but they just won't pull the trigger on it, because they don't think it's important or they have other things going on right now, and so those can always come up down the line.

We want to make sure that we're finding people who look like they are investing in their marketing. They're just not investing very well and getting good results. To start, let's look at, let's pretend that we watch or rate blog posts for a company that does villa rentals in Tuscany. Either maybe you live in Florence or you spend a lot of time there and you know the area really well, and you really like to do road trips and find things to do that are kind of off a beaten path, and that's often what people who are staying in villas do. You think it's a great fit for the type of stuff that you like to research anyway, and you like to get paid to do that.

You do a little google searching for companies that run villa in Tuscany, and ones that have blogs. Then you pull up some blogs to start seeing what you can do. Something to remember, and we'll talk more about getting these statistics next week, is that we're always like I said, we always need to keep in mind what the company is paying for. The company isn't just paying for a blog post as much as they're paying for a blog post more than they're paying for a writer. The company is actually paying for a piece of marketing that will bring them more business. In the case of blog posts, again, we'll talk more about stats next time, but I just want to lead what we're talking about here with the mindset that companies that are B2C, that's business to consumer, as opposed to B2B, which is business to business.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

Many travel companies are B2C, because they're marketing directly to travel purchasers, travelers. Companies that are B2C, that blogged 11 times or more a month, so that's about, there's 22 weekdays, so that's half the week days of the month, basically. Companies, that blog 11 plus times a month, get four times as many leads as those that blog only four to five times a month, and then I've got some more statistics that we'll look at next week about ones that blog less than that. But that's a lot more business, that would be you quadrupling the amount of business that can basically make up.

When you are looking at people to find folks that need help when you're blogging, you need to be thinking about, okay, not just these people haven't been blogging in a while, but what's the quality of these blog posts? Are they designed to help people book, is this blog actually serving its purpose?

Okay, so here's one called Tuscan Dream. They do quite a few different things, as you'll notice from the top bar here. They help plan your wedding, they have event spaces, they do yoga retreats, they also help you set up stays with hotels and BNBs, they can do restaurant bookings, they're kind of full service.

Because of that they're a little bit all over the place. When we looked at their blog, we saw that they haven't posted since last year. But it was interesting, because they haven't posted since last year, but last year they were posting quite regularly. It seems like they may have had somebody that was doing their blog that left, perhaps an intern or a general social media person, or perhaps that person who internally within the company, that was doing it, just got busy and doesn't have time to do it anymore. These can be really great. Any time a company was posting regularly and then have stopped, it shows that this was important to them and something has just come up. Often, as I said, whoever was doing it left or got too busy, and they just haven't had time to find somebody else.

That's super useful for us. Now, the one thing to look out for, is that if a blog hasn't been updated in a very long time, or if the website looks a little wonky, the company may have gone out of business. In this case we also checked the events to make sure that they had recent events going on, and there's a lot of other ways that you can do that as well. You can check their, like this one has the events page, so that's easy. But say this was a villa rental company and they didn't have any events or anything like that. I might go in and poke around and look for something that's a pdf or something like that, that has the date on it and see if they had a 2017 version, like a 2017 version of their listings. Or to see if they've added any villas recently by checking the timestamps on those villas themselves.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

Anytime we're trying to approach somebody because their site is simply out of date in terms of their blog or their social media, always make sure that you check that they're still in business. You can also go on LinkedIn to do that as well. Another thing that we noticed here, was that the posts on their blog are very general and very guide oriented. If you look at the recent posts on the side, six tips on how to rent a villa, a short guide. You know, another listicle, another exclamation mark. They're very sort of caddy, and they also are not really highlighting the experiential aspect. They're giving service information, but people can go anywhere to get service information these days, there's so many blogs, magazines will do it. They can get services how to information by the way. They can get that kind of information on Quora, so it's not in the company's interest anymore to be doing that kind of information. But it is in their interest to be doing story telling.

For instance, something that you could pitch to this company would be to do interviews with past guests about their experiences and to rate those up or for you to attend the yoga retreat and to write some essays based on that experience. You would pitch a company like this not only how to help them get their blog back online, but also how to turn their blog into something that is more experiential and paints the ambiance of the type of things that they're doing. Another Italy example here, we've got Tuscan House. They have one more recent posts that I didn't show here, because their website was super super wonky and oddly laid out. They had one post from January 7th. If you look on here, it's like they blog, I don't even know, they seem to have done it sort of, kind of regularly, like every two weeks in 2015, and then they put up one thing in 2016 and then they have the one right now. But their website is freaking beautiful. It is really a clear, custom build and it's got a lot of information on there. But their blog is just not working for them.

This is the kind of incense where this person is clearly very interested in their marketing and how they appear to their customers. I'm sure that they understand the importance of having a blog and this type of thing, as if you look at the sea food restaurant description here, you know they clearly also understand the importance of story telling and giving the backstory on these places, but they're just not serving it up as they would like. This is the kind of pitch where you could show them that you understand what they're trying to do and you want to help them do it and do it better.

Here's another one. This website, Your Tuscany. Had sort of completely paused. They were doing very very very regular blog posts and they paused, and it looks like the company is still around. Their blog is still very prevalent, but they're not working on it. Even the blog posts themselves were very bland, they were very, they looked like they were written for like \$5 through some SEO copywriting job. They really weren't anything interesting. I imagine they probably stopped doing their blog because they simply weren't getting any return on it. This



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

would be the kind of case where you would pull up some statistics, and again, we'll talk next week about how to find different statistics on the negative effects of having an outdated blog or a blog that looks like SEO keyword stuffing. How it's hurting their website and how you want to help them to make their blog into something that is gonna help them going forward.

Let's do another example, but this time we're gonna do Facebook. So, say you want to do a Facebook marketing that does tours in New York. In this case, I just chose New York because I was looking for a place that would have a lot of tours, and I wanted to make sure that we had a lot of options to look at that didn't have necessarily awesome Facebook pages. When you go to a small market, for instance I did a story a little while back on barbecue tours in Canza city. There's only one or two places that do barbecue tours in Canza city. A friend of mine runs a food tour company in Madrid. There's only a couple places. If you make your search super narrow or in a small market, you might end up finding that, well, there's a decent number of companies, they're all new and working very hard on their content marketing already and so they won't need your help.

Sometimes you need to enlarge your search a little bit to get some companies that do need your help. In Facebook, I was, I spent a while looking up these statistics, because it's kind of an interesting case. Companies have to be on Facebook, but Facebook really limits how much their posts get shown to the people who follow them, and actually awkwardly, if you have more than 500,000 followers, Facebook even further limits how many people that follow you, are able to see your posts. When I say limits, I mean only 2% of the people who follow you get your posts in their stream. Facebook is kind of an odd duck.

If you want to approach companies through their Facebook page, because all companies do have them, you can focus on the fact that Facebook has the most engaged users of any social media platform. What that means is that if we see a Facebook page that doesn't have very much engagement, it's definitely underperforming, and that's something that you can help them with. In this case we pulled Walks of New York, which is actually company that I know. I know the people who own this. They previously had somebody full time who did their social media and their blogs and that person has since left and so now they don't really have anyone doing it in a very attentive fashion. What we noticed when we looked at their social media, is that they have a very decent number of followers. They have 8,800 followers, and they're posting consistently, but they're not getting engagement.

Because with Facebook engagement is key, and for companies in fact, when you post, once people start engaging with that post, then it reaches more and more people, so engagement is also key in terms of expanding your Facebook reach. If a company is not getting very good



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

engagement, for instance, I showed here a post that went up four hours before we took the screenshot, that doesn't have any engagement at all. That means that there's a lot of room for improvement, and since they've got a good number of followers and they're an established company, that's probably something they would be interested in pursuing.

We looked at this other one called Manhattan Walking Tour. This was an interesting one, because again, they have a pretty decent number of fans, but they really don't post that often, and it seems to be just very random phone photos that the person who runs the tours takes, while they're out on the tours. I bet that person has a lot more photos that they're not using, or a lot of information in their emails of things that they've written up for people or different tours that they've offered or things that they've noticed when they're around, that you could very easily help them put up here, but they just don't have the time. This would be the case where you could say, hey, I see that you have a good number of fans on here, but you're not utilizing them. Here's how I can help you do that.

Here's another one, also New York one. This is City Sights New York. They have a really really large number of fans and they seem they're still in operation, but they're just not posting on Facebook at all. This is the kind of one like I said with the blogs before, it's often the case that they just lost a person who was doing this work for them and then nobody else picked it up.

Now we're gonna do an Instagram example. For Instagram I was trying to think of what would be a good type of company and I picked something a little random, but we were able to find some really good examples. If you don't know about Cappadocia, it is this place in Turkey with all these natural stone pillars, and it's very popular to do hot air balloon tours there, because it's very difficult to walk around and you get really lovely pictures from the hot air balloons. The hot air balloons themselves make really good pictures. I thought that this would be an Instagram example. What we found was that, while a lot of these companies do have Instagram accounts, they're totally under utilizing them. With Instagram, this is a huge thing for companies.

If you are a photographer or do a lot of photography and you're knowledgeable about Instagram. Because Instagram can be pre-scheduled, this is the kind of thing that companies have a really hard time getting into it, because it's difficult for them if they don't have a dedicated social media person to get on top of that daily manual posting. Instagram, however, has some of the highest engagement rates of people following brands. Facebook has a lot of people on it all the time, but the people on Facebook aren't always super happy about



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

engaging with brands. However, Instagram is a place where brands can really flourish, and I've seen a lot of brands do some really cool things with Instagram.

One that's not doing cool things on Instagram is this company we found called Rainbow Balloon. They're posting not super frequently, but they have a decent number of followers, given how infrequently they post. Their photos are okay but sometimes off topic, and very Turkey nationalist oriented, which doesn't necessarily help their sales agenda, right? With them, you would want to pitch to them about the values of being consistent on Instagram, and include some statistics about how that would help them grow, and also focus on how Instagram can be used to really drive traffic back to their website and get booking tours, and use that to steer them towards some content that would be more inspiring to travelers rather than just broadcasting their own personal message.

Another one we found, that's doing some interesting things, and they're also doing some videos, is this Kapodokya Balloons. But what we notice with Kapodokya Balloons, if you look here, and the reason that I took the photo, the screenshot so that you can see more at a time, is that they often have several photos that are super similar in a row. Here we also have a case where they're not posting very consistently, but they have a quite good number of followers and good engagement, so they're clearly doing something right, but it could be so much better, especially if they were posting more consistently. One of the things they could do better as you'll see when you look at the full thing here, is that they can be alternating the types of photos more, so that when somebody goes to their Instagram page, it creates a really nice tableau. Since they clearly have some good pictures available, that's something that they could work on.

Likewise, you see they've got a lot of photos that are sort of team or group shots over here, which aren't necessarily very marketing oriented, so those are things that you could advise them to do less frequently. In this case, since they've already got the content coming out of their own shot, but they're just not organizing it properly, this would be a great case of pitching them for you to just do the strategy about the Instagram and maybe review the photos, but to have their own team do the posting and you would just help make sure that they're going to post consistently.

Another one I found here was Atlas Balloon and they have not a ton of posts, but a great number of followers, sorry, I just had to blow my nose. You'll notice that they have really lovely photos, so I'm just gonna go back for a second to two before, so look at the Balloon Rainbow's photos for a second versus the Atlas photos. So, there's clearly so much better than the first one I showed you, Balloon Rainbow can be doing with its photos. Even there's



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

better than can be done than the Atlas photos as well. But while they've got some really beautiful photos, they're super inconsistent. They often go several weeks between postings, and that's part of the reason that even though they have 48 posts they have a lot of followers because they put some nice things up there and then other people linked to them and things like that, but they're not doing it very consistently.

Similar to the last one that we looked at, they have beautiful photos that are often very similar photos one after another. This would be the place where you could step in and help them with the strategy and show them that, because they have so many followers, even with this few posts. They have the ability to grow really quickly.

How do we make sure that we're not spending a bunch of time on a proposal for somebody who's never really gonna pan out? It's very important to do this in advance like I mentioned, because you don't want to spend a bunch of time putting together a proposal for somebody, only to find out that it's never gonna go anywhere. There's three things that you can check on. The need, which is what we primarily looked at now. You don't want to be approaching somebody who doesn't have a blog because they don't care about having a blog, but you also don't want to approach somebody who stopped doing their blog because they decided it wasn't working for them and there's no way to change their mind. You don't want to approach somebody who has a blog that's only updated every couple weeks because their niece is writing it, and they really want her to write it and they're not gonna give it to somebody else.

You want to make sure that you assess that there is a need as much as you can before you reach out to the person. You know, like in the case of the niece, you wouldn't know that in advance, but these are questions that will either get answered very quickly in your call or they just won't respond to you, so you don't have to spend too too much time putting together a proposal for them. Need is sort of the first and easiest one to check off the box. But the urgency one, I alluded to a bit earlier when I was talking about, you might get somebody who is interested in setting up a blog and has thought about it for a while, but then getting the blog actually set up, if it's not something that they are super super keen on doing this year, so that it's ready for this summer to get people to their website to book.

You know, the tours that they have, I'm trying to think of what's a good summer destination. You know, the yacht tours that they have around the mediterranean this summer. Then it's not probably gonna happen and then you're gonna end up spending a lot of time planning a project with them that might get held until next fall, after the big tourist season. Urgency is one of these ones that can be very hard for us to find out on our own, and sometimes they



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

won't respond to you, but if you do get somebody on the line so to say, that you've reached out to them, and they come back to you and there's a lot of discussion about timing or interest, but they sort of keep talking about it with you. That's a pretty good sign that the urgency isn't there.

This is the last one and I know that we talked about this a bit earlier. That you really want to avoid getting into a situation where you have a great call with somebody, you sketch out a lot of strategy for them about how they can improve their blog or Instagram or Facebook or what have you. Then it turns out that they really don't have the money for this. But how do you ask about money? It's very hard. This is one of the reasons I'm always saying, look at the quality of their website in the first place, because that's a good indicator of how much they spend on marketing.

The thing is that you can tell these days, because website design trends change so quickly, especially now that websites are primarily responsive, that you know, if somebody doesn't have a responsive website. If it looks like something out of 2008 or earlier. If it looks very static, that's a pretty good sign that they're not investing very heavily into their digital marketing. If somebody has a website that is very very fancy and not performing well, however, that's a really great indication that they have a need, because they spent money on this thing, and now they're not quite getting out of it what they had hoped.

Another good way to tell if a company has money is to look at the type of people that they target. If a company, or the same thing goes with the tourist board. If it's a tourism board in a parks destination, then that's naturally not gonna be a tourism board that has a lot of revenue coming in, because there's a lot of campsites and other things like that, and so the taxes that typically would pay for a tourism board, are often occupancy taxes, so they're hotel taxes. So an area like that, the tourism board isn't gonna have as much to spend on marketing as a resort area, where the occupancy taxes that come in from the hotels are very high.

One way to be sort of quick and easy about making sure that somebody has the means to pay for digital marketing efforts is to just naturally target more luxury or simply high priced items in the first place and so I separate those two things, because you can have something that is luxury and less expensive or you can have something that has a high sticker price background it's a big experience. For instance, a safari. If luxury isn't your thing, but you want to make sure that you're targeting people who do have the means to pay for the type of stuff you're doing, then you can look at going towards things that are, you know, maybe if cruises are your thing, or tour companies that offer longer tours. They're offering you know, five, 10 day tours as opposed to an afternoon tour.



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Locate the People Who Need Your Travel Content Marketing Writing

Those are things that they are selling to their clients, cost two, five, \$10,000, even if they're more ecotourism oriented or something like that. These are the three things that are great to try to suss out in advance or in that very first phone call with a potential client as much as possible.

It's been a great time chatting with all of you today. I hope that I have been giving you some ideas and some things that you can start looking for while you're hanging out on the web, of companies that might need your content marketing work. I have to tell you that once I started looking for these things, I found them everywhere. I had, I used to play ultimate frisbee, I used to captain an ultimate frisbee team in Boston, and I had a random email come in from this guy, who made ultimate frisbee videos or something like this. They're totally not travel related, but I wrote him back and I was like, I don't know where you got my email address, but your website kind of sucks, do you need help for it? Once you start seeing these things and just sending out these full pitches or casual emails, you get a lot of content marketing work come your way.

I hope that I've opened you guys up a little bit to what some of these opportunities are and next week we're gonna cover how to put together the wording and the statistics and the sales language of the travel content marketing pitch, that would be your first message, your first connection to the people that you find using these methods. I hope to see some of you on the call next week and have a great afternoon. Bye bye.