



Dream of Travel Writing

How to Write a Letter of Introduction—The Pitch Equivalent for Trade Magazines

Today we're going to be talking about how to write a letter of introduction which is the pitch equivalent for travel trade magazines. In particular, we're going to talk about how to profile the magazine you're targeting.

In the blog post for this webinar I talked about a situation we all find ourselves in all the time. When you go to a restaurant and you ask your server what you should order, it becomes a three-minute or more conversation where each person is trying to convey information and ask for information to make the best match possible while knowing absolutely nothing about the other person.

That's very similar to what we do when we pitch magazines. We try to figure out as quickly as possible what we need to know about the other party which, in this case, is the magazine.

When we're pitching magazines we need to be determining certain things about the magazine as quickly as possible and when we send the pitch letter, the editor is trying to determine certain things about us: are we a good fit for the magazine, is our writing good enough?

As we're putting together our letter of introduction there's a certain process that we want to go through to make sure that we have enough information.

You're never going to have all the information—you can't read the editors' mind—but, we want to have enough information to make the best decisions about what to put in our letter of introduction.

Then we're going to talk about the different characteristics of a letter of introduction and what needs to be there. And we're going to look at the particular backgrounds of three folks and how to incorporate that into a letter of introduction.

I have worked with lots of different travel trade magazines over the years in different industries and that are based in different places and that have different ways that they operate. So when I talk to you about travel trade magazines, I'm not going to talk just about one experience writing for one travel trade magazine. I've written for seven travel trade magazines and I have a lot of friends who've written for them. I'm going to talk to you from that broad scope which includes my own experience and what I've heard from other writers.



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Before we get started, for folks that weren't on the webinar last week which was the introduction to travel trade magazines, I want to quickly catch up on why travel trade magazines work so differently than consumer magazines. Unfortunately, in some cases I think there's still this notion that you can write up an article without an assignment from an editor without having even spoken to an editor and then pitch them the completed article. That's something that definitely doesn't work with consumer magazines and it also doesn't work with travel trade magazines. So when we're talking here about how you're not pitching to a specific section – I'm not saying you can send them whatever you have laying around. When we look at the articles you'll see they are (perhaps even more than consumer magazines) divided into sections that might not be what you expect.

For instance: Air Canada's En Route magazine has a section that's just profiling a Canadian expat abroad. Not the kind of thing you think is the high fluffy stuff of print magazines, but that's a really easy section to get into. And with trade magazines you'll see some sections that seem like they might seem very easy for you to write like "5 Interesting Desserts to Add to Your Conference Buffet Table" but you have to really couch it in the vein of what travel trade magazines are looking for.

The main reason that we're talking today about sending a letter of introduction to travel trade magazines as opposed to sending a pitch to a specific article idea that you already have that matches a section that exists in their magazine is that travel trade magazines do something special. The thing about travel trade magazine editors is that they are assigning articles. So rather than them looking through all the pitches that come, they have ideas and they assign them to writers.

What that means is that once you become in with them, once you are part of their stable, then you're going to get assignments from them regularly—every single month more or less. And not just the one magazine that you originally pitched, but travel trade magazines tend to come in packs. Editors typically edit more than one and companies might even have multiple editors who are each editing three or four. So once you get in with them you have the opportunity every month just from one initial letter of introduction to be getting 12 assignments a month and the great thing about those assignments—what makes it very fast—is that the editors come up with the ideas in house and then they pitch it to you.

They say "would you be interested in doing this?" and you get to say "That sounds OK but I saw that you have this on the editorial calendar, is anybody doing that yet?" And then they say "oh actually would you like to write about this?" It's such a weird reversal in what we



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think about in terms of the editor/writer relationships. But you save so much time on the pitching.

Q. What are the travel trades we should be looking at and what kind of travel trade magazines are out there?

A. A list of the travel trade magazines is also in the Six-Figure Travel Writing Roadmap. If you don't have the digital or print copy, I recommend you pick that up because we've got listings of tons of magazines—consumer and some travel trade magazines—as well as—all the different exercises and lessons

The basic essence of a travel trade magazine is that it is for people who work in the travel industry in some form or another. Perhaps they own a hotel or they work in a hotel or they are a bartender or a travel agent or they run a tour company or are a tour guide. They have some sort of travel related job. So the travel trade magazines are the professional magazines that talk about how to do that job or give information to people who do those kind of jobs.

And the thing about travel trade magazines is that you can't find them on the newsstand because they go automatically to people who have that job. They're on a list, they don't have to subscribe. The way travel trade magazines make their money—and what makes them more stable than consumer magazines (being the ones you can buy on the newsstand) is their reader base is qualified. They know exactly who their readers are and they've chosen them specifically. They're qualified buyers/purchasers – so advertisers (even if the circulation in the magazine is only a few thousand people) know that those readers are people who will respond to the ads in the magazines.

There are several different types of people who might be receiving these magazines, for example, people who operate tours or give tours, or travel agents who do bookings. There are general industry type magazines—which is the kind of magazine that every month (now) there will be an article on how Trump is affecting the travel industry. There are magazines for hotel professionals of all different kinds—which are perhaps the most interesting for a lot of us. There's one that's on hotel design and one on hospitality technology...I'm always curious about that one.

There are others for meeting planners, which is probably the biggest area. A ton of money is spent planning not just conferences but corporate meetings and association meetings. Groups like the Agricultural Association of Cattle Growers of Nebraska who will have a huge



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conference every year. The meeting planners need to plan interesting of activities that showcase the destination. And, they need to choose food vendors that have catering capacity to allow someone that doesn't have the time to leave their meeting and go out into the area to have perhaps the best green chile burger from Albuquerque or something like that. So, again this whole list is available in the book.

Tour leaders is probably one of the smaller sections in the list of travel trade magazines. You'll notice in here that a lot of these are international, so you might write a story for a US or UK or an Australian publication and then you can write a very similar story for a different publication or a different geographic area on the same topic.

Hotel professionals probably have the widest gamut in terms of what they cover. There are some that are luxury some that are design, some for hotel owners and some that focus on technology. Also there are F&B magazines which means food and beverage in the hotel context.

Meeting planners get the most and partly that's because there are literally different magazines for specific states because all states have big meetings.

How do we address the first point on today's agenda? How do we get the lay of the land for the magazine that we want to pitch so that we know what background experience we have that we need to be serving up to them in the first place?

Take a minute and consider what type of travel interests or experience you have that might match up with a trade magazine. Perhaps you really love interior design or in your previous job you attended a ton of conferences or planned events yourself, or perhaps you have a tech background. Consider anything that you have in your life and your experience and your interest well that might potentially match up with a travel trade magazine. Kerwin (who is on the call today) has airlines and there are a lot of aviation magazines. Kerwin, if you're able to drop in some names of some aviation magazines I'll push those out to the group.

The group notes their relevant experience and interests:

Mexico, Caribbean, Hawaii, outdoor, food writer, attending tons of conferences for cruises travel agents, multi-generational, children & family travel, Hiking and kayaking, health &



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wellness, food, off the trail exploring, diving, destination stories, timeshares, traveling with a large family

It's interesting because people who specialize in family travel don't typically ask me about writing for trades, but if you're used to writing about family travel in a way you are more familiar than a lot of people with the needs of a group market because of the things that come up when you're trying to get a certain number of people together. So that can translate well either for the travel agent side or for the group tour side.

This is an interesting thing that I've noticed that's changed since I started pitching travel trade magazines in 2012, is that it used to be very very easy to get the full issue of all of these magazines online. Now I've seen that because they want not just to have their circulation qualified (which is important for them with their advertisers) but also because the travel trade magazines themselves have moved into the event business. This is a big thing.

At the conferences for people who run magazines—for publishers and editors. They have been speaking a lot to people in trade about how they should be running their own events and specifically how the data they collect about their readers they can be selling and they should be selling because that can be a significant source of income for them. So these factors in the economics in how these magazines work mean that they've now gated a lot of their full issues.

For instance, I looked at Agent at Home which I have and I know I've had full copies of in the past and I realized that you couldn't just click on this cover and download the magazine. However, if you click on subscribe for free, then they're going to tell you qualified agents can read all these things. Go ahead and hit subscribe now for free. What I've noticed is they've made this quite a bit shorter – it's annoying but they want to get the right people reading the magazine. But, if you're interested in a magazine that is gated like this, give it a shot to go through and do the little subscription and see if you can get on their list. I spent a little time this morning trying to pull up some of these for you and found that, for most of them, I was able to go through and get through to the magazine.

I want to show you what to do if you're having a hard time getting this information. For instance, I pulled up this magazine and I thought "Forget about content for a second. If I can't get the full magazine how do I know who the editors are...who to pitch?" In these cases, go to Contact Us or Advertise With Us: advertising, write for us and contact us all go to the same thing. Then you have all sorts of e-mail addresses.



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Some magazines give you the e-mail addresses for each of the editors and, for people who've been trying to pitch consumer magazines—especially big news magazines for a while—this is amazing. You don't have to hunt around, don't have to use the database or go to a private Facebook group. You can just get the editor's email address. This is because the travel trade magazines have a much closer relationship with the industry so they want to make it easy for public relations people, destination representatives... whomever to get in touch with them. That's why their e-mail addresses, their titles and everything you need to know about them is very prominently displayed on their websites.

I did find one where that's not the case. If you're in a situation where you can't get the physical magazine (which also has this information) for travel trade magazines I recommend going to LinkedIn and looking for the name of the company and editor. Get the editor's name and hopefully e-mail address that way because they are very connected to the professional community so if the publication's website is a bit sparse, that's going to be the best way to get in touch with them.

Look around this magazine a little bit. I want to talk about familiarizing yourself with the magazine. With trade magazines you need to not only familiarize yourself with what the magazine is looking for but—like we do with consumer magazines—you need to know which parts aren't open to freelancers.

Here's why: the reason you want to know what's written in-house and what's open to freelancers before you write your letter of introduction (and it doesn't have to be in the level of detail like you're going to write a pitch) is to frame your background accordingly.

As for destination content, in some cases it is mostly going to be written by the editors as part of their role in keeping up connections in the industry. They need to go on trips and show their face to CVBs and DMOs and tourism boards to keep those connections going to get advertising dollars, etc. So it can often be that a lot of the destination features are written in house for that reason. In other cases, because the editors never get to travel, the destination is always written by freelancers.

The other side of that is here: we've got one called Smart Flyer University. Different types of articles that you're going to see in travel trade magazines tend to fall into a couple of different categories. This magazine has a lot of them so I'm using it as the example. You'll see that we've got a lot of these profile pieces that are written about a personality in the industry that have a message. Then you'll see that we have these very service—meaning how to advice—style pieces that tell you things about how to do your job. Then there are trend



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type pieces that talk about larger things that are going on in the industry. Then there are newsy things which are almost always written by the editors. Then you're going to have ones that are more the destination content that we're talking about. Sometimes those will be service and sometimes they'll be showcasing the destination.

Here's a piece that seems a bit newsy like a business profile – talking about Smart Flyer which is an agency. The whole article is telling us what this is and how it works and it's not very long. It's by Michael Holtz. Who is Michael Holtz? He's the CEO of Smart Flyer.

With the travel trade magazines there's going to be a certain number of articles written every month by people who aren't writers. They might be someone who runs a company. They're essentially getting free publicity by writing for this magazine – this is not uncommon.

In fact, it makes sense. Because whether these travel trade magazines are connected to a professional association or whether they're just serving people who work in an industry with information, it behooves them to be featuring members of the community to create more investment and also to show that they really are using the words that make sense, the experience, the on the ground eyes of those readers.

Here's a guy who is a veteran travel executive and entrepreneur—Chief Motivation Officer—this guy is a basically professional speaker.

I want to point out to some of you who are looking at doing content marketing, is that these things are not typically written by this guy. They're often ghostwritten by another writer who is paid even though this guy is not getting paid for the article. How to get those is a whole other discussion—you're not going to find out about that by pitching this magazine, you would need to approach the person individually. And if you see someone has a column that they're writing regularly, you could always write them and ask if they're doing it themselves but that might not go over well. If they already have someone they don't need you and if they're writing it themselves they would be insulted. If you do want to do this kind of thing you need to approach someone who is a business owner and offer to ghostwrite articles for trade magazines for them from scratch when they don't already have something going.

Here's another one: Founder and CEO of Taylor & Co Travel and creator of Miss Travels blog. This is a person who has a blog and she has a travel business related to it. She is being the talking head – the personality writing for these travel trade magazines. We've spoken about this before, but especially those of you who have your own business setting up tours or



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a travel agent business or anything like that, writing for travel trade magazines is great for you because it's going to be very easy for you to get in and also because it gives you more exposure for what you're doing.

This one is talking about a trend piece about how independent contractor travel agents are now the majority of leisure travel agents—not for groups but for people who are traveling individually for vacation. People have been saying for years that travel agents are dead—that there's no need for travel agents because of the internet but there's actually been quite a renewed and sustained interest in this industry so this is one of the types of articles that's a trend piece, but if you think you'd be interested in writing for travel agents or meeting planners or something like that, and you don't know any, how do you find out about these trends?

This is a very big question I get from people who want to break into writing for industry but aren't a part of that industry. Here's an easy tip: go on LinkedIn and find some LinkedIn groups that are for the people who would read this type of magazine then join those groups. Then you will see in the types of discussions within the group. Scan the discussions and that's how you'll pick up the trends. That's how you'll see what's effecting the daily lives of these people that have jobs you don't know about but that you'd like to start writing about.

What type of destination content can you do? In this case, they're specifically talking about hotels because for travel agents they want to know about the hotel to be able to sell it. What are the best rooms? What's different? They need to know how to talk to their own customers about it.

Whereas if you did a destination piece for meeting planners it would be very different. It would be about the meeting venues, activities, restaurants that have enough space or a private dining room to hold a large group. So destination content becomes filtered through these lenses so what that means is that as you are traveling on the same trips that you've always been taking, by just looking out for a couple of additional things, by just looking at when you're touring a museum – asking do you hold events here, how many people, how often – asking a couple of extra questions you can get the information you need to do these secondary destination pieces from a trade context.

For meeting planners, we have Connect and I've pulled up a couple of issues. They have the trends – what trump means for meetings. Also specific online content – but one of the great things about having the cover is you can see what is important – what are the big stories. What else are they covering: strategy, service, how to article but there's also a lot of sort of



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profiles, how to do team building = how a cattle ranch catered to a vegan group. We see this when we go to conferences – the need to have vegetarians appropriately taken care of in a group setting can be very challenging.

How can I take this idea and pitch it to another magazine? How do I delicately weave between here's some ideas I could write even though I'm not writing an actual pitch?

As you'll see, a lot of these (articles) aren't service: What Event Professionals can learn from Elon Musk. A lot of these are things that you don't have to have a background in this industry to be able to talk about. Something like this, Marriott's Global Brand Officer on the 2017 Trends, this is going to be hugely interview based. We spoke quite a bit last week about doing interviews...setting up interviews. Trade magazines are really built around interviews in a way that the travel section in consumer content typically isn't.

What that means is that a lot of your articles will be almost 100% what someone said in an interview. You can write that really fast because you don't have to do a lot of research. This is an example of the type of destination content: general hotel news, review of a particular place, larger destinations. Then there's one about Overland Park and this is an interview piece.

Briefings are destination content that are more news oriented. And here's one: Fancy Sweat Pants, what's it doing in a meeting magazine? I don't know but it's what I love about writing for these magazines because the editors just assign you things, you're not going to be stuck doing boring things like "how to negotiate the contract clauses for your meetings to make sure that you're protected in case of a fire." No, it's not that because that's boring to the readers as well.

If you're into interior design or entertaining or anything like that, there's a lot of things like that. There are trends in entertaining, trends in buffets, and trends in parties that show up in these magazines. One more example: Hospitality Today (not US based) is a bit more general in terms of its content as opposed to the travel agent specific and the meeting planner ones we've looked at.

I want to show you this full issue and how when you go to the masthead – it has the editor's direct e-mail address. In this issue – Jamie Oliver is opening a new restaurant, Visit England has won an award, there's some news, there's more trends, there's a lot of interview oriented stuff. The interview with Jamie Oliver about his new restaurant is six pages.



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One of the interesting things about writing for travel trades is that unlike consumer magazines where they really need the photos to keep people interested and draw them in, a lot of times the travel trade magazines get a lot more words. If you're looking to get into writing features and feature length content, this is a great way to not only to get that word count but to have a mentor in that editor to learn to write journalistic, reporting type, narrative features.

Now I'm pulling up lodging which is a bit general but about the hotel side of the industry. "Four Ways to Book Guest Loyalty" is a service piece based on interviews. Checking in with Timothy Smith is about technology, a new hotel booking app that targets millennials. For design there's a profile of a redesign of a hotel. More advice: Boosting Hotel's advantage in group business negotiations and a narrative on the importance of hotel uniforms

In this lodging magazine there are a lot of ads—that's how they make their money. When you see a lot of that it's great it means the magazine is doing well and you'll see here this is a much more design oriented magazine than the last one.

Not all are going to look like they were made in the 90s in PowerPoint, a lot are going to be really lovely. You'll see here in the table of contents it looks just like a consumer magazine. In this case, no e-mails for the editors. It's easy to piece together the e-mail.

In the beginning there's news pieces that are short and don't have a byline so those are written by the editors, then we get into a hotel profile and an interview—a success story.

I showed you all of these magazines to that they are quite different. The way you're going to pitch them requires you to go in and check out what the magazine you are pitching is like. Oftentimes when people talk about doing a letter of introduction for travel trade magazine they talk about it as if you can write one letter of introduction and then blanket send that same letter out to every magazine. Theoretically you could because you do want to have essentially the same information about yourself and your achievements; however, it's not going to be the most successful thing.

Think about it: If you're applying to a writing gig that you see online, is it going to be as successful if you send the exact same letter to everybody? No, you want to write to the specific requirements, the specific requests, and specific details of that job. It's the same with the travel trade magazines.



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Here's the basic letter of introduction structure:

Warming Mechanism – start as much as possible with a warming mechanism. When you're approaching someone in a sales call capacity (when we're writing to editors we're doing sales) and you have a cold approach – you have no connection to the editor – they open it not knowing who you are. If you have a warm approach you've found a way to thaw the ice in that connection. That can mean knowing someone in common or by other means. – TBEX in Huntsville – Key note speaker who is a big You Tuber and he got to interview Obama. He is from Alabama and has an accent and as far as Obama was concerned just seemed like he was going to have very opposite viewpoints and not be a democrat. In the interview in the very beginning to warm things up he said something and you could see Obama's face completely change. Then it became a much better interview – he wasn't as guarded.

My favorite warming mechanism for approaching magazines is to find a piece that the editor you are writing to has recently written for the magazine and complement them on it. Obviously at least try to read it and pick out something specific in there to complement them on. You can say "I saw your news piece on XYZ, that's so interesting, I love the quote that you got from the CEO." Or, I just saw your feature on the 4 new hotels in Jamaica, I really loved the way you described XYZ. So you don't want to just complement them and say "I liked your article" You want to show them that you actually appreciate something they have done. Keep it short, you don't want to test the editor's patience.

Your biggest, baddest writing experience – what if you don't have big bad writing experience? Any of the things on here except for 1 and 6 are optional. If you've not been writing for a long time or written for T&L or other big publication s- don't worry about it. You just need to show you have pertinent experience. It can be one or the other – writing or industry experience. Writing experience or publication records and the names you have at your disposal to drop are limited – don't use them But what you can say is: You've been a paralegal for 17 years and you've been writing briefs preparing reports and filings and all sorts of things you can say you have been writing professionally for 17 years without saying where. Or if you've been working as an admin and you've been doing blog posts or ghostwriting - MIT ghostwriting for the president of MIT –big deal. Clips not worry – they sometimes are not the happiest if you have a lot of really big consumer clips because they think you won't get how to write for the trade magazine. It's an assumption they make. Just show that you are a professional writer

Q. Is it important to have photography experience?



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A. Some care, some don't. They will want you to provide photos with your pieces, however you aren't shooting the photos. They want you to get photos from the places you're profiling. Photography experience isn't pertinent unless you're pitching a photography magazine. If you're a professional photographer and you lead tours, the tour part of your business is going to be more attractive to a trade magazine than the fact that you are a photographer. You'll want to say "Working as a member of the travel media for 15 years – published here, here and here."

Q. Should I mention I used to own a print magazine because it was a small niche magazine that only lasted for 4 years?

A. If you've been an editor, it shows you know how to structure a story, you know how to take care of the seemingly esoteric needs of things you need to include in the article for this advertiser. If you've worked in a full time way with a magazine whether editing or as an admin, etc. you can mention years/things you did in another career.

Your trade/industry experience – Trade industry experience that the section of the travel industry that the magazine caters to. Say you're pitching the meeting planning magazine, this is the place where you would mention any event experience that you have. Planned events for a job, non-profit, PTA whatever. If you're pitching Travel Agent at Home you're going to say if you are a travel agent, if you are closely connected with a travel agent, if you plan trips through your blog for people or if you typically plan trips for groups of a certain size because you are a family writer—anything like that.

If you're pitching a lodging magazine this is where you say "While I might not have worked in the hotel industry, I've been writing hotel reviews on the consumer side." Start with general impressive writing then get into any writing or work experience related to the industry. Someone like Kerwin who has experience in aviation can say he has a website about it, company related to it, speaks about it. What if he's looking at a different type of travel trade magazine? How can he translate this? In this case he would say he's worked for major airlines or travel companies. Or he can say he's been an insider in the travel industry for xxx years and a member of the travel media for xxx years and speaks about travel trends internationally. Move sideways from an area you are particularly experienced in. The trade industry is where you take something you've done and turn it sideways.

Your personal experience – things you've done that aren't work related that feed into the industry, not so much writing. Awards can be mentioned here but what's most important is that if you are just very interested in a certain objective. It might not be that you have



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experience planning meetings or conferences but you are an avid host and hold the block party every year for xxx people It might not seem you should tell the editor this but travel trade magazines are threading the gap where they need people with either industry experience or writing and they'll often take one or the other. So if you do have a lot of writing experience and not as much industry, you need to show the editor that you understand it and can see from that viewpoint in any way you can. Another important thing about including this little bit of personal experience—especially if you can do it in a funny way—is that it humanizes what's been a big dump of “Here's how cool I am.” And it brings the editor back in the same way we did with the warming mechanism. It brings back that personal conversation element.

Your best professional features (how you will make their life easier) – This is optional and can be a hard needle to thread, but includes things meeting deadlines and working under pressure. But we don't want to say something so bland and boring. We want to say something much more like “in my writing career I've handled situations like a source dropping out last minute for a big feature and I've always come back and filed the story on time.” This says a slightly general thing about your qualities, not as a writer but as a worker—as a person who gets your shit done. You need to make sure you say it in a way that is not dry. This is really important. The ones I did see were so boring, you want to show the editor that you will make their life easier not that you only know how to use bland keywords.

Looking for pitches for any sections – The way to wrap up the letter of introduction is to say “I would love to have an opportunity to write for your publication. Could you let me now if you would like me to send a full pitch on a certain topic or if you assign directly from the editorial calendar and when you might have some openings for that?” All editors for travel trade magazines do work a little bit different but they do generate more ideas in-house and you don't know what their time frame, what needs they have, what sections are already written by regular contributors so you need to say to them “I'd like you to give me some work, but I'm also willing to work for that. If you want me to send out a more fleshed out pitch, I'll do that but I'm not sure that's how you work.” Say it in a way that you don't sound like a loser.

Things you can do to really knock it out of the park, but don't worry about these if you're feeling a little nervous about how to match your experience and all of those things.

Make sure you're differentiating yourself from the people who are pitching to write for the magazine for free to boost their business. Now if you do have some sort of travel company and you are using that as some of your industry specific experience in your query letter you



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need to be especially careful about this. You need to make clear that you are a full time or part-time professional writer who gets paid to write for magazines – slant your letter that way to be clear that you write for publications and you’re not just pitching for a vanity column.

Put your best experience in the subject line: if you are a travel agent or have been in the past, you can say “Current (or Past) Travel Agent and Freelance Travel Writer Available to write for your publication,” or “experienced event planner turned travel writer pitching your publication.”

You want to do two things: (a) be clear that you’re pitching and (b) Convince the editor why they should open your e-mail...why they should be intrigued.

Mention that you have relevant samples in the same industry if applicable. I never tell people to include links in your initial email. It looks cluttered and if they want them, they’ll ask for them. Your initial letter is a pitch and it should stand on its own as a writing sample. But you should mention if you have relevant samples in the same industry. For instance, if you have written or ghostwritten anything that is in the industry of the publication you are pitching, you need to say that. If you, for instance, have written white papers on aviation trends, internal reports, programs for meetings for non-profits...any type of writing you’ve done that is related to the industry. You want to describe that—not at length—but mention you have done these in the past.

Also add professional attributes: something like “I’m able to travel to a destination or to take on assignments last minute.” Put that in, it’s very valuable and very important and it can be a big mechanism to help you.

“Example 1: I have several years of experience in the event and meeting planning industry as well as that of Director of Philanthropy. I’m interested in knowing more of how I can use that skill set to write for Travel Trades. I recently wrote an article for my community newsletter profiling two couples who love RV-ing. That would be the extent of my article writing. Based on your webinar, I feel comfortable that this would be a good fit for me. “

Gabi’s Recommendation: This is a great example of a situation where you might not have any real writing experience but that doesn’t mean that you aren’t exactly what a travel trade magazine is looking for. So particularly, what I would recommend in this setting is that you do have to at least dig up some types of writing that you’ve done in one or two of these jobs. And, as a director of philanthropy, I would imagine that she’s put together campaigns or



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strategic plans and that type of thing. So in this case, I would recommend that she should for sure pitch the event planning magazines, but perhaps because she has so many years of experience (and I also have a background in philanthropy and you do a lot of events in that kind of job), so it's a great example here, find specific magazines that would take advantage of that experience. As I mentioned when it comes to meeting planning, there's really a lot of magazines, so how do you choose which ones to pick? Should you pitch all of them, or send a letter of introduction to all of them? You can, but in this case (because she has so much experience) my advice is to go to the ones that are more about how to do the job rather than just write up some destinations.

Gabi refers back to the list for meeting planners...

Different states, Midwest meeting, religious meetings, business meetings, associations, etc.

One Plus is also general meetings, physicians travel and meetings that could be more specific on how to plan meetings. But you want to look at the bigger fish that are really going to value someone that has this many years of experience and go after them. As you're putting together the specific text in the letter of introduction in the industry and trade experience I would spell out: I've planned X number of meetings a year, I've planned meetings of this size, I've run a team so I have some experience in supervising and training people to run meetings—that's going to read well to the editor.

Q. Given how you've mentioned how interview based travel trade magazines can be, what apps do you use to record calls from a smart phone?

A. The short version is I don't always record my interviews I record them when the person is a bit litigious, literally I used to do a lot of interviews with partners for financial firms or law firms – in those cases you absolutely have to have the recording, but I typically write notes as I go along. But if you do need to record the calls either for yourself so you can check the quotes later, or because the source has asked you to or the magazine has asked you to, I do often just put it on speaker phone and record it through Garage Band on my laptop, but a lot of people do their interviews through Skype because they can record through Skype. But I don't like the call quality on doing internet calls so I usually try and do them on my cell phone even when I'm out of the country. Everybody has a different preference and I know some people have really nice microphones and they'll do it where they can connect their cell phone to their microphone so it goes directly into their phone. There's a lot of different ways to record if you want to go that route.



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“Example 2: I’d love to write for travel trades and would also enjoy doing some of the interview type of articles. I believe that I have some strengths that would fit well with these publications including the following: I’m used to writing and submitting articles ahead of deadline as a general rule (Note: this is the kind of thing that would go in that section 5 of your best professional attributes that you would mention) She goes on to say some places where she’s been published...I’m used to submitting articles as scheduled on editorial calendars, I’m a certified English teacher and that means editors don’t have to spend much time on grammar editing, plenty of free time and am willing to travel on assignment (Note: This would go in that last section where she can note she’s available to travel on short notice.) I’m also a photographer, I’ve always loved traveling, etc.”

Gabi’s Recommendation: She doesn’t have so much of a specific trade magazine fit like the previous example so what would be the right fit for someone like this? She has been a teacher and has written for teaching magazines, so that’s great because she has trade magazine experience. This is the kind of thing where she can say in either the personal experience, or trade industry experience, or the biggest, baddest writing experience that she has written as a teacher for the trade magazine in that industry. If she has a specific interest (and she hasn’t shared her personal interest with us) I would recommend taking the fact that she does have a writing background and, obviously, editors are going to understand that teachers are going to be good writers even if they don’t have a lot of publication credits (but she does have quite a few) to find the industry that fits her best. It might be hospitality design or it might be a meeting planning magazine or it might be that she really likes to interview travel agents and talk about how that job is put together. Given this general background, this really falls into several areas.

She really needs to figure out which type of magazine she wants to focus on then take little bits from each of her skills: maybe she’s written a lot of service articles and the magazine she wants to pitch has a lot of service articles, or the magazine comes out each week and she can use the fact that she’s used to submitting early and working off an editorial calendar as an advantage.

“Example 3: I am a hybrid: active tour and travel business expert and writer/blogger. This fuels my combined interest to receive a steady income stream now and to be active in my own industry as I build my 2.0 travel business. AS I tailored recent blog posts to show samples of interviews, latest trends, app technology and, of course, regional information from recent trips. Please feel free to use me as a sample for the introduction to travel trade magazines. She’s of course interested in travel agents, tour companies, travel technology, and hotels.”



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In this case she's got already her own business that does tours so this is a very clear mapping to, like she says, the magazines that are for travel agents and tour companies. She also has a blog and she's set up her blog to create clips of the type of things that she would like to be doing for trade magazines. If, for instance, your biggest baddest writing experience is just your blog and maybe your blog isn't Gary Arndt's blog and you don't have a bunch of awards, then saying that you produce your own blog and you do this and that type of articles can be great because even though an editor might automatically assume that a blog is just destination pieces in a diary style if you tell them that you have been writing under your own volition these type of pieces, that is a great piece of writing experience especially if you can couple it with industry experience like she can.

This would be the kind of thing where she would take her blog experience and say that "I do have my own blog and I've run it in a magazine style and feature this and this type of articles then she can go into saying that "I think I would be a really great fit for your magazine because I also run a tour business. This is where she would say the particulars of her tour business which tie into the magazine that she's looking for. If she's looking at pitching a magazine like Travel Agent at Home where they have a lot of service content and not as much destination content, she would say "I've run my own tour company for this many years AND I've troubleshoot all types of issues liked this and this that I've noticed you recently featured in the magazine and I would love to contribute more articles of a service nature about the business side of how to run your tour company and also in terms of travel technology this is the kind of thing "I run a tour company and I'm also a blogger and so I am accustomed not only to using whatever is the new media technology to run my businesses but also trying out the latest things to see if they're a fit. And perhaps in her trend pieces she can point to her site and say "In fact, I've been profiling these on my site for other leisure travelers as well as people who run tour businesses to sample and try as well.

Now we'll look at other questions and examples that have been sent in.

Food Writing Experience – Many of you have said you have food writing experience. If you have lots of food writing experience then writing for meeting publications about those things I was talking about like food trends: F&B trends for meetings and in the travel industry generally can be a great fit.

Outdoors – There are a lot of you who have said outdoors. One of the sort of lesser understood and lesser known areas of the travel trade side is writing about things called incentives. Incentives are when people who work for a company typically in a sales capacity exceed their sales goal, then they get a free trip—usually to somewhere very cool and very



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luxurious. And parts of those trips include activities like kayaking, bungee jumping, amazing meals on the cliff and things like this. If you have a lot of outdoor or luxury type experiences, then I recommend reaching out to places that cover incentives and also team building, when you have people all go out and do an activity.

Writing the letter of introduction in the travel trade industry is primarily the norm but sometimes they will prefer a pitch. That's why we send the letter of introduction but we end it by saying "If you want me to send you a full pitch, on a particular topic, please let me know and I will do that." We do this because, if they are a publication that takes pitches (which isn't the norm), you don't want them to assume that you've sent them a letter of introduction because you're too lazy to write a pitch. So you want to make sure that you tell them, that you are, of course, available to do that and you're just waiting for direction from them.

if you have any questions shoot me an email at questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com Thanks for joining me and I'll miss you guys next week while I'm in Japan and I'll see you the week after. Cheers!