




*Dream of
Travel Writing*

Article Nuts and Bolts: Putting Together a Business Profile

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop setting. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to
talk about...

1. What does a business profile mean in the travel writing context
 2. What business profiles revolve around—and why most pitches for them fall flat
 3. How trend pieces are constructed + examples in different lengths
 4. Very important webinar news update + “Taking control” series this March
- 



Before we get this train moving...

What am I talking about here when I say business profile?

Profiles Can Take Several Main Forms

- Individual
- Product/service/offering
- Business
- A trend piece is a type of profile in and of itself!

How Do Business Profiles Work in Travel Writing?

- This is literally a huge proportion of what appears in travel magazines, in-flight magazines and otherwise
- Depending on the magazine, can be as high as 80%
- Rather than city guides/round-ups and narrative pieces, *these* are the bread and butter of the travel magazine

Let's look at that trend piece structure again

- Lead with quote, preferably an anecdote about the trend out in the world
- Expand on other instances this occurs
- Move into data
- Quote or context about trend's origin
- More examples of the trend on the wild, particularly among "expert" examples
- End touching on broader significance of trend



It's ALL about the WHY

How does this change for business profiles?

- Lead with quote, preferably an anecdote about the why of this business
- Expand on why this is important in a larger context
- Move into data and examples of how the business implements it
- Quote or context
- More examples of the why on the wild, particularly among “expert” examples from within the company
- End touching on broader significance of why



Slip slap smart


London scientists believe seaweed could form the basis of the first environmentally friendly sunscreen

The importance of sun cream isn't going to diminish anytime soon, yet its molecules have been detected in fish and dolphins,

suggesting it's damaging our marine and coral life. It's why scientists at King's College London are working to develop a new, environmentally friendly version, made from seaweed extract.

Having observed organisms living in sunny, shallow water, the team extracted a substance called palythine from seaweed and tested it on human skin cells. They found the antioxidant absorbs harmful rays from the sun and can protect skin against potentially carcinogenic damage, just as man-made sunscreen does.

"Products with nature's sunscreens may encourage greater use because there is a growing public demand for more natural products," says Dr Karl Lawrence, from the St John's Institute of Dermatology at King's College, who is working on the natural sunscreen. "Seaweed-derived sunscreens, in tune with nature, could be beneficial for both human health and marine life."

 FLY TO MORE THAN 100 DESTINATIONS WITH BRUSSELS AIRLINES

I

t was a search for the perfect pair of skis – and failure to locate them – that made skilled carpenter, architect and ski nut Florian Kohlbecker

start designing and making his own.

Yet, it wasn't until 2006, when the German's architecture firm, Kohlbecker Black Forest Architects, started designing a ski resort and jump in Sochi (way ahead of the 2014 Winter Olympics) that Kohlbecker got a proper taste of the ski industry and decided he wanted in. So, in 2008 he founded Black Forest Skis – a ski company that combines traditional design with cutting-edge technology – and hasn't looked back since.

Based in Gaggenau, Kohlbecker's German hometown, a few hours west of Nuremberg the pieces – all designed by the architect – are made from 100% white ash wood "due to its durability", and individually handcrafted to ensure "every pair is a one of a kind."

Construction starts in workshops in the Czech Republic, before the skis are returned to the Black Forest Ski office to be oiled, bound, mounted, engraved and personally checked by Kohlbecker. The whole cycle takes up to four months to complete, with the skis retailed at around €800 per pair. "We use only the best materials, so the best stainless steel for the edges, the best carbon and glass fibre for the top and base," he says. "It's only possible to work this way when you have a small production system."

Indeed, it's a bespoke business, with Kohlbecker assembling just 125 pairs of commercial skis per year. The rest of his business comes from private requests, such as professional skiers wanting a custom-designed product they deem to be better quality than high street ski brands. "It's about craftsmanship rather than commerce," Kohlbecker maintains, adding that he enjoys spending time with his clients to work out what exactly they want – and is happy to cater to their wildest whims. "Mountaineering has become a lifestyle, and the idea of having perfect material for your hobby, combined with the beauty of nature, makes it very appealing," he says. blackforestskis.com

✈️ FLY TO NUREMBERG SIX TIMES WEEKLY

HOPE IN A BOTTLE

When *Aviselle Diaz*'s childhood dream to study Arabic in the Middle East began to drift out of reach, she put a clever idea into action



Aviselle Diaz is proof that with a little determination dreams come true. The 20-year-old, from Miami, USA, first fell in love with Arabic culture at school and made it her mission to study in the Middle East. "I read books and watched films, and my curiosity grew," she says. A documentary about the late King Hussein of Jordan introduced her to King's Academy – a school based in Madaba, "the city of mosaics", in Jordan. "I knew exactly where I wanted to be."

There was one problem, however: "My parents supported my dreams, but couldn't afford the tuition fees." Even when the institution reduced its fees, her goal remained out of reach. Diaz contacted hundreds of large companies worldwide asking for financial support, but not one of them offered to help. "It was frustrating," she says. "No one seemed to understand my passion to learn about Arabic culture."

Then came her light-bulb moment: she'd throw 100 glass bottles – hand-painted with a Madaba-inspired mosaic design – into the Atlantic Ocean with a message inside asking for help. "I felt like I was stranded on a desert island and my dreams needed rescuing," she says.

Her story was picked up by the *Miami Herald*, and both an anonymous individual in Jordan and Qatar Foundation International – a global body dedicated to Arabic language and culture – offered to fund her. "They were moved by my determination," she says. "I was overjoyed."

One of her bottles is now on permanent display at King's Academy, "as a reminder that dreams come true," says Diaz, who is now studying at Georgetown University, in the US, and has just completed a semester in Doha. "I am eternally grateful for the generosity of the Qatari people. They made my dream come true."



t's around 7pm and I'm gliding down an icy path that lays between two, shoulder-high snowbanks fronting thick woodland, in -20C degree temperatures, guided only by flickering lights ahead and the stars above. I'm not alone,

at least. A group of friends are – bar the occasional scrape of their skates on the ice – sliding silently alongside me, each sporting rosy noses, blistered from the cold, and large goofy grins fuelled by a Baileys-spiked hot chocolate gulped 20 minutes earlier. This, I think to myself, must be one of the best ways to spend a winter night in Canada.

We are at Arrowhead Provincial Park in Ontario, a national park around a two-and-a-half hour's drive north of Toronto that sits on the crystal clear, glacial Lake Algonquin, a popular summer swimming and camping

spot. Right now, however, it's the depths of winter, so we're here for a very different reason: to finally skate on the 1.3km fairytale forest ice loop in the heart of Canada's cottage country that has to be seen – and experienced – to be believed.

"It's kind of a winter wonderland," said Peter Briand, the park superintendent. "You're skating through a winding trail through a forest of pine trees." Open every day from January to March (weather dependent) since being built in 2012, the hidden jewel in the Muskoka area's crown is quickly becoming one of the region's most popular winter attractions.

Saturdays are the busiest days, with the rink often reaching full capacity. Local advice is to visit on weekdays or Sundays if you wish to avoid the crowds. "Half of the park's 60,000-odd winter visitors come for the trail specifically now," says Briand, adding that other winter ➤



Born slippy

A SLICK NEW AQUARIUM IN GRAN CANARIA IS SHAKING UP CONSERVATION IN THE CANARY ISLANDS. SARAH NEISH MEETS SNORING SHARKS AND WAYWARD SHELLFISH AT POEMA DEL MAR

The scene unfolds as though in slow motion. The tank with the wonky lid. The lightning-fast escape. The shout from the cleaner and the crab scuttling its eager way across the floor, claws clacking gleefully. It might sound like an out-take from *The Little Mermaid*, but I'm actually inside the brand-new Poema del Mar aquarium in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, shortly before it opens its doors to the public. I've been granted a behind-the-scenes, access-all-areas (well, almost all areas – the shark tank is strictly by invitation only) to the island's most hotly anticipated attraction, and while I wasn't expecting to find myself in pursuit of a fugitive crustacean, the experience is oddly thrilling.

"Does this kind of thing happen a lot?" I ask, referring to 'crabgate' and trying to ignore how much that sounds like 'crabcake'. The aquarium's

curator, Alberto Castellanos Vizcaíno, arches an eyebrow in response.

More than two years and several million euros in the making, this is one of the world's most ambitious aquariums, housing 7.5 million litres of water and an enormous jungle-themed atrium, dense with tropical plants, among which lemurs scamper freely and birds fly untethered. Conservation is number one on the agenda, with multiple breeding programmes in place to help grow numbers of endangered and at-risk species, including a local shark.

"We've been working with the University of Gran Canaria on marine-life projects for many years," Christoph Kiessling, vice president of founding company Loro Parque has said. "We hope that Poema del Mar will become known for marine conservation on an international level."

Before we can save the rest of the ocean, however, we need to return the runaway safely

UNDERWATER LOVE

Clockwise from top left; killer views from inside the cupola at Poema del Mar; a scuba diver takes a break; aquarium curator Castellanos Vizcaíno; this IMAX-sized aquarium screen is the biggest in the world

to his digs, after which time I'm free to continue my exploration of this watery labyrinth. I walk past tiny jade-coloured frogs the size of my little fingernail, and over a glass floor with shoals of curious-looking fish swimming underfoot and occasionally into one another. "These ones are from Mexico and they have no eyes – weird huh?" beams Castellanos Vizcaíno. I turn a corner and watch, mesmerised, as a scuba diver polishing the inside of a tank gently herds a giant catfish out of the way, the colossal creature brushing him with foot-long whiskers as it swims rings around him like a buoyant Lionel Messi.

In a neighbouring pool, a crocodile is giving itself a foot massage from a water jet. His claws quiver in the slipstream like he's playing a mean guitar riff. *Smoke On The Water*, perhaps?

Round another bend, and I'm met by a showstopping sight – the world's biggest curved aquarium window. It's the size of at least two IMAX cinema screens and I stare agog as two snaggle-toothed bull sharks glide by me just feet away like silent assassins. Beneath them, tendrils of seaweed reach out to kiss passing Atlantic mackerel, rainbow-coloured dolphin fish and spiny butterfly rays, their wings flapping hypnotically. Grimacing barracudas and arrow-shaped guitar fish dance up the glass, their soft underbellies inches from my nose. I'm confused to spot three sharks snoozing on the seabed.

"Normally, sharks need to keep moving in order to breathe," Castellanos Vizcaíno tells me, "but these ones are able to stay completely still." >

They are also, I learn, completely toothless – all gums, with skin the texture of a verruca sock. Much like my old school dinner lady.

It's all well and good gawping, but I want to know what it takes to realise an aquarium of this, um, scale. How do all the different species arrive on the island? And do they really all get on?

“Fish only eat when they're hungry. We keep them well fed so they don't start looking tasty to each other,” explains Castellanos Vizcaíno. Feeding time is a complicated affair. Heralded by the ringing of a bell underwater, all fish are fed together, with staff unloading buckets of different chow simultaneously at various points around the mega tank. The sleeping sharks are hand-fed by divers who descend and place fish directly into their snoring mouths.



MAKING WAVES

Vet Marta Muñoz has an eclectic bunch of patients in her care (above); one of the tanks offering a glimpse into life beneath the waves (below)

As for the residents' mode of transport to Gran Canaria, “they come by plane,” says the curator. Each of Poema del Mar's bull sharks incurred a bill of €40,000, ‘including shipping’. “Most of our fish came from other aquariums and a much smaller number were fished for us.”

Standing in a submarine-like vestibule surrounded on all sides by glistening gills, I chat to vet Marta Muñoz, who's on call 24/7 and carries out twice-daily checks, looking for any signs of illness. How do you know if a fish is sick?

“Their scales darken and they might swim faster or slower,” she says. One way she treats them is by placing the fish into a bath of soluble medicine which they absorb through their skin.

She tells me, “Here, the animals come first, people second. We hope that if we show people the wonders of our natural world, the next generation will take better care of it.”

As I head for the exit, I pass my sideways-walking friend off on his constitutional again, clad in his snazziest shellsuit. If he carries on like that, he might just pull a mussel. 🐚

Tickets from €17.50, poema-del-mar.com

DESTINATION GRAN CANARIA

Get 3 nights self-catering at 4-star BlueBay Beach Club, departing from London Gatwick on 16 May, from £245pp*. easyJet.com/holidays

easyJet flies to Paris from 5 destinations

WELCOME TO THE WEIRD HOTEL!

As hotels become increasingly “smart”, we travel to Japan to see how the latest in high tech stays compares with a break in a traditional *ryokan* inn

Words & Photography Florentyna Leow

How do you pitch these pieces?

- Focus hard on the why
- The details about the specific busy literally do not matter if they don't relate to this why
- Be very careful not to get bogged down lengthwise—editors will sense immediately it's because you don't know what the piece is about
- Be clear how your scope fits the length

Thanks so much
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting
travel writing with you 😊

Have a follow up question on this webinar? Email questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com and we'll cover it in an upcoming webinar or in our Monday reader mailbag post on the Six-Figure Travel Writer blog.

