



Dream of Travel Writing

Taking Control of Your Ideas, Pitches and Follow-ups

Today's webinar, as I mentioned, is about taking control of your ideas, pitches, and follow-ups from an organization level because I know a lot of you who are on the webinar today, I've worked with you either live or I coach you or we've worked in one of the at-home programs. And I know that having ideas is something that we all do. Even if you know they're not great, they're not matched to magazine, they're not ready, I know that all of you guys have ideas.

And what happens though is that step of getting from having that idea, thinking it might be a good article idea, checking it, all those things, they don't happen in an organized, automatic fashion for the vast majority of people who are pursuing having a freelance writing business.

And I'm not saying that in a pejorative way at all. But what I mean is that in a normal business setting as in a manufacturing business, a retail business, some other type of business, things are highly systematized. And when I say systematized, I mean if you have ever gone to Chipotle or some other quick service food operation and looked behind the counter, you'll see that for instance, at Chipotle, which is a burrito place for those of you who aren't familiar, they have little bins that have each of the things that they might put in your burrito. They have trays that have all the different types of meat. They have other things that have all of the different types of topping. And there's an order that they move through those things.

So first somebody asks you what you want, then they steam the tortillas, then that goes to the next person. And the next person is only in charge of going your rice, and your beans, and your meat. And then once they've done that, it goes to another person who's only in charge of putting the toppings. And then once that's done, it gets wrapped up first, I think, in paper and then foil, and then it goes in a bag, always with a certain number of napkins and this and that. And then it goes to the person who rings you up. And the person who passes it off tells the person who rings you up what's in there and then they charge you.

So this is a process. And this is a process that we as customers see. But even before that process, there's a lot of other processes. But how does that cilantro get destemmed and into that little box in the first place? How is that meat cooked? That steamer that steams the tortillas, how is that cleaned? How often is it cleaned? Whose job is it to clean it? Whose job is it to check on it if it gets repaired?

All of these things that create that burrito for you have processes attached. And if you go behind the counter, way behind the counter from the view of the person working there, there's often lots of photos and lots of process sheets that show how to put those things together. It shows you exactly what positions each of the things like the onions and the



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cilantro and the difference sauces, what positions each of those go, in the spot, in that thing that you as the customer sees when you ask for your mild sauce or your green tomato sauce or something like that.

So these are business processes. And when I say business processes, this is the kind of stuff I'm talking about. This level of repetition, of organization, of thought into what is organized and repeated, so this is what we're gonna talk about today. How to create repeatable, clear, proven, useful systems for everything from your ideas to your follow-ups, to writing your pitches themselves, so that each time you do that nothing falls through the cracks. So that every time something goes in at the beginning of the conveyor belt, it will actually get all the way to the end.

Because I know I'm just as guilty as this as most of you but how often do you have an idea and it just gets totally lost, even if you write it down somewhere and you know it's a great idea, an idea you wanna pitch right away. There's a magazine that you know would be perfect for it. It even has a great section. And then that pitch doesn't go out. You don't have to chime in the chat box because I'm sure this happens to a lot of folks. But this is super common, that there's a great idea and that pitch just does not go out.

Or another version of this is that you have an idea and you work on the pitch, the pitch gets really far. The pitch gets to a place where you're missing exactly one thing, or maybe it's only missing that final polish. It could just be a factor. It could just be that you haven't hit send on it yet. And that pitch languishes. That pitch languishes somewhere and who knows where because you don't keep all your pitches in the right place, and then you have other things that come up. You have an assignment that comes in from an editor you pitched before, things happen. And then the next thing you know, it's three months, six months, a year, two years later, and that pitch that was all ready to go wasn't sent. So that is what we're gonna talk about today, how to make sure that these things don't happen.

Specifically, there's kind of three clear portions of what we're gonna talk about today, which are ideas, pitches, and follow-up. But before we get into talking about those three things, there's something really important that I want to talk about to frame everything that we're talking about today, which is this whole category of if we think about ideas, pitches, and follow-ups, we as freelance writers can call that whole thing... we could call it our pre-production, we can talk in our marketing funnel, there are a lot of different words that you can use. But I recommend you just think of that whole apparatus as one machine.

Like I said before, we get into the machine that we're trying to create. What I wanna zero in on is why we are pitching in the first place. I think it's very common to think about the act of



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pitching as something that you do because you just came back from a trip and there's something that you wanna do, that you wanna get an assignment for a specific story or maybe you just wanna get assignments to justify having gone on that trip. But there's just this general vagary that I have noticed around what exactly the goal people have of sending out pitches is. For instance, if somebody comes back from a trip and they say, "Oh, I wanna pitch this from this place," why that place? Why the outlet? It's very easy of course and understandable to think, "Well, I need to pitch stories based on the trips that I've taken so that I could write those off for my taxes or so that I can earn money to replace those trips."

But I'm here to tell you two very important things about that style of pitching, which is that, if you don't have a very motivating reason that you need to be sending those pitches, they're probably not going to get out, they just aren't. And I don't tell you this to be a Debbie Downer, but I tell you this because I've seen it so, so many times. I've seen it for myself. I've seen it from people I coach. I've seen it from people who come to workshops, to people who come to me with issues that they've had in the past. I just see it all the time, which is that if you aren't crystal clear for yourself why those pitches need to be going out, they just won't. They won't be a higher priority on your to-do list than other things, particularly assignments that you already have in front of you, something where you can do the work now and it will become money later. It won't be a higher priority than getting sleep or spending time with your children or being in a new place and exploring it. It just won't get done.

So in order for you to even be able to take advantage of this machine of ideas to assignments that we're looking to create, you need to really be honest with yourself about why you are looking to pitch in the first place. If you have a reason why you are looking to pitch that you know, go ahead and drop that in the chat box. I feel like some people really might already have one, which is that they feel like they have been going around doing this freelance writing for a while but their income is not what they want it to be and they know that they need to pitch and break into new magazines to do that. That's a great reason. I know a lot of people who have that reason. That's a very solid reason to be pitching.

But if you just wanna get clips, then it can be very diffuse what the goal of your pitching is. Do you wanna get a clip that's so big that any editor will listen to you? Great. That's a pretty clear goal. You wanna pitch to get an assignment from a magazine that's big enough that it will instantly increase your credibility as a writer.

Do you wanna pitch to get a regular, recurring relationship going with an editor so that they will start assigning pieces to you? That's another good one. Do you wanna pitch in order to get confidence in yourselves as a writer, that people will respond to your pitches? That's another goal. But all of these goals have different pitching paths to go about that. And it's



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really important to get clear on this because it brings everything into focus in terms of what pitches you need to send out and what pitches you don't need to worry about.

And so what I mean by that is if you're this person who wants to get a clip that's so big, that's from such a household name, that you have immediately legitimacy as a writer, what that means is you need to ignore every single idea that doesn't fit for those type of magazines and pitch them relentlessly.

If you're just trying to get something published to increase your confidence in yourself as a writer, as a writer who can pursue this professionally, then you need to focus on places that will pay you a wage that you feel justified about. So that Xes out all of these places that pay you \$20, because you aren't gonna feel good. You aren't gonna feel like you've made it. You won't get that confidence from doing that kind of work. So you wanna be pitching a place that will pay you something reasonable for the work that you've put in. So we're talking about at least \$200, \$300, \$400 here. And you wanna pitch places that are not getting lots of pitches because those are the places that are gonna be easier for you to get an assignment to get that kind of confidence.

If, however, on the other hand, you are looking to create relationships with editors so that you get into a position where you don't have to send so many pitches, you wanna create the kind of relationships where editors are signing things to you or you can send them very short emails, then that's a different type of path that you wanna pursue. Then you wanna be specifically looking to pitch editors that you have a lot of ideas for, that you're very knowledgeable about.

I see some folks putting on...someone's in here. They've got to gain momentum in her income and portfolio growth to break into new publications and expand the subject areas I write about. This is a really great one that Stacy has. This is a really great pitching goal that I think a lot of people don't think about. I talk and other people talk about pitching things that you know well because that gives you a really well-put-together paragraph about why you're the one who needs to write this piece. But it's also really lovely to get paid to learn about something that you wanna learn about. So Stacy has got a great goal here. She wants to pitch to expand the subject areas that she writes about. So how does that translate to what type of pitches she's gonna do, what her pitching plan is?

It means that she's gonna specifically not right now work on pitching the things that she knows well. She's not gonna pitch the editor she already knows, or she is gonna pitch the editor she knows but she's gonna pitch some different things.



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Some of the ones that folks are putting in that chat box are the type of ones that I'd love for you to have something more clear. So if you wanna pitch to develop your writing credibility, great. What does that mean to you? Does it mean that you wanna have an assignment, a publication from a place that immediately tells people you're an established writer, or does it mean that you wanna prove it to yourself. If you wanna build relationships in your niche, great. I love that. That's one where we can say, "Okay. What's your niche? Who are those editors? Great. we're gonna go after those."

If you're not so clear on what the goal of your pitching is, I highly recommend taking some time to think about it. Obviously, I'm gonna start talking in this webinar and you're gonna start thinking about what I'm talking about now. But I highly recommend taking some time to think about that afterwards, and make sure that it's so specific that it's motivating. So if your "why" isn't specific enough that you can tell yourself when you're about to turn on the television, when you're about to read some random article on Huffington Post that you can't tell yourself, "Oh, no. I should pitch now because of this." If it's not important enough to keep you from turning on the television or something like that, then make it more clear. Make it more motivating because that's what will allow you to actually focus on this, to actually get it going.

So in that vein, I wanna just take a second to talk about this concept of idea-first pitching versus magazine-first pitch. And the reason I wanna talk about this is again, depending on what your goal is, the types of methods that you would use in what we're gonna talk about later are slightly different.

If you have one of these goals, like Dan had a great one for this, he wants to build relationships with editors in his niche. If that's your goal, then you wanna be pitching magazines first. And what that means is that you want to know exactly which sections are open to freelance first in the magazines that you're pitching and have tons of ideas that fit those. And pitch them like a banshee, like just pitch them once a week.

Now, if you...Catherine's got a great one for this. She just shared, "I wanna pitch to maximize the stories I place," and the pay that she gets for each trip that she takes. In this case, she is pitching around different things that come up on the trips that she's taking, which means that they're not necessarily gonna be all those same outlets because she's traveling to different places. So in her case, she's starting with the idea and then finding magazines that match it.

I will tell you super honestly, that is a much longer process. So if your goal is to get clips quickly or anything like that, get money quickly, if you have something that involves doing



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something in a fashion that is as quick and easy as possible or getting the most money possible, then I highly recommend a magazine-first approach to pitching. So if anybody's not clear on the difference between magazine first and idea first, let me know. But it's gonna become a little more clear as we look at some different things in the chat box.

Whether you are pitching magazine first or idea first, one of the cornerstones to your machine, we call it maybe the preproduction machine or the marketing funnel machine, one of the core aspects of your machine is that you can't create it out of nothing. So even if every trip that you take, you might be going somewhere different and you're pitching kind of different ideas, and you're not necessarily pitching the same magazines, if you don't already have some level of familiarity with what those magazines could be, what magazines might fit for you, what magazines are out there, the machine simply does not work. So I wanna be really honest here.

When I first left my university job to freelance and I had had my own blog, I had been writing for other blogs, and I had decided it was time to get into pitching print, we used to go in the summer. My husband had papers that he had to read because he was organizing a conference and he had to approve them, and I would take my magazines and we would sit at the beach and he would have this papers and he would mark up his papers, and I would have the magazines and I would flip through the magazine. And I'd check it against the masthead, see which sections are open to freelancers. And every section that was open to freelancers, I would read the pieces in there. I would write down some ideas for that section. This takes a really long time. Depending on how familiar you are with doing it and how long a magazine is, it can take like two to five hours per magazine. That's a really long and involved process.

And part of that is the reason that we created the travel magazine database is that I used to assign people the same thing to do, to familiarize themselves with the magazines that they wanted to pitch, especially if their goal like Dan was if they wanted to increase relationships with editors in their area or in their niche. Like I said, it takes a really long time and it makes it really hard for you to send any pitches.

So if you have a lot of time on your hands, it's definitely something that you can do on your own. You can sit there and just go through magazines and write ideas, and that's really great to do that, to become familiar with the magazines. But if you're short on time, then this is why we created the database, is because it does this work for you and has already separated out which sections are open for freelancers, and the important attributes of each section, and what kind of stuff they've covered in the past.



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So whether you wanna do it on your own or whether you wanna use the database to do a good bit of the work for you, it's really important to build up your personal library of magazines that you're familiar with, you have come up with some ideas for. So I've given a little method here of how to do that, and I just kind of went through it out loud as well. You wanna go through and only, only, only, this is super important, only note the sections that are open to freelancer's, guys. This is the biggest pitfall that I see with pitching, is that people get really attached to a particular idea for a particular magazine but that section that they're looking at is only open to people who work for the magazine. You can never pitch it. And people are super, super set on sending this particular idea to this particular magazine, and they just can't because they won't buy that idea from freelancers. So make sure that you're only looking at parts of the magazine that are open to freelancers.

Then you wanna know the ones that come out, jump out to you. And I recommend, if you do have access to the database, to just copy the full text of each section. And I have a site on that, I'll just switch down. So this is what that looks like for the different sections in the database, is that the name of this magazine, for instance, is Adventure Travel, and the section that's open to freelancers is called Adventure Academy. And then we talk about...it says it looks to the experts for lessons on adventure trips and four categories of photography, mountain skills, fitness and bushcraft. For each respective category, they teach how to take a perfect shot, for instance, or how to avoid avalanches in the winter or what keeps you going on the mountain or how to start a fire with steel. And it's written in second-person instructional format with each subsection ranging from 500 to 600 words.

So if you have access to the databases, as you're going through and familiarizing yourself with the different sections, I highly recommending just cutting and pasting that paragraph into your notes. If you're doing it on your own, make those kind of note. How long is it? Is it first, second, third person? What kind of tone is it? In the case, the one I just mentioned, it's very instructional. It's second person. It's designed to show you how to do something so that the reader achieves a level of mastery.

So once you've written all that down, then start to write some ideas next to it. And I recommend keeping this in one sheet, one document. We're gonna talk about this later, why I recommend keeping everything in one document. But it's all related to this idea of don't lose your things. Don't lose your sections, don't lose your ideas.

If you are a person who has magazine ideas, magazines you might wanna pitch, half-written pitches, have them in 12, 20, 35 different places, after this webinar, I really recommend you take some time to at least put them in one file folder, one email folder, one something in your Evernote because just putting them together in the same place is really the first step here.



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In this case, as you're familiarizing yourself with magazines, you wanna have one document, one Evernote file, on email, whatever it is, where you just have them all. You have the magazine name in every single section that you wanna pitch. And we're gonna talk more about how the matching happens and how the matching happens quickly when we get into tagging.

One thing that I just wanted to say here and I'm gonna put this in the chat box as well, is that if you are looking to go magazine first or you're somebody who is looking to pitch as many ideas as possible but you have certain things that you like to write about, I highly recommend creating a pocket cheat sheet. We've talked about this at length in other webinars, and there's a whole blog post about it, so I'm not gonna go into too much detail, but this is a really nice way to do that organizing of magazine sections, in terms of keeping what you really need to have in front of you, front and center all the time so that when you go out, when you're out in the field, then you know what types of ideas to look for.

So the really nice thing about having a pocket magazine cheat sheet, which in brief means you have all sorts of sections for different magazines that you like to pitch and you have it on your phone, so while you're out, you can say, "Okay. I just got to Livorno. What am I gonna do here today? I don't know. I didn't look up too many things or I did look up things and now the weather is bad, so what am I gonna do?" You pull up your cheat sheet and say, "Okay. Afar has a section called One Great Block. Let me see if there's a block that has a lot of interesting things that I could pitch." "Okay. I didn't find a block, but I found this business that seems kind of interesting. What do I have on my cheat sheet?" Here's a business profile. Here's a magazine that looks for business profiles of people who are doing interesting things involving food. "Great. Okay. This can work for the section." And then you jot that down.

So again, we've got a whole blog post about the magazine cheat sheet that I recommend you check out. But it's useful both on the ground and in terms of putting together pitches after your trip.

But first I wanna talk about ideas, what happens when you get them. So, I haven't played Pokémon Go, but I know that the slogan is kind of Catch Them All. So this is our approach to ideas. As soon as you think of one, whether you think of it in the context of a magazine, when you're doing that process of familiarizing your magazine, yourself with magazines, which again can be in the database or with a physical magazine, you wanna capture that idea. Do not let it get away. As soon as you think of something, no matter how nascent it is, even if it's just a word or just a topic or something like that, I want you to capture it.



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Now, the problem is that if you don't have a system for capturing it and organizing it once it's captured, it will be kind of lost but you can maybe find it later. And this is really the crux of idea generation issues here. Is that, there's ideas everywhere but if you don't have a good capture tool, it's gonna be much harder for you to notice them because you're too busy holding on to the other ideas that you've had in the past and try not to forget about them. So I wanna talk about what you need to do when you capture it, and then we're gonna talk about a couple of different methods of capturing it later.

Every time you have an idea and you write it down, there is certain things that need to be in that note to yourself. The reason for this is, on the one hand, you wanna make sure that when you look back later at that idea, you have enough there to remember how brilliant it was, why it worked. I have a lot of folks who've come to me and said, "Oh, man. I had this idea. I thought it was the best thing ever. And then I woke up and I realized it was crap. And this happens with like half of the ideas that I had." But what I've noticed is that a lot of those ideas of people that wake up and think are crap are things that...

when you have an idea, it's very important for two reasons to add all of this information to it. So on the one hand is that you need to have enough things in there that when it comes time to pitch, you're very clear on what was so cool about that idea in the first place.

What happens quite regularly is that, like I said, people wake up and they thought this idea was great and they don't know why they thought it was great anymore. And very often that comes down to there was something like why it was a good match for a section or something that was interesting about it that they didn't capture. They captured the topic but they didn't capture that spark to it. And so when they wake up and they look at it, the spark's not there because they didn't capture it and they don't remember it.

So it's really important that you capture certain pieces of information. So the first and most basic one is the trip. So if this was an idea that you had on the trip, don't just write down the name of the place that the idea is about. For instance, right now, I'm in Italy. I'm researching locations for us to do a weeklong boot camp in Italy in the fall for folks that follow us that are in Europe. And I'm in this little town that I love, which is a great base for things, but there's a lot of other little, tiny towns around here. And I hadn't even heard of this town before I came and started staying here. And I definitely haven't heard of the other towns. So it's very common that I'll be out driving. I'll drive to Montepulciano to check out some wine places or I'll drive over to Perugia where the chocolate is from and there's this really amazing architecture. And along the way, I'll drive through a village that something cool.



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So if I just wrote down in my notes, Fiano di Canina something fair or something like that, when I went back later to find that idea, I'm not gonna remember the name Fiano di Canina, I'm gonna remember that there was a fair in this little town in Italy when I was on that trip in March of 2018. So if you wanna make sure that when you note down the ideas, either because of the timestamps or something else, if you're using Evernote or something like that, you have to make sure that you have a timestamp if you're not gonna add the destinations. I do it in my email so that I always have the timestamp but those are two different approaches. Like I said, we'll talk about approaches in a minute. But you wanna make sure that that trip is somehow mentioned. So I might say, Fiano di Canina festival from March Italy trip.

Now, the next thing that you wanna make sure to include, if you think of it at the time, if you don't, it's fine is what type of article you're imagining. This is another one of those things that I think people often have an idea and then it seems silly later because they had a format in mind when they envisioned it, but then they didn't get that down. And then afterwards, they can't see how the idea would work.

So if you think of the idea as a round-up with other, for instance, off-the-beaten-path festivals in Italy that are worth checking out when you're in Tuscany and you have a couple of other ideas for that, great. Jot all of that down at the same time. If that idea is a feature, which is about, to continue the example, the act of driving around Italy and discovering these festivals that you never would have known about otherwise, and each one a person tells of another one and then you just create this whole trip out of these festivals, that's something you write down, that it's meant to be a narrative quest-oriented feature.

So if you have magazine matches in mind, another thing you have to write down. So the whole idea here is capture everything. Everything that you think about in that moment that's related this idea needs to go in that note. Your idea should not just say Fiano di Canina festival or festival in that small town in Tuscany, because that's the kind of thing that makes, that when you look back later, you don't know what on earth to do with this thing.

So for potential magazine matches, I might say, "Hmm. Well, it's kind of like a road trippy thing and it involves food, and it's foreign. I know AFAR does a lot of stuff like that. So let me just write down AFAR." So this is the kind of thing where you might not know that it matches 100% to a specific section in the magazine, but you might know.

And either way you might say, and this could work for this this and this, and that will give you further information when you look back at it, at how you were envisioning the piece to work. Like I said, it's very important when you capture an idea that you're capturing all of this. Just like when we talked about familiarizing yourself with magazines, you'll notice that



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the emphasis here is on doing more work upfront so that we have to do less work later on. And that's really the goal of this machine here, is that we're putting in as much information as we can early on in this process to get better results later.

Now, you might ask yourself, "Well, it seems like I'm gonna be taking quite a bit of time to write down this note. What if I never use this idea? Isn't that a huge waste?" I have literally tens of thousands of ideas written down. I'm never gonna use all of them. But by capturing all of them, that enables you to be able to use the best for each moment, the best for each magazine and not be trying to force the ideas that you have at hand at the moment that you're excited about into what works for each magazine. It allows you to really use the best for each circumstance because you have access to so many past ideas that might be a better match for that magazine than what's top of mind for you now. So I'll get in a second to systems. But I wanna include as well as these different little bits of information that we had, the trip that you are on, the destination, the type of article, potential magazine matches, I want us to also talk about tagging.

Whether you use your email or a document or a web app or something else, having words connected to different things allows you to search. We can search anything. You can search your whole computer, you can search your whole email, you can search a document, you can search so many things. We wanna use tags to help us search. So all of these different words, the trip, the destination, the format, these are all tags. They're all things that are searchable, whether we've specifically use them as a tag because I think in Evernote you tag things or in Gmail, you can tag things. You don't have to actually take that extra time-consuming step of making a tag. As long as you put the right words in there, you're able to search for these things later.

Now, when you're writing pitches, one, have pitch in lowercase, colon in the subject line of that pitch. But when you are writing to yourself a note about something to pitch, you wanna write "to pitch" because this allows you to search in any documentary or email or whatever and then quickly see the difference between the pitches that have been sent versus the pitches that you're going to send.

So there's literally, not billions but, hundreds of different to-do software or organization software that you can use to track this stuff. I'm teaching you a method that works no matter where you put it because the reason there are hundreds of task management software are because there's hundreds of different preferences of how task management and information should be used.



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So if you used to-do list, if you... I don't even know the names of all of them, Wunderlist. Google has one now that my husband uses. I don't know if it's publicly available but there's a different one that Google uses now that's meant to rival Evernote. There's so many different things out there.

Terry, I'll get to your question, just one second.

So the point of the system bit of organizing your pitches is you should use exactly what works for you. If you have a crazy complicated app that you just really, really like and you know how to use it, that's great, use that. If you are completely not tech savvy, I don't want you to use a crazy complicated app but I'm not gonna recommend one to you because you simply won't use it. So you can keep your ideas, as in you can capture and store them in a to-do software, in a simple list in a text document or on your phone, or in a Word document or in Google Drive.

You can use an email account. This is something a lot of people have seen me do on trips, is that I email my ideas to myself so all of my ideas have an email subject line which is a bit of an information. It's got the destination, the trip, a small bit about the idea type of article, potential magazine matches, and then in the body, I put any other information in there.

So if I am capturing ideas while I am out on a tour, there's a couple of different places that you can capture article ideas. One of them is when you're out on a tour. Another one is when you're out on location but not necessarily on a tour. Another place you can capture article ideas is just at home from things that you read online. And you can also capture article ideas in an interview that you're doing by phone. Those are the four basic places that you might be doing that act of capturing.

So in any of those moments, without missing a beat, I can open up a new email and send it to myself. If I'm on a tour taking notes, I can pop over to my email and send myself an email. If I'm doing an interview and writing down notes for that interview, I can still just open a new email file, cut and paste something from my notes, and send it to myself. So that's why I personally use email, but that doesn't necessarily work for everyone.

So if you wanna know the full method that I use, I have a task management program that allows you to email things to it. And you can email it to specific addresses for specific folders, so I email a certain address that keeps all my pitches. I can even make an address that's just for pitches from a specific trip and then they will automatically be organized. In



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that file, they can even have a date, like if there's a certain date that I know I need to send it by and it'll also be tagged with magazines and all those things.

But like I said, this is an app. It costs money. It's complicated to learn. It's not gonna be the right thing for everybody. But like I said, because I have lots of ideas all the time and I don't have time to spend on organizing them, this is what I use. The one thing I want you to keep in mind besides, make sure it's something that you are comfortable using, that you like, is that you do not under any circumstances wanna take too much time on your system. The system is not the end goal. Organizing your pitches is not an activity that should take you a lot of time every day once you get the system up. I don't want you to have a crazy spreadsheet that has pivot tables where you go in and you search and search and search and look and mess about doing different formatting with it.

So that's why I use email because it's super, super simple. It's not even an app that I have to login to or something that I have to open a tab and go to. It's just there all the time. I can just hit a new email. So for you, it might be an app on your phone which is a notes file that you can open really easy. Whatever is easy for you, you don't have to go crazy with tagging. You just need to make sure that the destination, the trip, the gist of the idea, any formats, any potential magazine matches are there so that when you search, you'll find all of the relevant information. So rely on search rather than spending time organizing your stuff so much on the frontend. You just need to have one place where you capture it.

So Terry's question was, she missed the difference between pitch and to pitch. So what I meant by that, you're gonna see in a second when we get to pitches is that your documents or your text of pitches that you're writing should have pitch colon in it because that's gonna be the subject line of your pitch. But pitches that you write for yourself, you should write to pitch, T-O pitch, so that you can search for the full phrase to pitch, and find everything that needs to be pitched versus searching for the word "pitch:" and finding the pitches that you're working on.

So all of this is just in the vein of, like I said, not doing a ton of organization, not making a task for yourself the act of organizing, but rather just putting the information in whichever capture method works for you, which like I said, could just be one document, it could be an app that's a to-do app, it could be Evernote, it could be just an email account, all these different things. You're loading things in in a way that they're findable rather than spending time organizing them into folders. Because this is another thing that you're not gonna wanna do. You're not gonna wanna go in there and sort of around and look through 200 pitch ideas to find the pitches that you need to send right now. It's just not gonna happen. It's one more roadblock that will keep you from sending the pitches out.



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In terms of what that looks like, so here is a simple doc approach. This is like a really old thing of mine that I pulled up. So this is kind of like a hybrid between places that I wanna pitch and starting to have some ideas for them. Like I said earlier, as you are familiarizing yourself with different sections, you wanna make notes on what they're looking for. So you'll see that here, I put BBC. They're looking for stories that have an unexpected or surprising timely line or hook, and weave strong, context-heavy narratives. A solid hook will almost always have a subject to the pitch with a "why now" question. And this is the information on what to submit in the pitch. And so then I just started writing down a couple of ideas.

So this is the kind of thing like I said. It's super simple. You can just put it in a doc. It can just be a numbered list or symbol list. You really don't need to go super, super crazy on the physical act of organizing as long as all of the words that you need to search for are there in that document. And then this also helps with pitching.

So I have to tell you this is very surprising to me because I know that having too many words in front of you can make it hard to focus on what you're writing. For instance, a lot of people use these writing tools where it blocks out the whole rest of your screen. Some of you might use them. I know there's a lot of different apps for that, and even I think the Google Drive and different things will do it for you now. So it seems counterintuitive that you'll write your pitches better if every single pitch you're ever gonna write is in one document.

But I have seen time and time again, when we do workshops, that the people who have a different document for each pitch that they're writing on or even beyond that, rather than different document, they have a whole folder, and they have a document for here's each version of my pitch and here's information for my pitch, and here's the information for the magazine. The more things that they have to open to turn their idea into a pitch, the less likely it is that that pitch gets done.

So I wanna show you something. I'm just gonna switch the screen one second. And someone had asked about the slides later. In the webinar library when you purchase the webinars, you got all the slides as a PDF. And if you are a member of the Dream Buffet or the coaching program and you're accessing your webinars that way, then you have access to the full PowerPoint actually as well as the PDFs of the pitches.

Here you'll see, this is a document that has...you'll see it's very small but you don't necessarily need to read it. This is a document that has a bunch of pitches that I was working on. And so you'll see that I've got some notes on what to do when. And then I just got pitch after pitch after pitch. I've got a pitch here for magazine, Pilot Getaways. I crossed it out because it went out. I have a pitch, not sure who this is for. Clearly, it's something that I'm



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still working on. This thing about Turkey and it looks like I was writing this one, and then I decided instead to send her this one. Here, I've got a pitch for destination weddings. I was going through some different ideas and then I didn't come up with one yet. But I've got a note there. I've got the editor's email address of where I'm gonna send it.

Then I had a full pitch that I wrote up for a magazine called Maine Boats. I've got the whole pitch. It's even got my little signature at the bottom, and I crossed it out because it went out. I have to tell you, it's very surprising but the folks who write pitches and actually get those pitches out, it tends to be that they're doing them all in one document like this.

This is something that I used to do kind of just by accident, but I've noticed now as we do the live workshops, whether it's the freelance traveling boot camp or Pitch-a-Palooza, and I'm working with people and they're one-on-ones, the people who are further along on their pitches, they have it all in one place.

And part of that relates to the fact that as you are writing several pitches, there's things that recur in your pitches. So the most simple, simple, diluted format of how pitches work is that you open with a lead which should be something really important and attention grabbing. Then you have a paragraph that says what section you're pitching, how long you envision the piece being, what you're gonna include. Then you have a paragraph about how you are as it relates to this piece, and then you just ask them. Are they interested in Argentine Tango meets Maine Boats for Maine Boats feature section?

That's it. It's very simple. It's like 100 to 250 words. But what happens is that, let's say that story about Argentine Tango in a boathouse in Maine, I was gonna pitch that as a feature to one place. I was gonna pitch it as a profile of the owner in another place. I was gonna pitch it as part of a round-up to a different place. If I have all of those things in that same document and I'm working on each of those pitches, it's really easy on the one hand for me to work on several pitches about a related thing all at once. It's also really easy for me to get bored of one or get stuck on one pitch and then go work on a totally different pitch to clear my mind. Or it's really easy for me to be feeling...it's not bored, like I'm just not sure this is a fit anymore. I'm starting to get frustrated. And then I see another idea and I'm like, "Oh, I feel great about that idea so I can jump over."

You can also copy and paste the parts of your "who you are" paragraphs. They're all about the same trip. You can very easily copy and paste them from one place to another. Again, I know that this is something that seems counterintuitive for a lot of people, to be doing everything on the same document, where it just feels like you've got so much text going on and it's a bit distracting. But I've really seen time and time again that people who write their



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pitches quickly and effectively and actually get them done and actually get them out, tend to have all of their pitches that they're working on at a particular point in time in one document.

Now, is that something that you just wanna go on and on so it has 1,000 pitches in it? No. I think every so often you should move the ones are completed over to a different document called complete. But I definitely having a pitch and progress file on the one hand like I said, I've seen reliably that people get them done better.

But secondly, and here's the great thing about having just one document for your pitches. The really great thing about it is, every time it's that time of the week or that time of the month, whatever it is for you that you're gonna send your pitches, you just have to click over to one file and know exactly what's outstanding, exactly which pitches you're in the middle of, exactly what piece of information is missing from each pitch. It's all right there in one place. You never have pitches fall through the cracks anymore if they're in that one document. You know exactly where to look each week to get started again. So you also don't waste time looking through your email or different documents to see which pitches are ready or not.

So you could create a complicated tracking system where you say each pitch, each outlet that it's gonna go to. Also an Excel, put the email address for each editor. You could put the names of a couple of different editors that you're considering. And then you could have a section called progress, where you say where you are in each pitch. But why create a separate Excel sheet for that? You don't have several people that need to look at that information. You don't have somebody that you need to report to. What is the actual point of that tracking sheet? Is it moving you closer to your goal of getting pitches out or is it one more thing that you need to do that's keeping you from writing, researching, matching, hitting send on that idea.

So let's look at what happens when you hit send. So I've talked a lot about a specific follow-up system that I use that I find easy that you don't have to think of that. And that's the calendar approach. But I wanna also just take a minute to talk about... Oh, Annalisa just asked about follow-up strategy and I just got there, so I think that that must be the delay.

So I also wanna talk about today, a slightly different strategy, and then I'll remind you guys what the calendar strategy is that I talk about often. So one different strategy is, I call it the one-day follow-up. And what I mean by that isn't that you follow up one day after you send a pitch. Please note, very importantly, I do not mean that you follow up one day after you submit a pitch. That's too soon. You should not do that. You should wait at least a week before you follow up on a pitch unless it's super urgent and for an online market. So don't



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follow-up less than one week after you send a pitch unless it is both super urgent and for an online market.

When I say the one-day follow-up, I mean that there's a particular day each week that is the moment in your own schedule when you do all of your follow-ups. So that means that if it's Friday and it's 11:00 a.m., then you are doing follow-ups. Or if it's Tuesday and 11:00 a.m., whatever is the time for you, that works best in your schedule every single week, that is when you do your follow-ups.

So this can be really nice if you are somebody who works in one place, you have a very regular schedule, you're not also doing yoga teacher training or carting your kids around to seven different activities that are different every single day of the week. You and your spouse have a regular schedule in the morning, things like that. This can be very easy. But if your life a little bit more chaotic, then I don't recommend trying this approach because if you miss your follow-up time, your follow-up day, then you get that emotional weight on yourself that you haven't done it, that you need to do it later.

And it gets very easy for that emotional weight to grow and grow the longer it is since you've missed your deadline for yourself, which is a big deadline because you had several different follow-ups you had to do at that time. But the one-day follow-up like I said, can be really great if you're a person who likes routine, you have a schedule, and you will do something just because it is on your to-do list.

Especially if you're a person who already has an admin day where you do your billing and different things like that or I know some people who have a day that's their day that they work on pitches period. You can have a bit of that time, especially is good to do when you're a little low energy and a little bored, that can be your follow-up time.

Now the calendar approach that I've talked about before means that every time you send a patch, you immediately go to your calendar and one week out or two weeks out, one week if it's online, two weeks if it's print, then you make a note in your calendar to follow up on that pitch. Then two weeks after that or one week after that if it's online, then you make another reminder to send a second follow-up about that pitch.

Now, whichever follow-up approach that you use, you've gotta do another one of these things where you front load with information while you have it so that your life is easier later on. And in the case of follow-ups, the way that we do that, it's not when you're writing the pitch, but in that point where you are matching an idea to a magazine. So going all the way



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back up to an earlier phase in the machine, all the way back up to the matching. When you haven't written the pitch yet, but you've just said, "Okay. I think this idea will work great for this magazine. I'm so excited. I'm gonna write the pitch now." Pause yourself and say, "What other ideas could work for this magazine?"

So if you're a person who's doing magazine-first pitches, you'll probably have a lot of ideas for one magazine at a time because you're looking at what works for that magazine. But if you're not doing magazine-first pitching, and you're doing idea-first pitching, then you might have an idea and then have found a home for it, and it's a magazine that you haven't pitched before. It's a magazine that's new to you. So before you start writing that pitch, I want you to take a second and look at some other sections in that magazine or the same section that you're pitching your current idea to, and think about some other pitch ideas that could work for that magazine. Now, the absolute pro tip is if one of your other ideas is better, if it's a better fit for that magazine, then stop the pitch you were originally gonna send and write the pitch for the better fit first. This is the ultra, ultra-great point of having this follow-up seed be planted all the way up in the idea phase. Is if you have a better idea for that magazine that you just found because you found it when you were trying to match a specific idea, if your new idea is a better fit for that magazine, pitch that idea first instead. Don't pitch the idea you were gonna originally pitch. Save that idea for once you have a relationship with the editor and that the editor is more likely to work with you on an idea that is very dear to you.

So before you've written your pitch, you have some extra ideas for that magazine so that once you write your pitch, when you are setting a note to follow up, and that might be a list of pitches to follow up on that you have for your one-day follow-up whichever day that is, or it might be that you're putting the follow-up note into your calendar for when you're gonna follow up on that pitch, you include your other ideas. You include or other ideas for that magazine in your follow-up note. Whether that's in a list for your admin day or it's in your calendar, and you do that for two very important reasons. The first important reason is that, if you are following up and the editor wasn't interested in your first pitch, they don't even get back to you, then you automatically send them a new patch.

So Tara had a question about the amount of time that I wait for a follow-up, and I recommend one week for online and two weeks for print. But there's two follow-ups, people. So what it means is that day zero, I'll put it in the chat box. I'm gonna type for a second. Day 14, you follow up on your pitch, on the first pitch. We'll call it pitch 1. And then on day 28, you send pitch 2. And then my math is gonna leave me, but I guess it would be day... what's 28 plus 14 people? 52 maybe? 42? I guess we'll just call it day 42. You follow up on pitch 2.

So what that means is that having the idea already matched the magazine in your calendar or on your follow-up list means that when that day 28 rolls around and you're sending your



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second pitch, you don't need to think about it, it's right there on your calendar. So there's no friction for you to send that follow-up with the new patch. But the other thing is, what happens if before this gets around, so if you have already pitched and followed up on and heard nothing, what if the editor has gotten back to you, and they've gotten back to you with a no? There's a long moment that you take there or you might like get a little hiccup of, "Oh, no. They said no to me." But you turn around and you send them a new pitch, and you do it right away, especially if they've said, "Sorry, that didn't work out. Can you send me another pitch?"

Then you'll have a flutter, you'll have an excited flutter and that will make you nervous because you feel like now there's a pressure that the second pitch has to be better and you'll delay and you'll delay and you'll never pitch that editor or maybe you'll pitch them four months later, or six months later or maybe you'll think about pitching them four months later, six months later. But then you'll feel like they don't even know who I am, should I even pitch them and then you still won't pitch.

So Kelsie asked a question. I have an entire webinar about following up, which is in the webinar library now. And if you want more about the mechanics of the chain of those follow-ups, I recommend checking out that other webinar. Because like I said, we're not gonna talk too much about the actual content of the follow-ups and the pitches and ideas in this webinar. So I recommend checking that out in the library and I'll get the link and put it for you in the chat box.

In the meantime, we've gotten to follow-ups. We've talked about ideas, we've talked about pitches, and we've talked about all of the different parts of the process. So, now you have your machine. Your machine begins when you are out in the field, you're reading the news, you're doing an interview, and you capture an idea, that's when the machine begins. And then once you have that idea, you write down everything that you can think about it. You write down the destination that's taking place, what trip it's connected to. If you didn't hear it on trips, then where else you heard it? So maybe you heard it on an interview or you read about it in Conde Nast or in Skift. You read something that made you think about it. Write down whatever that trigger was when you captured that idea along with any potential magazine matches, anything else that you might need to know to pitch it later and it's captured.

Then when you're writing your pitches, you might have a specific magazine that you're looking to pitch. You might just say, "Okay. It's Tuesday. Tuesday is when I send pitches. It's time for me to send my pitches." At that moment, you just do a very simple search. And whatever you're capturing method is, your capture method could be your email, that your capture method could be Evernote, it could be some other to-do list software. So you just do a search. You say, "Okay. I wanna pitch something to this magazine. What ideas do I have for



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this magazine?” You say, “Oh. I just found a magazine which has a section for narrative features. What narrative features ideas do I have?” Or you say, “Hey, I wanna do the pitches that are all about that trip that I took to Tuscany. Let me look up Tuscany and see what I’ve got for that trip.”

Everything is tagged. And when I say tagged, it doesn’t have to be a real tag, it can just be text that you put in there, but everything is tagged so you can find it and work on those pitches. And then as you’re putting together that pitch, as you’re starting to think, “Okay. Here’s a match for this magazine,” you think of your ideas, other ideas for that same magazine and you jot them down in your follow-up notes.

And then once you send that pitch, the note to follow up either goes on your follow-up day list or it goes in your calendar for a week or two weeks out from when you pitched. And then once that reminder comes up, you send a follow-up. And the next reminder, you send a pitch all over again, and the system just works until you get an assignment from an editor.

Now, I say until you get assignment from editor because if you do this systematically, you will. You’ll get an assignment from every single editor eventually. I literally promise you. If you do this and you’re pitching correctly and you’re pitching ideas that are actually ideas, and again we’ve got a lot of information with that in Idea Fest and Pitch-a-Palooza, you will get an assignment from any editor that you’ve set your heart to. I have seen people go and get assignments from The Economist, from huge, huge places but only if you just stick to it and you follow your system, and like a little machine, you just keep running through.

So all of that being said, this is the last webinar in our series on taking control of your business. I’ve dropped in the chat box, this is the link to that webinar that I mentioned, which is on follow-ups which has a lot more information about how to set up those email chains.

If you’re gonna follow up and then the send a new email in that same follow-up. That’s all covered extensively in that webinar.

So thank you guys so much for joining us. And I hope that you take a little bit of time after this to think about what very, very simple solution or a very simple method works for you to capture all your pitches and take 5, 10, 15 minutes to just move all the pitch ideas you’ve got currently into that one place. Move all the pitches that you’re writing currently into one email. It will really save you so much time and make sure that your pitches start getting out. If they’re not or that you get more pitches out if you currently are.



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So I hope you guys have a really great day. It's about 10:00 at night here for me. So I'm gonna get ready, have some late dinner, and get ready for bed. And I hope that the rest of you guys have a great rest of your week and your weekend. Cheers.