



Dream of Travel Writing

The Magazine-First Approach to Organize Your Pitches to Ensure You Hit Your Goals

Today, we're gonna talk about the magazine-first approach to organize your pitches to make sure that you hit your goals. And the thing about the magazine-first approach to pitches that's really interesting is that this is actually how I usually set people up for them working on pitching goals, people in our coaching program.

And yet, we did a webinar on the idea-first approach to pitching, which is not what I usually work with people on earlier. And so somebody asked me after we did that idea-first approach to pitching webinar, which we'll talk more about in a bit, "Well, how does this work with a magazine-first approach?" And I was like, "Oh, of course, I can tell you that because that's what I do." And I realized that we didn't have any material in our webinar library on the way that we do, in fact, recommend that people create their pitch plan. So that's what we're gonna look at today.

So, particularly, in this first webinar, in this series of four, I wanna kind of posit the counterpoint between idea-first and magazine-first pitching. And because these are terms that I don't know if anyone else uses, that I think we use relatively exclusively in order to explain these concepts to you, I'm gonna explain what they mean so we can all be on the same page by what I mean when I say idea-first and what I mean when I say magazine-first pitching.

Then we're gonna look in brief because we already did a whole webinar series on the idea-first pitching, but also because we're gonna look at this in more detail when it comes to magazine-first pitching throughout this webinar series. So we're gonna look kind of an overview of the main differences between the two, and then we're gonna talk about the pros and cons of each process. And as we do that, you'll start to see already why one approach works better in some situations and one approach works better in the other.

But then we're gonna look at some specific, sort of, let's call it goals you might have or points in your career when you might want to use one or the other.

As we get into what we're looking at today, I was putting these slides together and thinking about, you know, in Dream of Travel Writing, when I'm talking to writers, working with writers one-on-one, or coaching program at live events, or things like that, there's certain examples from when I was more of a freelance writer full time than I am now that I use. But as I was looking at this idea of what is my experience using these two frameworks and when have I used them and why to put this webinar together for you today, I realized that, interestingly, I've gotten national bylines using both of these methods.

So, even though, in this webinar series, we're gonna talk about magazine-first pitching, and how to use it, and why, and it will often sound at times like I'm knocking idea-first pitching, I will say you can get results from idea-first pitching. I have gotten, like I said, national bylines from doing that. But as you'll see, as we go through the webinar, there are some reasons why you may wanna choose one or the other in different situations.



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We chose also to do this webinar series because I've been talking with a lot of people, both in our regular coaching calls, as well as on one-off calls that I've had with some folks about this idea of which magazines should you be pitching.

So I'm seeing these responses from people as lessons go by every day, and it's really interesting how many people realize that they need to take a better look at which magazines they're pitching and why, and how many people just take certain magazines and work on pitching those and get frustrated because they're not either getting any results or they're not getting results in the direction of their goals and give up on pitching entirely.

So, because I've seen a lot of these, you know, very appropriate feelings of frustration around pitching lately from folks that I'm not working with as closely, I wanted to do this webinar series to really sort of drive home this idea that it's not about the quality of your pitches. In many ways, even the quality of your idea matches is not where you should start if you are working on sort of scaling up as a writer. You really need to start with being super clear about which magazines you are pitching and why, and that's what we're gonna look at in this series. So, definitions first.

So when I say idea-first pitching and magazine-first pitching as evidence sort of in the construct of this term that we've created, it's all about where you begin. It's about your jumping-off point. It's about your departure point, okay? So are you departing on your planning of your pitches from the idea, from the destination you've gone to and the specific thing there that you wanna cover? Or, are you departing and finding your pitches from the magazine, okay?

So, more specifically, what I mean by that is, I'll give you some sort of not extremely specific examples about people, but I'll look at some situations that I've been in before, okay. So, somebody who, for instance, has a destination that is very dear to them. Maybe they go there often, maybe they've covered it in some outlets already. They don't live there, but it's a place that they feel like has so many stories, okay?

And, in this destination, there's a couple different stories that they have ideas about specifically. And around those ideas, they're sort of set that this is the idea that they wanna pitch, this is the concept of this destination, this is sort of the content that they wanna write. So all of the pitches that they're working on for various magazines trickle back to this. They will look at magazines and see, "Is this idea that I have a fit for that magazine?" And if not, they put the magazine aside, okay?

Now, on the magazine-first approach, that would look more like somebody who has a particular topic that they wanna write about, let's say beer or something like that, you know. And so they look for some different magazines that cover that topic, and then they look at what articles not just that magazine is publishing, right? Because a lot of things a magazine is publishing might actually be coming from in-house writers or writers who are in contract for the magazine. So, not so much for freelancers.



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So these writers who want to write for specific magazines, they look for the sections that are open to freelancers in that magazine. And then rather than say, "Oh, here's the story that I really wanna tell," or, "I just went on this trip, and I really wanna place the story," they look at what is going on in that magazine, and then they say, "Oh, they have a section for this, actually, there's this idea kind of that I forgot that I had that'd be really great for here." Or, "Oh, they're looking for a profile of a bar that's kind of a dive bar, but has a really interesting sort of cultural backstory. I have like three places that I know that are like that."

So the difference here is that if you are starting magazine-first, the ideas come at the end, okay? The particular ideas that you're gonna pitch. And they're pre-shaped because you don't even start to think about ideas until you're looking at the parts of the section that are open to freelancers. So these ideas that you're specifically honing down and even putting on your "Let's work on this pitch" list are shaped already by what, not only the readers of this magazine are interested in, but what the editors are commissioning from freelancers in terms of specific type of articles.

When you start idea-first, you have an idea. It might be as drill down to like...there's, you know, some people I know who write the whole story first, which I would never advise, of course, and then they go look for a home for it. So sometimes people not only have the content and the type of article, but it's already drilled down to what the story is gonna include.

Sometimes, they just have, you know, this idea, like, for instance, I think this is probably played out by now, but this idea of New York City, where I'm based kind of developing its shoreline and becoming like a waterfront culture. This is happening in a lot of places. But I believe like when we first moved here or something like that, there were a lot of places starting to open on the waterfront and now there's tons of free events that you can go to. There's lots of bars. There's lots of nice places to sit. They have Tango in the evenings, all these kind of things.

Where it used to be that nobody would ever really go there. There was nowhere to walk along the rivers. The rivers were dirty. You know, who knows, you might find a body like they do in the TV shows, whatever. So let's say that that is your idea, and you're kind of even taking it a little further. Like maybe you want to do a round-up of some of the new restaurants that are on the waterfront that are kind of hopping.

So if that's your idea that you're departing from, you're already narrowed in terms of the type of article, okay? It has to be that it is a round-up, and you're narrowed in the content, it has to be about these waterfront restaurants, and intrinsically, you're also narrowed in other ways because you're narrowed to magazine sections that will do a round-up just about one city as opposed to roundups that would have to be broader geographically.

You're also narrowed to roundups that would be a round-up just about one type of place, as in just restaurants, as opposed to roundups that might be restaurants, and activities, and places to stay, which might be more common, but it depends on the magazine. So, now if you're



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doing idea-first pitching, you're equipped with these parameters, okay? And you're going out and looking for magazine sections that have those parameters and magazines where the audience would hopefully be interested in this idea.

And then hoping that the parameters in that magazine section that the content that you're interested in writing would also work for the editor in that section. So there's a lot more question marks, okay, as you'll see as we go along, but that's kind of the basic difference between idea-first and magazine-first, okay? Is whether you start with the idea and then look for magazines, or you start with magazines and then look for ideas, okay?

So, again, if you've never heard of those before, don't worry. I made them up for you. There's a lot of times when there's a concept I see a lot of writers struggling with where editors say, "Just do this." In this case, editors say, "Just read the magazine." But that doesn't help saying just read the magazine. Because if you don't know how to look at the magazine like an editor does, if you don't know how to look at it, specifically with an eye to what ideas to pitch them, the advice, "Just look at the magazine," does not get you anywhere.

So this is the exact...I've kind of written them next to each other. This is the exact sort of process of working magazine-first versus working idea-first, okay? So in our idea-first webinar series, what we did was we actually went through, and we had six webinars on this topic. And it was very different than what we're doing in this series in terms of the series that I'm doing now with the magazine-first ideas, I'm kind of teaching you guys a method, okay? So I'm talking about why we do things this way. I'm walking you through how to do it and whatnot.

But, in this previous webinar that we did, it was a live workshop. So what that means is that in each webinar, I was only doing the work to put together these pitches on the screen with you so that you could see how long it takes me, how I make decisions, and each little piece, so to say, of this process and how it went together. And so the way that we segmented out our webinar series on this is a little bit different than I have here on the screen. So, I'm just gonna tell you that for a second.

So, again, it's a little different because, in that one, I was doing in front of you, so there's a lot of kind of seeing exactly how I would look at things, what kind of things I might look up to go into the pitches. It's also a lot about writing the pitches, okay? So, in that one, we started with the same thing that I've got a number one here on the screen for you. So, in the first webinar, we took a trip that I had gone on, it was a press trip, a couple press trips actually, but it was kind of a round trip in the Czech Republic last year for the TBEX's Conference.

And I went through the itineraries that I had and jotted down from memory all of the different things that struck me in the different stops that we went on that might potentially be article ideas, okay? And I ended up with a list, I believe, of 39 potential article ideas. And then the next thing that we did was that we took all of those article ideas, and then I went to the Travel Magazine Database, and I pulled up a bunch of likely subjects in terms of magazines that I think maybe some of these articles might work in because the audience



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seems like it might be good. So, I have the advantage of knowing the magazines there, right, which not everybody has.

So I was able to kind of narrow down which magazines I was looking at in the first place. But also, I only did this in about an hour, including some time for explanation. So if you were to be spending more hours on this, you would have gotten more matches. But what I did was I took the ideas we had, and I looked for how many magazine sections can we come up with that we might be able to pitch these two. And I ended up, again, with like about 30. Not exactly every section that I found was for just one article idea.

So there's some article ideas that I didn't find homes for exactly just in that one quick time when we were running through, and then there were some that I found multiple homes for. Like I had this idea around interviewing someone who was kind of like a local sort of representative of being a local in Prague. Again, we found several different places that we could put that.

But interestingly, and what happens in this step two of working idea-first is that we ran into the issue that a lot of the places that I had been on this trip were not super off the beaten path. Like, they had UNESCO heritage sites and things like that, but it was difficult to figure out, even among European, more regional magazines, who would take a story on something kind of out of Prague or out of Brno or whatever in the Czech Republic. That was a big stumbling block that we ran into in that series that you also run into when you work idea-first.

And I know often the stories that people that I work with are looking at are not just kind of like a basic city guide of a major city. They're gonna be more interesting that they took, you know, a trip where it seems like, well, you know, "I might be the only writer who has this information, why can't I find a place that would be interested in it?" And so that can be one of the things that can really drag you down working idea-first, is to be trying to figure out what magazine would possibly work for this idea, okay?

And then the next thing that we did in the series that you'll also see as number three here is that we looked really closely at each of the magazine matches, potential matches, rather, that we had found, and we said, "Okay, how likely is it that the editor would actually accept this idea for the story?" Like, the format seems right, but do they cover, not just this destination, but do they cover this type of story arc around this destination? Do they cover this size of business if it's a business profile?

Do they cover destinations that are this far from an airport, like I mentioned, that are this many people that have, you know, this number of attractions? And so we tried to really drill down in that way. And that's a really important thing to do when you work idea-first because you're looking in so many magazines that you need to take sort of two separate passes to make that initial step of, "Okay, this looks like this might work here," and then go back and do more due diligence to see so that you don't send an editor a pitch that's really way off-base for him or her.



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And then, we actually did that over the course of two webinars in the series, and then we worked on lining up the pitches. So when you're working idea-first, and we'll talk again a little bit later in this webinar about the times when I do think that, you know, that's a potential method for you. So when you're working idea-first, you're trying to play stories from a trip, and so you're typically kind of writing as many pitches as possible.

And so, in terms of scheduling, this gets you into a situation where you might be doing a pitch blitz. So you'll need to have for instance, perhaps like a large amount of time set aside where you're doing all of this research and matching work, and then another large set of time set aside in order to write the pitches and get them out, and then also a set of time set aside to follow up on them to make sure that you don't miss that.

And then, unless you have some other... This is the tough part. If you're pitching idea-first, particularly if you're working with one idea at a time, you don't typically have something to go back to that same editor that you just pitched with and say, "Here's a new idea for you." And if you've caught my webinar on "The Art of the Follow Up", this is a really important part of the way we teach follow-ups, and it's really effective. Which is that you send a pitch in a week or two weeks depending on when you're doing online, or print, or how sort of time-sensitive the story idea is, in a week or two weeks, you go back and you just say, "Hey, what questions do you have about this pitch so that I can answer for you?"

But then in another two weeks, you essentially declare it dead to them without saying so in a way that could feel kind of like you're backing the editor into a corner. So rather than saying this very anemic but common phrase of, you know, "Can you let me know if you're not interested in this because I'd like to take it to another publication if you aren't." You say, "Hey, Sarah, editor, it seems like you weren't interested in my pitch on Torcello. Here's another pitch for you on, you know, pop up popsicle stands," and then you put the new pitch.

And what happens there is that we activate a really cool psychological reflex, which is that rather than backing them into a corner saying, you know, "I who you owe nothing to need you to look at this pitch to tell me something. Guilt, guilt, guilt, lack of leverage," okay? Instead of saying that, we're saying, "Hey, I'm in demand. I've got lots of ideas. You don't want that one? Cool, here's another one."

And then the editor is like, "Wait, did I want the other idea?" And they feel the scarcity rather than you having the scarcity. And then they go back and look at that other idea. And I can't tell you how often people tell me, "Oh my God, that really worked. Somebody bought my idea when I sent them the next idea because they went back to look at the first idea, and then they bought it." Okay?

So this is one of the problems with idea-first that people don't think about, which is that your follow-ups lack oomph and leverage, okay? Because you're not able to project this sort of like, "Yeah, I've got lots of ideas. Here's a new idea," because you just don't have another one lined up that you can easily send them. And then what often can happen as well is that if the



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editor gets back to you, and says, "Oh, thanks so much. This won't work for us this time, but feel free to send us more pitches."

I know a lot of people whig out when they get those emails because they don't know what to pitch next, okay? They don't have another idea for that editor. But then they kind of feel like they have to drop everything and get to know the magazine and find a new idea. Because, you know, Lordy, like, this editor got back to you and asked you for pitches, so what else are you gonna pitch her, right?

So, as you can see, there's a lot of, and again, we'll look at kind of the pros and cons in a second, but there's a lot of potential drawbacks to this idea-first method. So let's look in more detail about the magazine-first process. So in the magazine-first process, the very first thing that you do is that you very diligently and specifically select the magazines that you're gonna pitch.

And as with everything that we kind of counsel or teach as a process here at Dream Travel Writing, we advise you in a very sustainable manner. And so what I mean by that is that as you're choosing the magazines to pitch... We'll look at this again in a lot of detail in the upcoming webinars. But as you're choosing the magazines to pitch, you look at it with your goals in mind, but also with your circumstances.

So we look at it in terms of what magazines are you gonna have a lot of ideas for first and foremost? But then, just because you have a lot of ideas for a magazine, is it a magazine you really want to write for? Does the voice fit you? Do the values fit you, okay? Does the persona of the ideal reader fit you? And, does the magazine fit you in terms of the pay that you'd like to be earning right now?

For some people, that's a non-issue. For some people, it's like the first stop. I had somebody who is a...writes features for "Travel + Leisure" and whatnot and was an, you know, avid user of our database who came and told me that he really wanted to know right away if a magazine paid or not. Because for him, it's literally not even worth clicking two screens to get to see if the magazine pays because he's at such a level that that to him is the very first consideration.

He doesn't wanna open the magazine and then go to the How-to Pitch tab, and scroll down to the bottom and see the pay rate, or if the pay rate is unknown, okay. He wants to know right away. He only wants to even spend two seconds clicking on magazines that he knows are gonna pay. And that is not the situation for everyone. Not everyone is at a place with their writing that they can have the luxury of making decisions on that level about who they will pitch, okay?

But whatever level you're at, you do have something, which is either what you think you should be earning right now, what you'd like to earn in a little bit. And so it's important to take those goals into account in the spread of the magazines that you choose. Because if you find yourself only pitching magazines that don't pay because if you're okay with that, right



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now, but then you have a bunch of relationships with places that don't pay, and then how do you grow? You have to start over from zero, right?

So another thing is that some people have goals around market position. They want to be writing for national news and magazines, or, even more specifically, they want to be writing for national news and magazines that are only exclusively travel magazines like "Conde Nast Traveler," or "Travel + Leisure," or "AFAR," or something like that. Now, if that is your goal, rather than your present reality, it's, again, important to make sure that you're not exclusively pitching those. That you are giving yourself something that will also furnish bylines in the meantime, unless you have the freedom to just pitch, and pitch, and pitch, pitch, and pitch, and pitch, and pitch, only that, and not have any, you know, incremental steps in the meantime, and you have the constitution that that's okay with you.

So when we look at this magazine-first approach, we spend a lot of time making sure that the magazines that we have selected upfront are optimized in a number of different ways so that you don't spend time getting to know a bunch of magazines, reading them, learning their sections, starting to shape your brains that the ideas that you see in the world come neatly packaged just for these magazines, so that you don't spend that time on magazines that are not the best use of it, okay?

This is really important because, as humans, we all have this sunk costs thing. Sunk costs, if you're not familiar with it, is when you make decisions based on how much time you've put into something, even though that's in the past and doesn't technically have any bearing on the future. But it's this feeling of sunk costs and making decisions out of it, okay? So that's the first step for magazine-first, and we're gonna spend a bunch of time on that in this webinar series.

And then, you're gonna create a list, a special list for yourself that is not super, super detailed, but it's more of a brain dump of potential article ideas for each individual section of the magazine that you're looking at pitching. Now, we do this for a couple of reasons. There might be certain ideas, right? Everybody loves idea-first pitching. There might be certain ideas that you're really clung to right now that are very present for you that you're really looking for homes for.

But we begin with this massive brain dump that should be as detailed as possible to unearth all ideas that you have bopping around in the back of your mind during your previous travels, or maybe just things that you've seen online, or heard from somebody, or whatnot that could be a fit for these magazines that we're looking at targeting. And we do that in one batch before we pick out ideas to work for because then we wanna choose the best idea, not the idea you're most attached to right now, but the best, most closest fit for that magazine to start with, okay?

But we have all the other ideas there. And that means that once you've sent that first pitch to the editor, you can already start working on the next pitch to that editor. So you can have it ready for him or her for that moment when you get that reply email, or if you don't get a



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reply email, for that, "Hey, it seemed like you weren't interested in my first pitch. Here's a new one for you to consider." Okay?

So that is the process of magazine-first pitching sort of in overview as well as idea-first pitching. And, like I said, we have the webinars already on the idea-first pitching if you want to check those out, and like I said, those walk through me literally putting the pitches together in front of you, me looking through the magazines so you can see what I'm looking forward to see if an article idea is a fit or not, all of those things

But the magazine-first is one we are gonna embark on as part of this series. Now, as we start to look at which type of pitching you should utilize in each situation, I wanna say something unfortunate. I only have one pro here for idea-first pitching, okay? And the reason for that is that the pro of idea-first pitching, you'll see that there's a bunch of cons going up, but the pro of idea-first pitching is really this thrill of having an article idea that you've had on your own that you've generated independently and somebody saying yes to it and telling you that it's valuable and that they want to offer you money for it, okay?

That's the pro of idea-first pitching. It's a fantastic feeling. The thing is, there's also a pro of magazine-first pitching. Because as we talked about when we looked at the overview of how these two processes work, when you do magazine-first pitching, you're still generating ideas that you are interested in, that are your ideas for each of the magazines that you're gonna pitch. But you're just starting with the buckets and the frameworks that are already given to you by the magazine, okay?

That's the difference here. But you still get that same thrill, okay? But the other pros of magazine-first pitching is that because you're pitching fewer magazines, you have to spend less time familiarizing yourself with the magazines because you're more familiar with the magazines because you work with them regularly and they're top of mind for you. You also have to spend less time verifying if your articles are a good fit.

Because you are emailing these editors regularly, you also have a warmer reception to your pitches because they've seen your name in their inbox before. And because they're seeing your name more regularly and often getting back to you, even if it's a no that has no sort of bearing on, you know, your ability to pitch like we already assign that idea, or we have a similar story running to a different destination or something, you're building relationships with editors as a result.

And because you have relationships with these editors, you have a better chance of them thinking of you in an editorial meeting and about an idea that you haven't pitched them, but that they wanna assign to someone. I know even in the case of...it wasn't a far...I think it was close to living. Even major news and magazines will take article ideas that they've generated in-house and assign them to writers that they've never worked with if they liked the pitches from that writer that have been coming in. And they just wish that there was a good story that they could work on with that writer, but it just hasn't worked out yet, okay?



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And because you have these relationships with editors, and perhaps before they even assign you the first story, they're getting to know you as an idea generator, as a writer, as a professional in the field, you have a better chance of getting a higher rate from them right off the bat because they have more respect for you. So if we go back here for a second to the processes around this, this is where we start to see a lot of the cons.

So, you know, we can also kind of class that all of these things that I've said to you here, you know, less time familiarizing yourself with magazines for magazine-first pitching, that's gonna be a con for idea-first pitching, right, as well. So it's gonna take you more time to familiarize yourself with magazines, more time to verify if the articles are gonna be a good fit.

You're gonna have a cold reception for all of your pitches because you're pitching so many different magazines. You're not gonna build relationships with editors, and so on, and so forth. But we can also see here in the process a number of these cons. So, with magazine-first pitching, we'll see that one con is that you perhaps, it depends, but perhaps you aren't getting pitches out the door in the beginning because there's a lot of this sort of upfront setup time of choosing the magazines, right?

Whereas with idea-first, you could find one magazine that seems like a fit for this idea that you're trying to pitch and shoot that out. So you might have an idea going out faster with idea-first pitching than with magazine-first pitching, okay? But we also see that the con that we talked about quite a bit with idea-first pitching comes on the back end, which is that you don't have another article idea to send to that editor.

But the big cons with idea-first magazine are really the time, okay? It's the time that goes into finding all these different magazines, the time that goes into familiarizing yourself with them enough to know if this idea is a fit or not. And for me, what's the big sort of tragedy of this is that that time is not utilized to its fullest because not only are you spending more time but because you're not generating more pitch ideas for those magazines. It's wasted. It's one-off. It's like the single-use plastic of pitching, okay?

Pitching a magazine once is like the single-use plastic of pitching, okay? So for me, that's a real tragedy, okay? Because I know so many people are spending a lot of time familiarizing themselves with magazines but not writing that many pitches for those magazines. And so that's the kind of thing where, you know, if you're in the States, the IRS says, "Well, is this a hobby or a business, okay?" And that's something that we want to avoid quite heavily, okay?

So we looked at the pros, and we looked at the cons. You may be saying now, if I'm so not just gung ho, but, like, I find it to be so much better in terms of efficiency output, meeting your goals, process, all these things, the magazine-first approach, why did I do a webinar series on idea-first pitching in the first place? And the thing here is that I get questions about it all the time because most people are doing idea-first pitching, okay?



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This is really important for you to think about and to keep in mind because what it means is that if most people are spending a lot of their time on single-use plastic pitching and not building relationships with editors and pitching editors cold and not showing editors that they have a lot of ideas that can fit their publication, this is an opportunity for you. It's an opportunity for you to be more focused on sustainability and longevity in your pitching than your peers to supersede them by working faster and more efficiently on your pitching goals and meeting them and being able to move up to the next stage of goals.

And most importantly, it's really true, editors are typically not getting repeat pitches from people that they would like to get repeat pitches from, okay? Editors get repeat pitches from like, you know, people who are totally not on point, or like wackos, or just enthusiastic readers with no writing ability, or whatever. But it's very uncommon. I hear this from editors all the time. If they tell you to send them more pitches, they do really mean it.

And even if they don't tell you, if they don't create some sort of weird wonky lie/never ever, ever get back to you after 200 pitches, they aren't trying to get rid of you. They're just waiting for the right pitch to come from you, okay? So I really recommend magazine-first pitching, but there are some times where I can see I have done I might recommend to somebody to do idea-first pitching. So let me tell you what those are.

So one of the core times that idea-first pitching becomes sort of a forefront strategy for people is when they have a specific trip that they must place, and this is almost always because it was sponsored. So you can see now why I often advise people not to get sponsorships. This is part of why because it puts you in this idea-first position, which becomes a huge time suck and takes away from your other goals, okay?

So if you are on a trip which you must place a story for, okay, idea-first pitching looks like the best solution. But this is only when you don't have any editorial relationships to lean on. I had a whole coaching call with somebody about this the other day who has been going on some press trips recently who wants to go on more press trips, who wants to build some more relationships, but she's finding that she is understandably having a hard time placing stories from those trips because she doesn't have relationships with editors already.

And so what she realized is that she actually needs to put the brakes on taking trips for a little bit, even though there are, you know, relationship she wants to build with tourism boards and things like that, and focus on building relationships with the editors in order to have somebody ready and knowing her and trusting her who will buy the stories from those trips, okay? So when I say that this is a good time to use idea-first pitching, I only mean when you don't have the option to build relationships with the editors, okay?

If you have the luxury of time, I would definitely recommend if you are interested in press trips to, in fact, build the editorial relationships first before pursuing trips, rather than the other way around. This is something that I've seen is just a huge door opener. I had for a long time, several trade magazines that I wrote for regularly, and I know several other people that I work with that I coach who have done this as well who have built up some



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relationships with trade magazine editors, which is great because then you're not having to pitch for every story idea. You're getting them coming to you with a story ideas.

So, you've got your relationships with the editors, okay? And then you can go to the destinations you want to go to or the press trips you've been invited on and say, "Hey, you know, I have this relationship with this editor. I can talk to this editor about what would be the best way to incorporate this trip into a story. You know, would you be interested in having me on the trip?" Knowing that this is kind of my anchor for this trip, but I'm a freelancer, and I will place this story other places as well afterwards, okay?

Because then you have the ability to go on the trip, know that you're gonna place a story and have that pressure taken off. But still if you wanna pitch it later in an idea-first format, great. Or if you wanna funnel those article ideas into your pitch plan, we'll talk about pitch planning later in the series, if you wanna funnel those article ideas into your pitch plan for the magazines that you're targeting, building relationships with, okay?

Now, the second time in which it makes sense to do idea-first pitching is if you have a publication-oriented goal, okay? So this is when you really wanna place a certain type of article, you really wanna place a certain number of articles, you have a monetary goal that you're trying to hit. So, for instance, you know, let me look at these through each of these three lenses.

So you have a certain type of byline you want. Okay, so maybe you want to land your first feature. Maybe you want to land first national byline, maybe you want to get a front of book story in an airline magazine. So these are all things that I've heard from people recently, okay? So if that is a superseding goal for you, so your income needs are more or less met, let's say, in other places, and this is something that you're trying to do as an achievement goal for yourself to show that you can do it to create a framework for going forward, okay.

A lot of ifs there because you have to be really clear if you have this type of goal for the right reason, okay? So if those are your goals, then here's how you might use an idea-first approach. Because it's really important here where the... This is why I was saying if that's the right type of goal. I'll give you an example. So somebody said the other day that she wanted to get a national byline, and I said, "Why?" And she said, "Because I wanna get the ASJA professional level membership."

And I said, "Okay, why?" "Because that allows you to do these client connections meetings with certain content marketing agencies that I really wanna meet." And I said, "Well, why do you need to do the professional-level ASJA membership for that? Why can't you just set up your own meetings with those people? Why do we have to go do all the work to get a national byline to get this ASJA level to get these meetings when you're still gonna have to pitch them in those meetings, okay? There's still gonna be like only warm meetings at best," all right?



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And this is the kind of thing where if you want a national byline, for instance, because, you know, it will make you feel like your family can finally understand what you're doing, I get that, okay? Literally, this happened to me with my grandmother. She's like, "I want to subscribe to this magazine." I was like, "Okay, great. I'm glad you like my article on it." You know, but I totally get that, okay?

So if your goal is to get a byline in a national magazine, for instance, okay, now, let's look at this. Because if your goal is just to get a byline in a national magazine, you still might actually be better off using a magazine-first approach, right? Pick a bunch of national magazines that you have good odds with to make sure that you meet that, right?

So that's still a little bit wonky, okay? But if your goal is to place a specific story in a national-level magazine, then we get into different territory. That's where you know, we have a specific trip you've been on that you really feel like this needs national-level exposure, and you're gonna go pursue that strategy, the idea-first strategy, okay? So you can see why, again, it's very dependent on your specific circumstances. And this is why when we coach, we ask a lot of why questions around this kind of thing.

So let's look at the next one, a number of bylines. I just worked through this with somebody the other day. So she really wants to place, I believe it's like 20... It's kind of like 20 bylines or 2020, but I just thought of that. We didn't think about that at the time when we were working on this. So she really wants to get 20 bylines under her belt, let's say, okay, and I believe that the timeline that we ended up setting for this was something like August of next year, okay?

And we were talking about how to set that up. And she was saying, you know, "Should I have a goal of like a certain amount of bylines a month, or of building relationships, or what?" And what we ultimately said is if she really is set on having kind of like a number, she wants a number of clips, she kind of wants some diversity in her portfolio, things like this, then it's probably better to have it as a publication goal so that she can be flexible on how she gets it.

So what that means is, let's say that things are ticking along and maybe, you know, for various reasons, she's been pitching some bigger, harder-to-get-into magazines. So if she gets closer to her goal and finds that those just aren't working, then she might need to diversify kind of a bit in terms of the approachability of the magazine. So, she might say, like, "Okay, well, let me switch over to some online magazines, some more indie magazines, or some local regional magazines where I'm more likely to land this byline."

But, again, you'll see even in that setting, what's still happening is that she really is just switching the type of magazines that she's looking at, okay? Now, it just happens that as we were talking about this goal, she had five specific stories that she's really interested in and really looking at placing. And so, she was really kind of going back and forth about her strategy of, like, is what she wants really to get those five-story ideas out there into the world somewhere, is it that she wants to build a certain number of relationships with editors, or is it that she wants to have a certain number of publications under her belt?



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And what we realized was that they're kind of three separate things that she needed to look at three separate ways. So what we did was we actually took this placing those stories, and we said, "You know what, let's see if we can place these stories as part of this 20 bylines endeavor. And if not, we can revisit an idea-first goal of specifically placing those stories later. But if right now, you really want 20 bylines, we should focus on making sure that you're pitching stories that are likely to get picked up, AKA magazine-first pitching to publications that are gonna be likely to publish them."

So we kind of rejiggered her goal because she realized that while her publication goal was for a number of bylines that was kind of big in the time ahead of her, she could be flexible on the how. Now, sometimes, though, when people say that they want to publish a certain number of things, it's actually from a certain trip that they've been on, okay? That's what their goal actually is.

So I was working with someone on this approach the other day, where it was more like, "I went on this trip. There were tons of story ideas. You know, I have so many different things. I'm gonna sit down, and I'm only gonna pitch this one trip until I get seven placements from this one trip," okay? So that's when we're looking at a number of bylines, and it does need to be more of an idea-first kind of goal.

Okay, now the next one I had on here is an amount of money. So this is an interesting one because we can have an amount of money goal, which is gonna shake out more as a magazine-first approach because you wanna build the relationships to have the expectation of that money coming in regularly. But you can also have, "I went on this trip. This trip cost me this much. I wanna make sure that I make at least as much back from the articles on this trip," okay?

So that's where you're going in this type of thing where you have an amount-of-money goal that's related to idea-first pitching. Now, when magazine-first pitching works well, I mentioned kind of a number of the use throughout the webinar. But these are some of the situations in which it would make sense for you to consider it. So, if you're somebody who really wants to know that your work is going somewhere, okay? So if you're somebody who wants to know that you're following a method of pitching that will eventually bring you results, okay?

If you want to spend less time on your pitching and get better results, it sounds so silly. Like, who wouldn't wanna do that, right? But I tell you, quite honestly, there's a lot of people who want to spend a lot of time on the research and don't actually wanna write that many pitches. And then you get back into this thing, like I mentioned, like with the revenue servicing, well, is this a hobby or is this a business, right?

But if you really want to spend less time on your pitching but get more results, having an organized pitch plan that's magazine-first will be the way to get you there. If you wanna see your work appear in specific magazines, then magazine-first is a no brainer. But the funny



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thing is a lot of people tell me they want their works to appear in magazines, but they never pitch those magazines.

So, again, this requires kind of committing to yourself that that's your goal rather than whatever else has been your priority as you've been avoiding doing this. Now, if you want to build a career for yourself that focus on magazine writing, then magazine-first is really a must. Because if you're gonna be a full-time writer or even a part-time freelance writer, you need to make sure that you're spending as little time marketing as you can and as much time doing revenue-oriented writing as you can. So, it means that building relationship needs to be the core of that.

The last one here is interesting because this is kind of similar to the first one I have on here about you want a method that will guarantee you results from pitching, but it's a little different. So when I say that you wanna have a method that will guarantee you results, I say that for people who have this concern that they're spending a lot of time on something and they don't know where it will go.

A lot of people from blogging have this mindset or just people might have it generally from life. There's a lot of things in digital marketing or trying to get into travel writing that you may have done in the past that may cause you to feel like you're spending a lot of time on something with no idea where it's gonna go, okay? But when I mean when I say that you would rather have a method for your pitching rather than throwing spaghetti, I mean this more for the people who really feel like they need to be organized about how they do their work and how they choose what to do in a given moment.

This is a big theme that I've been hearing from people about struggling to know what to work on in any given moment. And as you'll see, particularly in the last webinar in this series when we talk about putting together a pitch plan, it's 100% possible to have a lovely little list for yourself of every little next action and your pitch plan that's gonna take you where you need to go.

I know for some people, it might sound like, "Oh, I can see how that might work." But for other people, it might be like, "What? I thought I was pitching. I just have to sit there and make a grimace until I know what pitch to write. And then I still don't know if that's gonna lay on, and so on, and so forth." So there is a way where you can always know what is the next pitch that you need to write and be sure that it's gonna bring you to your goal, and that's what we're gonna talk about in the last webinar in this series.

So coming up in the next series, we're gonna begin, in the next webinar, by talking about how to decide which magazines to pitch, right? I looked at several different criteria for that in terms of what we're gonna look at when we talk about how. How do we make sure that you create a list that passes that criteria, and most importantly, how to do it without a lot of agitation, how to do it relatively quickly and confidently. And then we're gonna talk about how to create a personal kind of file or dossier on every magazine that you would like to target with everything that you need to know about them at the tip of your fingers.



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You don't need to re-research every time, I hear a lot of people doing this, but also with all of your ideas that you have set up for them and the sort of low hanging fruit and all that. And then we're gonna create this magical pitch planner that I mentioned that lets you know at any given day at any given time what you need to be working on to make sure that your pitches move you towards your goals.

It was lovely chatting with you guys today, and I will see you again soon on another webinar.