



# Dream of Travel Writing

## How to Create a Personal “File” on Every Magazine You’d Like to Target

Today, we're continuing our series on "Magazine-First," as opposed to "Idea-First" webinar. Oh, sorry, not webinar Idea First versus Magazine First pitching. So we started out this new series, sort of as a counterpoint to the series that we did before, which was the Live Pitch Workshop where over the course of the six pitches, I took an itinerary from a trip I had gone on in mounted magazine database and found which magazines would maybe be a fit, found some ideas, wrote up the pitches. Now I did that in six hours, but I think we came up with six whole pitches or something like that at the end. And it was very much, you know, a horse pace. Half of the time, I was explaining what we're gonna do and then doing the exercise on the screen. So it wasn't even six hours. We didn't look at all the magazines that I probably would've looked at, but it was engineered in order to show you that you can get these things out, you can go through a whole trip, you can go through the database, you can narrow down the ideas that are gonna work and get them out.

A lot of the time when people are over here and pitching, one of the things that make the process take a long time, and that pitching takes a long time is one of the biggest complaints that I hear from people, is there's lack of triaging. So in that "Idea-First Series," one of the things we were really looking at doing, I did everything on the screen in real-time. I didn't do anything in between the webinars. So you saw me doing all of the work of looking, deciding, all that's stuff. So we did that in order to show that you really can get some things out in that time. Now, obviously, not everyone's gonna put, you know, a timer to themselves to do that all the time, but somebody very rightly asked after that series, how does this work if I wanna do magazine-first pitching, as opposed to idea-first pitching.

And it was such a great question because that's actually how I usually work with people in our coaching program. But people who I don't work with on a long-term basis are usually more of the type where they're looking to take some ideas that they already have, get those out into the world, and it's definitely more time-consuming. And so I felt horrified that the way that I usually work with people, the way that produces better results, that takes less time was not covered in that series. So that was the birth of this whole series. But as we have moved through this series, I wanna take a couple of minutes today to recap the things that we've touched on early on. That we're now at the point where we are doing something similar in this webinar to something that we did in the "Idea-First Series."

So in that series, what we did was we took first all of the itinerary, all the different stops on this trip that I had been on in the Czech Republic or Czechia. And I pulled those out into potential article ideas. Then we went to the magazine database and we looked at different magazines that might potentially be a fit for that geographic area or that type of stories and we started to pull out sections that might work. We're gonna do something very similar today as we create a personal file for every magazine that you'd like to target.

So, like I said, I have a couple of slides just touching on what we talked about early on in this series. We'll clarify a little bit more about the magazines that you might be interested in targeting and how to make that list. But we covered that really extensively in the last webinar in this series, webinar two of this "Magazine First" series. In the first webinar, we covered



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the difference between idea-first, magazine-first pitching and I'll just recap that a little bit as well. So first we'll do a little bit of recap, and then I'm gonna talk about why personal files on each magazine are really the linchpin of pitching success. And I say this not... How should I put this? I've seen people create personal files on magazines and not be successful in their pitching. And I can tell you why, and that's because they didn't sit down and put the time into doing it really complete in the first place, or they chose the wrong magazines.

This is really common and really important. And I was thinking a lot about this yesterday and the day before, when I was seeing about the content for this webinar about some people that I've seen do this and not succeed. And it often comes down to something that we touched on in the last webinar in this series, which is not really sticking to that safety-match-reach, college application method of making sure that the magazines you're working on pitching are within your capabilities. I just had a chat with someone recently who has a very limited amount of time. In fact, she frequently will skip her coaching calls because she just has too much on her plate in a given month. And she has some trips that she's going on, I believe late next summer. So August or something like that. And she wanted to start working up a pitching plan to land assignments for that time period, for some trips that she already has planned, that are already paid for through a different method of travel.

So when we sit down and start talking, she listed all of the usual suspects, right? "Natural Traveler," "Travel & Leisure," da, da. And I had to talk to her for quite a while about the actual probabilities, none even for her period, but just for anybody, even people who have a relationship with these magazines for God sakes to get a specific story into those outlets, and how those low probabilities require a certain number of pitches for you to definitely get an article assignment. And when we ran those numbers and we looked at it, it was, you know, on the manner of, she would need thousands, maybe tens of thousands of pitches to get the number of assignments that she wanted from the type of outlets that she was talking about. And it's simply not reasonable to do that between now and August. And it was really interesting because when she first was talking about this timeline that she has about August, she said, "Oh, well, I have a bunch of time."

And I was like, "No." Like, "This is something that we should have gotten started on earlier." Like, "We don't have a lot of time for this plan to build the relationships that you need to get the guaranteed assignments that you need by August. Like, that's very soon, actually." So as we look at this idea of creating a personal file on each of these magazines, again, one of the reasons that it doesn't work is either, if you don't walk through it in a certain amount of depth, we'll cover that today, but it can often trackback to this idea that you didn't pick the right magazines for where you're at. Sometimes where you're at, like I said, is in terms of level. So sometimes it's magazines that... It's not just that they're big as in big circulation, big names and things like that, but you don't have a relationship with them yet.

So, you're starting this very uphill, very long slog. And sometimes, it's about the magazines aren't the right fit in terms of what you wanna write about today. And it'll be really interesting because as I was preparing this webinar and what we're gonna do for the exercise that I'll do



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on screen, I was thinking about the list of potential magazines that I came up with in the last webinar that we did, that was, like, my hypothetical list of magazines if I was doing this exercise. And I think it'll be really interesting to see as we go through, and I try to come up with ideas for some of these different magazines for you. Some of them might be things that I wrote about more a while ago, but I'm just less interested in writing about now. And so when you are working on that second step of creating the magazine list for yourself, it's also important to think about what you're excited about coming up with ideas for.

So, when people in our coaching program go through this exercise with me, what often happens, they create a list of magazines and then they start to go through this step that we're gonna do today, and they realize a number of them won't work for one reason or another. So this step that we're doing now can also kind of requalify for you that you wanna go back to your original thoughts about different magazines categories, or different magazine names, and maybe pick some that you missed, or maybe find some new ones. So this step can also be kind of a recalibration before we do what we'll do in the next webinar, is to develop a timeline, a plan around what you're gonna pitch to who and when. Okay.

So I'll talk a little bit about what goes into the file. It's pretty simple, but like I said, the act of what we're doing in today's webinar is not the difficult part. It's that choice of having the right magazines and being honest with yourself, as you go through today, to both give yourself the space to create ideas as you're going, as well as to recognize when you don't have ideas for a certain magazine and it's not something that's just happening today, that magazine and its sections that are available just don't speak to you. So we'll do one of those lives so we can see how that goes.

So I just wanna say, because we're gonna use our Travel Magazine Database today, there might be magazines you're interested in pitching that aren't in there, and obviously, that's totally fine, but I just wanna make sure that you know that anytime you wanna do an exercise like this or anything else and not use our Travel Magazine Database in the first place, or use a magazine that's not in our Travel Magazine Database.

If you don't do that same level of due diligence that we're doing, where we go through, and we say, what's the tone of this section? Does it actually appear in every issue? Was this just a one-off time that it was written by a freelancer, but it's usually written by a member of the editorial staff or a celebrity contributor or something like that? Is this a section that doesn't appear in every issue in the first place? Was it something that was just a special for the holiday? Something like that.

If you don't go through and ask those questions, especially when you're doing something like this, creating a file for magazines that you wanna pitch, you can really set yourself up to get excited about a lot of ideas that just aren't viable with magazines. And then you get that response that's like... I don't wanna say it's super common, but in terms of positive nos that you might get from an editor, it's a relatively common, but strange response where you pitch an editor something, and they say, "That's a great story. I can't wait to read it."



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And you're like, "Does that mean you're commissioning it? No, you think you're gonna read it somewhere else? Why don't you commission it then?" That kind of thing happens because you've pitched an idea that is interesting but does not fit for what that editor is allowed to commission. Okay? So you'll see, as we go through the exercise that we're gonna do today, how we've set up the Travel Magazine Database to help you with that. But I just wanted to put that out there because we're gonna be using it extensively today.

So for pitching idea-first versus magazine-first, I threw these terms around earlier without qualifying them, because we've already covered these quite a bit in the first webinar in our series. But if you are just popping in for this one, obviously, I recommend doing what we're talking about step by step by step. But if you maybe haven't seen the other ones in a little while, I just wanna qualify.

So really the crux of this is that the difference between pitching magazine first and idea first comes out, not necessarily in how you write the pitch per se, but in that initial part, in terms of what ideas you're even gonna work on pitching in the first place. So, you know you're pitching idea-first when you have gone on a trip, you have come back from the trip, and you are thinking about what you did on the trip, and then trying to find magazines that fit that, okay? If you go on a trip or you just sit down and assign for pitching, and you look at magazines that you know that you wanna get articles in, and then try to come up with ideas that fit with those magazines they are publishing, that's magazine-first.

Now, I don't wanna spend too much time recapping stuff that we've talked about in other webinars, but the benefits of pitching magazine-first are manifold. So the thing about pitching magazine-first is because you have narrowed yourself through what we're doing in the webinars in this series into a really powerful potent, and honed list of magazines that are really a great fit for you in terms of your abilities, your publication background, the ideas that you're interested in, all sorts of things like that. You save yourself so much time researching magazines.

And I don't just mean looking for places to put your article ideas, but also on familiarizing yourself. If you are pitching the same 10 magazines every single month, and you need to write at least one pitch for them every month, or maybe an article for them, hopefully, right, then they're gonna be more familiar to you. It's gonna take you less time every time you're trying, not only to write that pitch, but to know if an idea is a fit for a magazine, okay. And that's really powerful.

But even more importantly, we wanna place the articles, right? So when you're pitching the same magazines with incredible regularity, and we're gonna talk a lot about this in next week's webinar, then the editors get used to seeing your name in their inbox. And I know I mention this every time, but multiple major newsstand magazines that I hear regularly from folks they would like to appear from, I have heard from the editors, and not just personally, but like in public settings that they have had writers that pitched them regularly, that they assigned a piece to those writers that was not something that the writer pitched, but that was



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something generated in-house in an editorial meeting because they saw the pitches, they liked the pitches, the ideas just didn't work for XYZ reasons, but they were confident in the writer's ability. Okay. So this idea of just appearing like clockwork every month, every two weeks, whatever it is in an editor's inbox is very, very powerful for your chances of success, not just for your efficiency in your work. Okay.

Now, I talked a little bit about the importance of narrowing down the magazines that you're going to make these personalized files for, very carefully. And I just wanna take two seconds to say this again, because even if you did this webinar, you know, when we first did it a few weeks back, or if you did it a week ago, or two weeks ago, anything like that, as we head into trying to create these personalized files for each magazine, I wanna just plant these seeds of why some magazines might not work, because if you feel like you're really struggling with something as we do this exercise, these might be some of the reasons why, okay?

So, when you're narrowing down your magazine list, again, you have to be honest with yourself. And this is really hard for a lot of people. And I say that with full involvement of myself, I was just in a business mastermind session last Monday, where I looked at this... I'm trying to describe it without giving too much information about how it works because it's not really relevant, but it's a list of all the tasks that you do for your business. And you're supposed to talk about whether you're proficient at them, or passionate about them, or both. And I have done this exercise several times over the last couple of years, and I realize that a lot of things that I was putting in there, that I was passionate and proficient about, I put more because they're the cornerstones of what we do, or how I identify myself, or something like that.

But they might not be exactly the thing that I'm most passionate about or even super passionate about right now, or something like that. So when I say to be honest with yourself about the type of articles you wanna write, I say this with all love, but also with the knowledge that if you're not really excited about something, your pitch won't shine the same way, it'll take longer for you to come up with it, all of these things. Okay. So it's really in service, not just of you writing the articles you're most excited about, but also in service of you getting assignments and getting your pitches even written and out the door that I say this. So also in that vein consider things like word counts. Some people are really aspiring to write longer articles, some people abhor them and get really scared when they're assigned them. Okay.

And the type of article you might think that it would be really interesting to do interviews, but the idea of pitching 20 interview-based or profile pieces in one month really scares the bejesus out of you. So be honest about that, about what you're good at, about what you are interested in but not comfortable taking on too much of, about what topics you have ideas for all the time. And if you feel like you don't have ideas all the time yet, we have a lot of other webinars on that.





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I have one that is specifically about how to make sure you have ideas all the time. And I definitely recommend checking that out if you have not already. But we're also gonna cover in this webinar, how this magazine first approach can really help you with that, okay? So also thinking about what... you have that love at first sight feeling, okay, as we go through this particular exercise that we're doing today, you'll start to get a feel for that. And that's where I was saying that you might look at the list that you created in the last webinar and feel the need to make some revisions as we do today's exercise.

So, trying to get to the next slide, but it's paused. Oh, there we go. All right. So particularly, don't neglect for yourself, and this is something that's not gonna be seen so much in this exercise that we're doing today. But if there's a magazine you feel on the fence about it's worth revisiting, don't neglect how frequently it comes out. If you don't have a lot of time and frequent is fine. If you want to have a relationship with a magazine you can write for every month, frequency is really important. Circulation, that's gonna help you know if this magazine might be a little too big for your britches, okay. Pay and pigeonholing. I mentioned this before, but it's worth saying again, especially as we go through this because it can happen in type of article, as well as type of article idea in terms of content and things like that.

If you're doing so much of one thing, not only can you get tired of it, but you can feel like, or find that it is hard. Again, could be a mental barrier or external, but to pitch stories or to get a sign for stories about other things. So you'll see that the list that I created for the exercise that we're gonna do today is very diverse. Now, I would almost say that it's too diverse for most people. Okay. Now, I said here, that you should consider the dangers of pigeonholing, but I also wanna make sure to say this because the list I have covers a lot of different topic areas that if you aren't somebody who's regularly consuming a lot of destinations and/or other inspirations for article ideas, having a list that's too diverse might be really tiresome because it's hard to come up with article ideas for so many different avenues. Okay.

So, we'll see when we do the exercise later, if even though I thought this looked good beforehand, I find that it just doesn't really make sense when we sit down to it. So I mention this and I just wanna say it again, that this is one of the very first exercises I do with nearly everyone in our coaching program. I say nearly because I don't always have people who are really gung ho about writing for consumer magazines. Some people are more interested in content marketing, whether that's creating their own custom gigs or not, or trade magazines or working on their own blog or they're working on books or something like that. So that's why I say nearly. But anybody who's interested in pitching consumer magazines, we do some form of this. The thing that varies is how many magazines are involved because if you're somebody who's doing consumer magazine pitching to places you don't already have a relationship with as a very small portion of your portfolio, it's a huge time sync to go through and make these personalized lists. Okay.

So if you are doing a number of other things, I recommend keeping your list of magazines that you're pitching every month to probably not even 10 to more like five to eight would be



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a good place to start and really hone in on ones you think that you can build relationships with. And I looked in the last webinar about how to change the number of safety-match-reach magazines that you're looking at for different size lists. Okay.

But the reason that this is one of the first exercises that I do with nearly everyone on our coaching program is that you need to... if you really wanna pitch consumer magazines, you need to first and foremost, this is also the first thing that I teach in every single live workshop that we do about magazine pitching, I think also in our idea-first program and probably also in our Pitchapalooza program is the first thing, is to put yourself in the shoes of the editors that you are pitching. So that means that you need to get very familiar with their magazines in a way that they live and breathe every day these different sections, the topics that might be good for them, all these things.

You need to be not as familiar as they are, obviously, because that's their job, not your job, but you need to be as familiar as you can be with how what they do intersects what you look to do for them. Okay. And that means often putting a cap or horse blinders on to ideas that don't fit what you need for your pitching quota or plan, again, we'll look at this next month or next webinar, for each magazine. Okay?

I know this can be really hard, especially if you're just fine-tuning your idea generation thing. And you feel like you have ideas all the time or at the flip side, if you don't have a ton of ideas and you have a few that you're really attached to, especially if those few are more like a destination or a trip, and they're not so much something that feels like it can fit in a lot of different magazines, whichever end of that spectrum that you're at, it doesn't matter. You still need to train yourself to only, if not generate, you can generate more ideas and keep them in a file, I have thousands and thousands of them lying around. But to only get attached or begin to develop or be obsessed by or think about article ideas that you can pitch to magazines. Okay? And this heads off one of the biggest issues that a lot of people have with their pitching, which is that they get attached to ideas that just aren't sailable. And then they end up writing this 10,000-word piece and putting it on their blog because there's nowhere else to put it. Okay.

So neglecting this step, this stepping this whole idea of creating this pitch file, okay, either in completeness or in order. Now, I say that we'll talk more about completeness in a minute, but I say this in order because people often do basically what we're gonna look at in this webinar for magazines. They go through them in a lot of detail, they generate or write article ideas for them, whatever, without doing the previous step, which is honing the list of magazines that they're gonna pitch. And that leads to problems for a lot of reasons. And again, we talked about that more in the last webinar. But neglecting this step will cause you to spend more time pitching and get less results. The reason for that is, if you don't do this personalized file creation completely enough in the beginning and you can absolutely revisit it periodically if you feel like you need to refill it, but it should kind of keep itself going.



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But if you don't work on this completely enough in the beginning, then you'll find when you sit down to write pitches that you don't have enough information, they need you to go back and refamiliarize yourself in the magazine, or that you don't have enough ideas. Now, when we go through this exercise in a minute, you're gonna see that we're gonna write down a lot of different ideas for the magazines. But if you don't write enough ideas, even if they don't work, because we're only brainstorming right now, okay? We're not gonna be checking article ideas to see if they fit and writing up the pitches. We're only brainstorming right now. Okay. So if you don't write down enough ideas at this stage, what happens is you don't have enough fodder to remind yourself how to begin that process again the next time. Okay.

So it's kind of like... This is a strange example but because it's holiday and people make candy, this just made me think of it. With chocolate, if you're gonna use chocolate to make chocolate-coated things, you have to temper it. Tempering is this weird thing where you have to heat the chocolate and then heat it again to actually stabilize the molecules. I didn't realize this was what tempering did until I read a book on chocolate making recently. But when you temper chocolate, you stabilize the molecules so that they fall into a particular arrangement that gives it that nice sheen on the chocolate and this nice crack. So if you've ever had chocolate that melted in your car and then looked kind of weird and filmy and waxy, and had a weird texture to it, then chocolate has fallen out of temper. Okay? It got heated up in your car, but then not heated to the right temperature and it just looks crummy. Okay.

So when you temper chocolate, when you make it have that right temperature, you actually add some other chocolate that's already been tempered, and it picks up the molecular structure for that chocolate that you've added and copies it in the chocolate that you're tempering right now. I know this sounds kind of weird, but it's a principle that you see in a lot of different places. Okay? If you watch a kid's ballet class, right? If they didn't have a teacher or two or four in front doing all the steps and then some other kids who are better than the rest of the kids in the front row, doing all the steps, the rest of the kids wouldn't remember the steps. They wouldn't do them properly. Right? They need someone to copy.

So what you're doing by creating these personalized files is you are giving your future self the wiseness of your presence self-doing this exercise to copy again in the future. And that saves so much time. So we talked in the last webinar about starting your magazine list. And we talked about starting with a lot. We talked about looking for both different geographical areas, as well as topical interests. We talked about starting with no less than 30 and then narrowing that down further. Okay. As we do this step now, I hope that you have already narrowed your list.

If you have not done this step of creating that initial list or narrowing it down, I really encourage you as we go through this exercise that we're gonna do today to not get to attach any magazines and kind of watch me do the exercise, but then go back to the previous step. Okay. So we're gonna look at the actual magazine sections, which is something that's really important when making your list as a starting point, but we're gonna do it in much more detail today as we create the actual magazine file. And we're also gonna start to come up with





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article ideas, which you should not do. I'm waving my finger, no, no, no, when you are doing the step of narrowing the magazine ideas or narrowing your magazine list.

And I say that because if you are in that big picture phase of creating the perfect magazine list for yourself, where you're excited to come up with ideas for these magazines every month, you're excited to write to these editors, you feel so excited about each of these magazines that even if you're not hearing back from the editors, you're really excited to work on the pitches anyway because you know this is a magazine that you wanna be writing for. If you start before you have your properly, like, narrowed down list to start to come up with article ideas like we're gonna do today, then you risk getting attached to magazines that really aren't right for you. Okay. So we're gonna look at magazine sections in this webinar today in a lot more detail than we did in the second webinar in this series. But please don't start to do the exercise along with me if you haven't done that yet. Okay?

So, where do most people go wrong in their pitching? This is something that we're gonna address today, like I said, as we were talking about the different benefits of creating these magazine files, but I wanna show how a lot of the issues that people have with pitching can be negated by what we're doing here.

So, they often don't have an organized approach to showing up in editors' inboxes, I talked about the benefits of that earlier. And what we're doing with this personal magazine file that we're gonna create is we're gonna create a wealth of ideas for you to draw on at any time. So it makes it so much easier when you know that you owe an editor another pitch to actually get it out the door. Likewise, if an editor writes back and says that doesn't work for me, what else do you have? I know it's often very difficult for people when that email comes, they feel like they should do it that day. They're not sure what the right idea is. There's something else they're trying to get done that day. The end of the day comes and they're, "Oh my God, I did not respond to this email."

Then the next day comes and they're like, "Well I didn't write back to it yesterday. They've probably already forgotten about me, so it doesn't matter if I wait one more day." And one more day becomes a week. And then you feel like, "Oh my God, I didn't write back to them, they've like forgotten. Maybe I shouldn't write back, I don't even know what to do now." Okay. So having a file of ideas at the ready for every single magazine not only helps you to know which idea you should look at next but there's this is other really cool bonus, which is that when we come up with the magazine ideas that we're gonna look at in a minute for different articles, we are gonna do them by the magazine section. You'll see what I mean by that in a minute.

Now, if an editor writes back and says, "Oh," like, "Thanks so much. I have this section already assigned through next December, so I'm not looking for any pictures on it right now." You can immediately go over to your file and put that whole section in italics so that you don't consider it next time and say, "They don't need pitches on this until, you know, I don't know, October or something because they're assigned out through next December." Okay. Or



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if they say, "Thanks so much, I feel like Rwanda's really overplayed right now. I don't know if we can really do a story on this. You can go through in every other article idea that you had about Rwanda for that magazine." Again, put in italics and somehow note that you should not use that pitch.

So not only does having this file help you to figure out what to pitch because you have a bunch of ideas there, but if the editor gives you some note, something that helps you hone what to pitch to them, something that tells you a piece of information you didn't previously have about what this editor is looking for, you can add it to your file. So your file becomes a growing repository of information that helps you pitch that magazine every time you sit down to work on it.

So people often lack confidence that their ideas are a fit. And just like I was talking about this whole idea of tempering before, it can be really difficult when you have one or just a handful of ideas for a magazine to remember why you thought that idea was a fit if you come up with it and then sit down to write it later. I find this happens a lot. I've had people write out entire pitches and then we're just working on rewriting the pitch. And then two weeks later, they tell me that they didn't end up setting the final version, which was all ready to go because they decided that the idea wasn't a fit for the magazine in the first place. Okay?

So having these files helps remind us every time we go to that file and every time we work on the magazine, what the magazine is about and why we thought this magazine idea was a fit, and so on and so forth. Now, obviously, these things about too much time, pitching takes up too much time. Familiarizing yourself with magazines takes up too much time, researching ideas takes too much time. These all go back to what we were talking about, this efficiency of having this work done and in one place where you can find it and having it done for the magazines that you know that you are gonna pitch every month. But this is one that I have been talking to people a lot about this year, this idea that people don't know where to start when they sit down to work on "pitching." Okay.

And I put pitching in quotation marks here because "pitching" is not an act, it's a process. Okay? Pitching is not like doing the laundry. Well, doing the laundry is also kind of a process, but pitching is not like loading the dishwasher, let's say. Okay. Loading the dishwasher is looking at what's in the sink. Maybe you give it another rinse. You find a place for the dishwasher, right? Like, that's like three steps, but it's something that you're gonna do all in one go.

Pitching is not usually done all in one go. You have ideas, you match them to outlets. Or in this case, we have an outlet, and then we come up with ideas for that outlet. We refine them through some sort of preliminary research to make sure that they're a good fit. Usually by researching the magazine rather than the idea, then we research the idea further to make sure we have enough information to write the pitch. And sometimes at that point, we find out that it's not a good fit anymore because if some information that comes up. And then we develop



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it out into a full pitch by finding certain key pieces of journalistic detail to make the pitch work.

So, because pitching is not something, like I said here, that you just sit down and "do" like, I'm just gonna pitch now. Having this framework and also the pitching schedule and plan that we're gonna work on the next webinar, having this framework gives you somewhere to start. Okay. Because what you'll see when we do the next webinar next week is that we'll also track where all of the different pitches are in development, so that you can always look and see what pitch you can pick up and work on, when you're gonna owe a certain editor a pitch, so you need to start working on something for her, something like that. But the idea is that as we create these personal files, you don't lose track of where you're at with a given magazine, okay? You'll never have to feel like you are starting from scratch.

So what exactly is this personal file? I've alluded to a couple of different things that are gonna go in there. The first and foremost is the specific sections that you wanna pitch. If you have access to Travel Magazine Database, like you'll see I do in things example today, then you can just cut and paste the whole paragraph of that section. And I really recommend that you do that because we obviously don't write more than we need to in the database. We write just the things that you need to know to write a pitch. We write the tone, we write the word count, we write the layout of the article, we write examples of what they've pitched in the past.

So having all of that handy, as you have forgotten about the magazine and you're now coming back to write up this pitch will give you a quick brief on what you need to know about this magazine section. And you can, of course, obviously, go to the magazine and find out more. But we include this in there as a way to get a quick overview and a grounding when we come back to our list. Now, we're going to come up with article ideas for each section. You'll see how I go about doing that. But before we do that, I don't always do this, me personally, but I do recommend this for other people. You might wanna make other notes about the magazine style and demographics. So you might wanna hold some information from the demographics tab in the database, or the editorial positioning statement that we have in the database.

You might just make a couple notes like this is a very sort of young, zippy tone or something like that. It's totally up to you. But again, it's that idea of what can you capture now once, when you're familiarizing yourself with this information, that will help you not feel like your idea is not a good fit, that you aren't sure if this magazine is really something that you're excited about, that maybe this trip that you went on has mostly things that don't fit, but there's this one activity that was perfect for it. But if you don't remind yourself, what's the angle on this magazine, it'll kind of be lost. Okay.

So we wanna have that sort of intangible feeling of what the magazine is about on top of the magazine sections if you like. I tend to just know a lot of them because it's my job unlike a lot of other people. So, I don't always write those things down, but I really, really recommend



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them. And I can definitely give some examples of that. Today, although, I know most of the magazines in here, so it's not something that I would naturally do.

The last part of this process that is very important, like I talked about is to dump a good amount of ideas for each section. And I'll show you how I do that. Because again, it's important to not just write one idea for each section. I see this happen a lot. Sorry, lemme just go back for a second. I see people write just one or zero ideas for each magazine section in the magazines on their pitch list a lot. And then they send me their pitch list and their personal files. And we sit down to figure out what pitches they're gonna write. This is something we'll do in the next webinar in this series. And they're at a loss. They can't tell me what ideas they have.

And so then we have to basically do everything that we're gonna do in this next exercise over again. And then sometimes find that they don't have ideas because those magazines aren't really a fit. And then they have to go back and do it all over again, and our whole coaching call has been wasted. So that's on the one hand, right? If you sit down to figure out what ideas to pitch and you don't have enough pitch ideas in your personal file, where do you start, right? You've neglected that awesome benefit of the pitch file which is that you never have to worry about where to start. Because if it's not complete, you don't have that information. But the flip side, okay, I talked about this a little bit earlier, is this idea that if you really aren't coming up with ideas for that section easily, then it might not be the best magazine for you. Okay.

I talked about that a little bit in this kind of example of what can sometimes happen in our coaching calls. But it's important to realize also, as you're going through, that there might be certain sections of the magazine that you have more ideas for and not others. And that's totally fine. And also that this is really scratch file. Okay. This is for you. This is not a document that we're ever gonna send to the editors, very far from it. And this is just a brain dump.

So you also should not be second-guessing your ideas at this stage. So it's one thing, if you really don't have ideas for a section, like I said, that's a problem, but it's really important as well to ask yourself, do I have an idea? And I'm starting to go down the rabbit hole of wondering if this is a fit. If I just give myself a moment to stop and, like, put the things on paper, will they come? Something like that. Okay. So we'll go through that. And again, I'm doing this exercise for you live like I do in the other series. So there might be some times where that comes up today. We shall see, it'll be interesting.

So this again is the list of magazines that I put together in the exercise for the second webinar that we did. So I've pulled up all of these except for the first one, because we don't have it in the Travel Magazine Database. And I will open a document. And what I'm gonna do is I'm going to open the Travel Magazine Database files for all the magazines. And we're gonna look at those together, and then I'm gonna have a document that I'm dumping these different things and these ideas into, to show you what it looks like when I do the personal files. And



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then after I've created them by showing you the database as I pull them over, then we'll go back and we'll look at the document I've created and what it looks like.

So, let's jump in and have a look at that. All right. Lemme switch screens here. So like I said, the very first one on the list, "Ambassador," and actually I'm just gonna copy that list over as well. The very first one on the list, "Ambassador," is something that we don't have in the database. I had it in here because I have written for them previously. So I'm gonna keep that out of what we're doing for now just because it's something that we don't have in the database which will require looking at it. I do know it, but it's not as easy to show you on the screen. Kind of how I would look through it as for the things in the database. So we're gonna start with those.

So let's look first at "Italia!" Now, you'll see here that we are working on a rewrite of this magazine, which means it's changed some of its sections. But since I'm just doing this for you as an exercise, I'm gonna skip that. It doesn't really matter. This is just an exercise, but I will tell you that if you are doing this yourself, and you're doing this with the database, and you run into something like this, then get yourself a fresh copy and just double-check for yourself before you work off of this information. Okay? So I've written for a lot of different magazines about Italy before, and this one is based in the UK. So I'm gonna put that in my notes because I wanna make sure to know the type of English that I need to use first and foremost.

And this is definitely a note that I recommend putting in your notes because I find that for some markets, the editors can get quite twitchy, if you type to them in American English, rather than their local English, in terms of immediately not trusting you. For some markets, it doesn't matter, but it's so easy to do these days, you just reset Microsoft Word or your whole computer if you want, whatever is easier to the type of English that you need to write in, and it'll autocorrect everything for you. I had to write for a UK-based magazine for a long, long time, and I had to really delve into the sort of differences in syntax. And we've had British people write for us, and I always see the little things that come out, but it's not something that you need to make a big fuss about. Just change your Microsoft Word settings, or your computer settings, and that'll take care of it for you.

So, anything else that I wanna think about on here, this is kind of just all general. Now, we have a lot of demographic information on here, so I'm just gonna take a little whiz through this. So, obviously, they're all interested in Italy. I'm just gonna take a note here about the income because this will help me if I'm looking at article ideas to know if they're sort of too low brow or too high brow for this audience. So, there's also a big interest in language which, because I have a degree in Italian literature is an area of expertise for me. And it's interesting to me that a lot of people are looking at my property.

So, I find it kind of weird that... Okay, 95% cook Italian every week. I was gonna say that doesn't seem like a lot that purchase, but that's online, 95% cook Italian food every week.





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That's a lot. Okay. So, what else? 50% of people spend their time on food and wine activities. And then this is interesting that they might focus on married, empty-nest couples. Okay?

So I hope that you can see already just how pulling out these particular things. I'll just show you what my notes look like for a second, how pulling out these things could make a huge difference for me in terms of article ideas, right? So it could be that these things... I'll just make it a little bigger, that these things are... like I said, they're obviously in the database, I might get the sense of them from a couple of magazines, but by having them here in my pitch file, every time I look at it, every time I'm coming up with an idea, I can compare it against this really quickly at one go. So let's go back and pull some magazine sections. Here we go. All right.

So, these sections that are open... Again, in this case, were open because we're changing this, but sections that were open for freelance writers, we've got, it looks like four, but they use 10 to 12 freelancers per issue. And I'm actually just gonna dump this frequency information in my file as well because I personally find it helpful to know how many ideas I need for each magazine. And this will also help me when I come up with the plan that we'll do in the next exercise. So it's monthly and they have 10 to 12 freelancers per issue.

And all right, so they've got holidays, 48 hours in culture, and features that are open for freelancers. So holidays, now, they don't mean that in the happy holidays way, it looks like they mean that in a travel way, three to four articles that are 800 to 1000 words often cover what life is like in lesser-known pockets of Italy, and are commonly written as first-person travel guides through a city. It's so funny because somebody that I coach has an article idea that would be great for this, and she is trying to sell at 2,000 different places. And now, of course, I'm wondering if she has considered this outlet. So if you are really close to a magazine, as you start reading this, you should immediately start to come up with certain ideas. So what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna pull this whole thing over into our file, which unfortunately has some weird...

So lemme see if I can fix it, but I'm gonna pull this whole thing over into our file. And then what I'm gonna do is we're gonna dump all of these into the file. And then I'm gonna show you how I would go through and come up with ideas for them. So, first I'll just dump everything in and then we'll come back, I'll show you the other thing and we'll do ideas. So 48 hours in is a guide to a select the Italian city. So it seems like, with this 48 hours in, I'd have to be very careful to find sections they have not already covered. So that would probably require me, later, not now, right? Because right now we're just brainstorming to review what they've covered in maybe even the last, like, three years and just put that together on a list. On the flip side, I could also just write down a bunch of cities and just search them on their website, and see which ones they haven't covered, okay?

So I'm just gonna write that out for now. Culture, they have two to four articles about this, every issue and the writer is typically an expatriate live in Italy, and they are describing a visit. So sometimes they're a first or a third person, okay, to a destination with their spouse,



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family, friends. Okay. Got it. I have some like that, great. Features, features, features, features tend to focus on a certain city or region. They are more holistic in terms of covering the destination but sometimes there are other things like a quest to meet the wine and cheesemakers of Valtellina. Okay. So we've got our four because there are some additional things online, but I'm not gonna worry about that right now. So let's pop over and start to come up with article ideas for these sections. Let me change the tab and blow up the text for you again.

So for this one here about culture, I just went here first, this culture section. Oh, sorry, this 48-hour section. Okay. So, it says that recently they've covered Cinque Terre, Florence, San Gimignano, and Milan. So interestingly, these are all really quite close together and San Gimignano is smaller but very famous, Cinque Terre is famous, not huge but very famous, Florence and Milan are very large and famous. So I need to think of places, it seems like for this section that aren't super small and maybe that's because it really needs to be something that you can spend a whole 48 hours there. So there are some places on Italy's Eastern Coast that are really interesting, but they're not big enough for this.

The Eastern Coast kind of has, apart from Venice, a dearth of places that are large. Now, there is this place, Vicenza that I don't know so well, but I have a friend who's an architect who was just there and she spent quite a bit of time there, and has connections to a lot of places, so that could work for me. There are some other places in the North of Italy that are, like, a good size city. So like Parma where Parmesan comes from Bologna is quite a big place, but not too many people go there. And we actually just stayed in the area of Turin, Torino. So, I spent some time there, there's a lot to do there and around. And we went to several cities that I think might be too small. But the Bra area, there were some other big cities there. It's kind of like where the Barolo wine is from and things like that.

Now, again, I mentioned there were some places in Le Marche that I like, but I'm not sure if they are big enough. And then there is a city that I really like called Urbino, but again, I'll have to check if that's big enough. Now, there are some places in Tuscany that I stay a lot, and I'm not quite sure if my city would be the right place for that. So I'll put this and then... Now, what's gonna happen is I'm writing out this list of cities. And this is also kind of helping me think back through some different trips that I've done in the past, as well as put some trips that I just went on just now. But I might end up pulling some of these things into some other areas, but what I've done is, I've picked the section that I feel like I can most start to come up with ideas for. And this is often in this vein, it's often like an itinerary piece or a city guide or something like that.

Now, let's look at something slightly different. So here we've got these holidays, right? So these are also kind of long, and they're typically first-person travel guides through a given city, but they focus on what life is like inside lesser-known pockets, right? So the writer is almost with the tourists visiting cities around Italy or an expatriate. It's not uncommon to see them referring to their family through the article. So one covered the... And I'm bolding things here. And I totally recommend that you do this as well. One covered the Eastern



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region of Le Marche. So I have a good one for Le Marche but they've covered it kind of recently. So this Le Marche idea that I have, I'm gonna go down here and I'm gonna put in the future section instead.

So the wife of Dante who wrote Dante's "Inferno," Dante's "Paradiso," I think, her family is settled in Le Marche. They fled Tuscany. There was a lot of political strife that they were involved in going on at that time. And they've settled in Le Marche, but they also have repurchased a village in Tuscany. And there's this whole thing about... this might be kind of an old idea for this magazine. And this is kind of a thing that's going on, is that people are purchasing entire villages in Italy and turning them into high-end sort of accommodation. So again, that might be kind of old, but we'll see. So, something else that I saw recently that could be an interesting feature idea, is that in Piedmont, which is an area known for its wine, there were some really amazing Amaros, which are after-dinner drinks from the mountain regions there and everywhere I went, every city seemed to have their own.

It was really interesting. Apart from the South of Italy, I've never been somewhere like this where they don't really drink the national Amaros. Each place has its own local one that it drinks, and that's an interesting one. So, you see that I was trying to fill in this, but I saw this and it gave me an idea to go down to the next section. So I'm gonna switch to another magazine now, so we can see how this works for a different type of magazine, but you'll see, this particular magazine that we're looking at now, all of these articles are really long. Okay? Like these ones are particularly because they're features, but we have up to a thousand words in almost every section here. Now that's not usual. Okay. And for me, it's fine that that's the case, but it's important to think about, like, if you're somebody who would feel a bit of a strain to come up with a thousand-word article pitches every single month that this might not be the right kind of magazine for you. So let's look at another one. I'm actually going to switch the screen back for a second.

Okay. The next one on my list is this one "International Living." Let's see what sections they have. Okay. We'll take this one. So, this one as you can see has 20 different freelancers per issue, and let's see how often they come out. They come out monthly. So again, a wealth of opportunity here. They are all about not necessarily retiring, a lot about retiring, but kind of about living abroad as you know, International Living would suggest, so I'm just gonna drop a couple of notes from this. And then let's see what they have in the demographics.

Investment savvy individuals, affluent professionals with disposable income. Now, this is great. So they say, "We've got in here key areas of interest." Now, obviously, from my choice of Italy magazine, you can see, I know a lot about Italy, but also about Spain. I don't know so much about the Central American area. Now that could be a liability. We'll see. So let's have a look here. So the international dates, describing events that take place consecutively during the month, the festivals and events have short description listing their dates. This is something that I could do.



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I don't know if I would be as excited about it as some other things, but it's worth keeping in my file because as I travel around, I'm often coming up with these. So one that I really like and visited recently, well, we did go to the famous Truffle Festival in, I believe it's Alba or whatever, Italy, but the most famous Truffle Festival. But then there's also a number of Chestnut Festivals. And we tried to go to one, that's kind of a little too commercial. But there's one that I went to in another town that I like quite a bit. So that can be one that I can pitch for next fall. The Savvy Traveler's corner is the inside scoop on what to do in a particular destination. So that's something that I can come up with a lot of things for. So I'll add that to my list. Offshore and finance.

Now, I'm not sure this is really for me. So I'm gonna skip that one. Lifestyle is about an individual or a couple that is living the retirement lifestyle abroad in first or third person interviewed, includes financial notes. I'll add this as I'm sure I come across people for this, but I don't necessarily... I know some people who just rue the writing community that might be a fit for this, but I'll have to think about that a little further. Real estate covers bargains in a specific geographic region.

So, this is actually something, again, that for Italy, I feel like I would have a lot of ideas, including the town that I usually stay in and some other places that I have visited, and so I'm gonna put some notes on that. Solutions on issues facing retirees abroad, not so much my area exploration. This is a deep dive into a locale, including house prices, cost of living, details on what makes it desirable to be an expat. And the transportation overview, includes supermarket, coffee, and lunch deal, okay. And costs for multiple projects.

So this is something that I can do in places that I stay in for a certain amount of time. There are certain ones that I stay in relatively regularly that I could probably do this, but I would have to do it on the ground. Cover story, almost always by a member of editorial staff. So we'll just skip that. Offshore about investments. Not so much my kind of thing. Antiques and collectibles, not so much. Income overseas about retirees who are now working, retirees opening a beach hospital or restaurant da, da, da. Okay.

So this is something that, again, I can maybe come up with interview topics for. So on these ones where I'm saying, I might need to kind of think a little further about interview subjects, it might be that... Again, I'm going through this a lot more quickly than you guys would, but it might be that if I sat down, I could think of a few very, very quickly. And it might be that I'm like, "You know what? These are just not really the right kind of articles for me." So this International Living one is one that has a lot of sections available. So it seems really attractive.

But if we go back over for a second to my files, you're gonna see that I kind of jotted down some things, but it's a lot emptier than the last one. Now, this is a little bit time, I was going through it really quickly. But at the same time, I just feel less excited about this, right, which is kind of weird because I would think that I would have a lot of article ideas for this. So this might just be something that I would need to take a pass on. Let's look at one more, which is



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very different, and then I'll pop back over to the slides. Let me switch the screen over to "Ambrosia" so you can see what that's about. So, "Ambrosia" is an Indian magazine, and I'm pretty sure it's like an all-feature sort of area. This is based in New York. It comes out bi-annually.

What else do we wanna know about it? What sets a region's culture apart? Okay. From roadside stands to Michelin Restaurants. Okay. So the high brow, low brow doesn't matter to them. That's cool. So they are health conscious. This is good to know as well. And they want a storied history to the food. Now, it's really interesting, there's a totally random story that I just thought of reading this that I wouldn't have thought of before that I'm gonna add to the list here. So let me just figure out what would be the right section for it. I guess this would be maybe a third-person feature. So I was just reading a book that mentioned a place in Seattle and we were going to Seattle. So I was a great list to go there when we go. But the place in Seattle wasn't open anymore.

And the woman who had been making Scandinavian style Aquavit and making a really interesting New Nordic menu had transferred over to this other restaurant. And we went to the restaurant, and we were expecting, I don't know who we were expecting, but it was in this very sort of Portlandy neighborhood that was surrounded by a less affluent area. And the vibe was a bar in the back family-friendly restaurant up front, lots of board games, small dishes. It was a very interesting kind of place. It wasn't what I was expecting. And it might be a good entry into talking about Seattle-Scandinavian history, which was covered a lot in this book that I read, and how it's kind of changing for the hipster generation. So that was kind of a long treatise on what this idea is, but because it would be a longer feature idea. So about Seattle-Scandinavian grading for hipsterism.

So, you'll see in here again, long articles, okay. This one here we've got first-person stories often deeply personal, really a writer's connection to a locale as well as their knowledge as a culinary scene. We've got Brooklyn's Chinatown, Brooklyn Bodegas, something that looks at the different times in a writer's life. So, you know, I can totally draft off of this and do one on where I grew up. Which like literally the village in California that I grew up is currently home to this wonderful Australian cafe from New York they just opened there, a bakery from the previously only Michelin star place in Silicon Valley, and so on and so forth. And I was just shocked when this Australian cafe opened, I was looking for a recipe on their website, and I just couldn't believe it when I saw that my hometown was the place of their first location outside of San Francisco and all of the Bay Area.

So that could be an interesting entree for this first-person one. I could also look at something that's more Italy-related, perhaps from the trip that I just took to Piedmont. And I have a lot of interesting notes to a first-person nature about how I went with a friend of mine who's my best friend, but she became my best friend when we first lived in Italy together, and kind of doing something that mirrors kind of the change in the friendship with things from this trip along with other trips in terms of the food. So for third-person features, I could come up with a lot of ideas for this. I'm just gonna hold onto that one for now because we already dumped





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something over there. Roundup. So these are four to five establishments that reflect a city, region or nation at large with a 100-word introduction and concept, and its connection to the given location through food. So I'm gonna pop over to my notes file now, so you can see what I'm typing, and I'm gonna bold that connection to the location through food because I think that's the most important thing to look at here.

A concept and connection to the given location through food. So seems like I could also look at the Seattle, New Nordic thing over here, and how New Nordic is kind of sweeping the globe generally and not having the same effect on Seattle, but these particular places are a standout. What else? So, if we think about this idea of roundup, so they take a concept and explore its connection to a location through food. This seems like something that I should have a billion ideas on.

So, you know, for Berlin, it's a really interesting thing there about the Vietnamese heritage and the different types of restaurants from tea houses, to street food, and like the war of the four places there, and how that ties into the immigrant history in Berlin, which is not only Vietnamese, there's also a big Turkish area as well which could also be written about, but I just stayed in the Vietnamese area recently and how that ties into kind of larger current questions about immigration in Europe and Germany, particularly.

And that reminds me also of this idea of Curry Hill which is a place that is here in New York that we go to frequently because my husband is Indian, and that has a similar sort of show of the breadth of cuisines from India. But it's most interesting, I think to see which one play out like there're certain restaurants spots that are constantly turning over into something new. And what that says about the immigrant restaurateur experience. I happen to be connected through family things to this place which is a new health-conscious, not aimed at Indian, place that is really taking over in that area. So, obviously, fewer article ideas here, you can see once I kind of started to get into it, how this one reminded me of one in New York and also another one in Berlin, and I can go on and on and on.

And so that's one of the reasons why, like I said, it's really important to give yourself space to sit with these. You can see with this other magazine, it kind of didn't jive with me. I could come up with more ideas with it if I tried, but there was something about it that was kind of, like, not working for me at this moment. But with this one, once I gave myself a second, I was able to start coming up with more and more and more ideas. So let's look at the first one for a second.

So, obviously, here, I've got one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine. Now that's really a good ideal to have, I would say 5 to 10 article ideas for each of the different sections that you would be dropping into your personalized file here. Why? Again, because that goes back to what I was talking about not only having the work for yourself already done, but also giving yourself that groundwork, that when you come back to it, you can see many different facets of the shape of the ideas that you were coming up with. Okay.



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Because right now, I read not only about these article ideas, I read the description, I'm reading lots of other different articles, and really allowing myself to think about what is right for this magazine. And you don't wanna have to redo that all from scratch every single time. So as you can see, this is what we're looking for here. Obviously, more details, like I wrote down quite a few different details here in this one about not only expanding your article idea, but helping show how I would wanna connect it back to this larger thing that I found to be really prevalent in each of these sections.

I really recommend doing this as well when we find where I did it to kind of bold these different things that help stand out to you to help pop for you when you come back about what is important in the section so that you can remember it very quickly when you come to pick up article ideas, to help you select which ones are the ones that you wanna pitch.

So that being said, let's wrap up for today. Cheers and happy holidays, everyone.