



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

Today is the second webinar in our new series on "Magazine First Pitching." Now, this was actually a very interesting question that we got. And basically, somebody asked, "I know that you did a webinar series on idea-first pitching. How does that work for magazine-first pitching?" And I said, "Oh, my god, that's actually what I talk to everyone about in their coaching calls."

I usually don't advise you on idea-first pitching, I just did this webinar series because a lot of people, that's how they naturally look at approaching things. So, with this series, what we're setting out to do is to really put down, very step-by-step, and it's quite simple, actually, how to create a comprehensive plan for yourself to place articles in the magazines that you want to work with regularly, right? I mean, that's the goal, if you want to be doing consumer articles, right? Is to place articles regularly with the magazines you want to be working with.

So, in the first webinar in this series, we looked at the difference between idea-first and magazine-first pitching, and we talked about the benefits and detractions of each one. And I'll just recap that a little bit later today. But what we're really focusing on today is this idea of the hit list, because it is absolutely not as simple as it sounds.

When I talk to people about what magazines they'd like to pitch, by and large, the ones that they tell me, maybe the ones they're already working on pitches for, or just the ones that they kind of have off the top of their head, are not really the best use of their time. And that's why we spend a lot of time talking about, well, what are your goals? Where do you really want your writing to appear? What kind of writing do you want to be doing? What frequency? How much do you want to be paid? What kind of editors do you want to work with? What relationships are you looking for? What type of articles? Do you want to be writing profiles? Do you want to be writing features? Do you want to be writing front-of-book pieces? Do you want to be writing news briefs, and so on, okay? Because often, the magazines that people say, "Well, I'd like to write for this one," they might spend, you know, a decent amount of time reading it, or thinking of ideas for it, are not actually going to move them towards their real goals.

So, this idea of creating the right list for you to start with is very important. Just before this call, I had the Travel Magazine Database subscribers call, and somebody asked a question about how to access more magazines. And another person on the call recommended that they get a certain subscription to something that allows you to read different magazines called Magzter, M-A-G-Z-T-E-R. And I said, "You know what? I really, I've seen a lot of people that have come to events, or that I've worked with them in the past fall down this rabbit hole of reading magazines, where they just do so much reading. And there's kind of like a peak that happens, which is that, for a while, they're learning things, and they're building confidence. And then, as that continues, and they haven't started sending out pitches, getting assignments, getting responses, building relationship with an editor, then it becomes this kind of desperate thing, okay? And so, I actually don't recommend spending a ton of time reading



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

magazines, unless they are the magazines that you are planning to pitch every single day. So, that's what we're going to talk about today, is what magazines should that be.

So, specifically, I'm going to walk through, again, like I said, recapping a little bit of this, why idea-first, rather than magazine-first, and then we're gonna look at the very first step in building out your list. I have some certain kind of exercises, one, but not both of these, you'll have seen if you've done the IdeaFest program, but we're going to take it a step further in this webinar, okay?

So, I have some certain exercises that I use to help people build this list, that I've always used, that I've just used since, you know, like, the dawn of time as far as coaching goes, and whatnot. And it's really interesting, because I often see people who don't put the time in to get really strict on having a good list in the beginning, over the course of 6 months or a year, or even 18 months, are the ones who kind of fall off with getting their pitches done, who don't really have a lot of ideas for the magazine, or they second-guess their ideas, or whatever that is. And it's really interesting because the people who are very sure, that are very interested and very attracted...we'll talk more about what you want to look for when you look at magazines, and the list they put together, are able to just fire off those pitches, even if they have the same sort of perfectionism, or self-doubt, or whatnot, that these other people might have.

So, then, like I said, we're going to use this exercise, which if you've done the IdeaFest program, you may have seen, but we're gonna take it much further with this idea of the sort of college student application approach to building out your magazine hit list, portfolio, whatever you want to call it. And then I'm going to give you kind of some examples of some metrics to use to refine your portfolio, and some things to look at to kind of just give that extra check, to make sure that you're actually going to be able to get all these pitches out the door.

We're going to talk more about that in the next webinar, of course, how to plan that out, in the next two webinars, actually. But to make sure that you can actually get them out the door, even when they turn into articles, that this is a slate of magazines that would make sense for you to be writing for a large portion of them.

So, moving on today to talk about this idea of magazine-first pitching. I mentioned earlier that I did this series on idea-first pitching because a lot of people approach things that way. And so, it's very easy to ask, well, if that's how everybody works, then why should I do this a different way? And so, what I find with a lot of things about travel writing is that people say, "Oh, well, you know, it seems really hard to place articles, so I'm just gonna start a blog," or "Nobody really seems to be able to land a story in Delta Sky, so why should I pitch that?" And yet, I always know people who've done these things, right? I always know people who have, you know, with either a lot of fuss and hard work, or a minimal amount of fuss and hard work, done these things.



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

And when idea-first versus magazine-first pitching, this is really one of those areas that a lot of people are simply going about it in a way that is infuriating. Trying to pitch idea-first is literally the most time-consuming, frustrating, least likely to bring you closer to your goals way to go about pitching. And yet, everybody does it. So, this, if nothing else, is one of the best reasons to practice, preach, stridently adhere to magazine-first pitching, because it will very simply and clearly lead you to success. And if you are pitching a magazine that just didn't work, then you stop putting it on your list, and you've learned something about what magazines are not the right fit for you. And we'll look more about that today.

So, let's look at some of the benefits of magazine-first pitching. And it's interesting, because you'll see, and hear it in here, some of the things that are detractors of idea-first pitching. So, one of the pros of both magazine-first and idea-first pitching is to place an article idea that you generated yourself. And it's interesting, because I think there's kind of more fervor behind idea-first pitching, because you feel like you went on this trip, and this is what you saw, and this is the story that you want to do, and so you have to find a home for it. But the irony is that it's easier for you to find a home, and actually get the story placed, if you are really adhering to a magazine-first approach, where you're really familiar with a small number of magazines, and there's a good chance of the editor getting back to you, okay?

So, if you have a specific list of magazines that you're focusing on pitching, you also spend a lot less time familiarizing yourself with magazines. As a result, you also have to spend less time verifying if your article ideas are a good fit, because you're reading the magazines regularly and you know them really well. Because you pitch the editors regularly, you get a warmer reception to your pitches. And even if they're not assigning you stories right off the bat, you're building relationships with those editors. Even if they're not responding, they're gonna get used to seeing your name in the inbox.

I've had people say in really massive publications, two of them that I'm thinking of, that they've assigned stories that were ideas generated by the editors, not from pitch ideas, to writers that they never worked with before, just because the writers were pitching them regularly. Good, solid pitches, okay? So, this is one of the massive benefits of magazine-first pitching, okay? Is that you might not even realize that you're building that relationship, but that editor is thinking about you, okay?

And also, the dirty secret of magazine publishing is that not everybody gets paid the same rate. This is one of the things that makes this really difficult for us to get rates for the Travel Magazine Database, when we try to put the pay rates in there, because not everyone is paid the same rate. People often don't want to say the rate they're being paid, because they don't want you to go to the editor and say, "Well, so-and-so's being paid this, so I wanna be paid that," because they're afraid that's going to get them in trouble with their editor.

And so, if you are someone who is known to the editor, even if you've never worked with them before, even if they've not really seen your clips, you're more likely to start out at that



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

higher rate, that experienced writer rate. In fact, I was just thinking of somebody who I worked with in the past, who was a regular writer for "Wall Street Journal," the travel section, of course, and she had pitched to a job, like, a writing gig that she saw in our newsletter. And she wrote them, and they wrote her back, and they were super excited about her application. And they wanted to work with her. And they said it was an unpaid position.

And this woman said, "Well, thank you so much for..." She's a professor as well. She's very dignified. She said, "Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate you writing back. I'm not able to do work that's not for pay, as I'm a professional writer. So, I thank you for this opportunity, but I'll have to decline." And then they wrote back, and they said, "No, no, no. I'm so sorry. The rate is actually this." Because somehow, in their heads, she was an unknown quantity, so they put her in this box of being able to get away with things, or being low-paid, or whatnot, right? But then as soon as they saw that she was really professional, she jumped back into the paid box. Okay?

So, this is one of the things of establishing these relationships by pitching regularly to a small cohort of magazines that you know well, because they're constantly front-of-mind for you, and that you're focusing on them, is that you show those editors, before that first assignment ever happens, that you are a professional writer, through pitching them regularly, showing them that you have good ideas, and showing them that you understand their magazine, and they're going to give you that higher rate earlier on in the relationship. So... Oh, there's a letter missing here.

This is three type of pitch, or, so, three types of people who pitch, okay? So, I want to look at this idea, right? We talked before about people who spend a lot of time reading, the readers, right? So, I've mentioned three types of pitchers here, the reader, the idea enthusiast, and the planner. Now, these three types... this is something that I just came up with for this webinar. I don't know if I'll keep using it. It was kind of just an idea that I had very, right before I was going to talk to you guys, or do the last webinar. But this is really kind of, like, a good subset, though there's probably other categories, of approaches to pitching that I see.

Now, the really interesting thing, of course, is that pretty much everybody that I know who is a really full-time freelancer, as in, this is their full income, and they actually earn their livelihood off of pitches. So, they don't really have, like, a lot of ongoing content marketing gigs. They really write almost exclusively for magazines, if not exclusively, and those magazines tend to be commercial magazines rather than trade magazines, so they're not working as much on assignment as they are going on trips, coming up with ideas, and pitching. So they're really, you know, as they like to...what is it? Kill what you eat, or something like that? People who have to go out and hunt for their food themselves, you know. They're that kind of freelancer. Those people, you know, to a man or woman, so to say, are almost entirely in the third category here, the planner, okay?



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

Now, when I say the planner, I'm not just talking about somebody who before they go on a trip, they look at what different magazines might potentially look at that, you know, accept that article, and create a magazine cheat sheet, and then they go on the trip, and then they come back, and then they place the story ideas. It's much more than that, that they have some relationships with editors that they've built, by doing stories for them in the past. And every single trip they're going on, they're trying to find a story for every single editor that they work with, on every single trip, and they're working closely with the editor before, during, and after, to make that happen, okay?

But not everybody is going to be this kill-what-you-eat kind of person, right? And so, I want to make it clear that when I say that the full-time people that I know, who really subsist on writing entirely for consumer magazines for their entire living, are planners. I tell you that because I want you to understand A, that it's possible, but B, that it's only possible with this level of scrutiny of your approach, that you are really focused on what time you're putting in to get what outcome, and not allowing too much to happen outside of the margins.

So, two types of things that happen outside of the margins of what's actually ROI, right? We hear about ROI so much for people who are paying us, but we don't think about our own ROI over time as writers, right? So, in terms of the ROI, things that happen outside of those margins, it's often in these two veins, the reader, or the idea enthusiast. I'm interestingly getting a message from somebody that she's trying to join us, and it says that the call has not started. Okay. Great. She was trying to join the one that we originally had scheduled to stay before we swapped over, because I had to go to India, unfortunately, for a family emergency last week.

So, in terms of these two types of things that are outside the margins, we talked already about the reader, and how they spend a lot of time reading in ways that are not directly connected to a pitch that they're about to send out. But even larger than that, that they are reading things that might be connected to one pitch that they may or may not send out, as opposed to reading things to build a relationship, to constantly invest in this account that you're building with this magazine, okay?

But the opposite of this is the idea enthusiast, okay? This is somebody, I'm personally am constantly victim to this, that just has so many ideas, okay? Now, it's fine to have lots of ideas. It's fine to also capture them. Anyone who has ever been on a tour, at a conference, or been on a workshop that I've run, or anything like that, knows that anytime we're out, I'm constantly scribbling. I'm writing down so many different ideas that I'm having, from something that somebody's saying, maybe it's even an idea for an essay, that's not related to the exact trip that we're on at this moment. But, I only look at them when I need them, okay? I write them down, I capture them, they're there, I put down a level of detail that when I need to come back to it, I can come back to it, but then I don't get attached to all of the different shiny objects, okay?





# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

So, the idea enthusiast is somebody who might have an idea that's a great fit for a magazine that's important to them, but, then they have a new idea, and then they try to find a home for that idea instead, and they leave, like, a mostly-written, almost-ready-to-go pitch behind. So, these are really the two different ways that you can kind of, let's say, "productively procrastinate," but I really find that these things are a little bit more, like, just sort of idly doing social media and telling yourself you're networking, to read too many magazines, or to try to find matches for too many different ideas.

So, the antidote to these two things is this magazine-first idea, where we are going to set up a very specific framework of magazines, that you will only pitch these magazines. I know, right? Only pitch these magazines, I'm telling you? What are you gonna do with all your other ideas? Therein lies the rub of creating the right magazine-first list, okay? Is that you need to make sure that you have fool-proofed your list against the eventuality of all of the different things that might make you abandon it. Okay? So, think about it that way. So, that's what we're looking at today, when we're going to look at these different ways to triage your list, and make sure that you have the right magazines on there in the first place, okay?

So, the way that I like to start, by putting this list together, is to be broad, okay? I like to think of all of the shiny objects that might interest you now, rather than have them come up later, okay? So, what that means is that when you're looking at putting this list together, we start very broad, but we also have some structure, okay? Structure is very important to making sure that one doesn't go too far afield with these things. And here is a structure that I recommend, and this is the exercise that if you've done IdeaFest, you might have seen before, but we're going to take it, like I said, one step further. Okay?

So, I really recommend that you dedicate yourself...listen, I'm serious about this, like, five hours, to this first step, if you can swing it. Split it up over several sessions if you have to, but I really recommend being thorough. Remember what I said earlier? Find the shiny objects now, evaluate them in bulk, in batches, with an eye to what's really the best thing, so that you're not distracted by them later, so that you don't feel like, "Oh my god, this magazine is really a great magazine for me. I really need to add it to my list. Oh god, here's another one I need to add to my list. Oh my god. Now I have, like, 10 more magazines than I was expecting. How can I really get to know all of them? Oh, I'll just kind of let this one slide by the wayside. I won't send that one a pitch this month," and so on and so forth, okay?

So, collect all of the shiny objects now, and evaluate them with a shrewd eye to their actual long-term value, okay? So, like I said, I recommend taking five hours to do this, if you can, and really looking through all potential magazines, okay? So, obviously, if you have access to Travel Magazine Database, you should most certainly start there. You can use Google if you don't, but it's gonna be a lot faster and easier with the magazine database, and I'll show you a snippet from there and why it's gonna help you later on, but also, we just have a lot of magazines collected there. Google is only... Believe me, I find Google to be much less useful



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

lately. Several of us were talking about this, how it seems to not sort of serve exactly the quickest answer to your question as much as it used to. Okay?

So, start with the whole pool of all magazines in the world, for narrowing, but give yourself some lenses through which to look at. Here's what I recommend, two types of lenses. Now, you might find that one of these types of lenses is more important to you. Fine. We'll talk about how to manage that in a second. So, geographical interest, okay? These are places that you know well, that you can write about sort of ad nauseam, okay? I just had a call earlier with somebody who lives in Turkey, and it was really interesting because she talking about how she feels like Istanbul is quite a tourist destination, and everything has kind of already been written about it.

But at the same time, if you're based in Istanbul, anytime something new comes up, you're well-positioned to be the one to cover that new hotel thing, or the, you know, whatever that trend that's related to Istanbul is. The second type of interest, it's topical. So, let me explain what I mean by topical, because I've had some people come up with really interesting topical interests in our IdeaFest program in the past. So, we had somebody... I know the person, I'm trying to think of exactly the word that she used. Someone in the past said something that was, like, quirky...it's like quirky places or something like this. And she's actually working on a book about it now, but it's, like, places, like cat cafes, or iguana cafes, or whatever. But these kind of, like, very off-the-beaten path, not exactly shops, but experiences.

So, that's kind of a niche. It's hard to explain, but it's definitely a niche they can have, okay? So, topical interests can be a lot blander. They can be wine, you know, food, they can be cultural heritage, they can be architecture. This is one that I actually wish I heard people say more, because it's a really easy one. I also know editors who are frequently looking for writers on this topic. Your topical interest could be sailing, it could be snowboarding. I know a rock climber who is also a yoga instructor, who lives in the mountains, and has a biology Ph.D., and so that's her three right there, okay, right? You know, yoga, mountain climbing, and biology, or, you know, nature, whatever.

So, your topical interest should be things that you read about anyway, separately. And what I mean by that is, like, if you're just clicking, you know, on the sidebar of a website, what are the type of things that you click on? What are the things that draw your eye? If you're going somewhere on a trip, what are the type of things that you already would plan to do, and sort of look up separately on your own? There's somebody that I worked with for a long time who was very interested in food tours. She would always go to food tours.

So, it wasn't just that she was interested in food, it was that she was interested in food tours. That's great. You can become the food tour person, okay? So, brainstorm topical interests, brainstorm geographic interests, and then narrow it down to the three that you really feel like...three in each category, okay, not three total. So, three topical, three geographical, that you really feel like you would be comfortable committing yourself to being a relative expert



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

on. So that means you kind of need to follow the news in this area, you need to kind of maybe set up some email subscriptions, so that you have ideas coming your way, different things like that, okay?

Now, then, for each of those three topical and three geographic interests, like I said, if you like, if you feel like you have too many topicals and not enough geographics, because you are nomadic, or something like that, you can have four or five topicals, and two geographics, or one geographic, but I recommend having both, and let me explain why. Because there are trips that you will take, even if you are a destination expert, that will take you to other places, and you want to still be able to pitch those stories. And even if you're a super, super destination expert on where you live, there's going to be other places that you know, maybe where you vacation, or your family lives, or something like that, that you still are going to have article ideas for, and we want to find some homes, potential homes, for those, okay?

Now, then, from each of those, come up with at least five, you can come up with more, you can come up with 20, you can come up with 10, you can come up with 30 if you want. Come up with at least five magazines for each of those three geographical and three topical sections, okay? Now, once you have that list, then we're going to move on to looking at what those magazines actually accept from freelancers, okay? Because it really doesn't matter how close they are to your topical and geographic interests if the sections that they actually commission from freelancers are things that you would never be interested in writing, okay?

So, I know this is gonna be a little small on the screen. This is why I was waiting to make sure that the slides loaded, so we could see this. But this is an excerpt from the Travel Magazine Database, for folks who don't have it. So, I just want to show you, when I say "magazine sections," what I mean, okay? So, each of these things here, this is pulled from "Airbnb Magazine," okay?

Each of these things that you see listed here is one article that appears in every issue of "Airbnb Magazine," okay? So, for instance, I was working with somebody yesterday on this one called "Passions and Pursuits," which is about an Airbnb host. There's also one in here called "Smart Traveler," which is a service article, which means, like, a how-to or tips article, giving the reader advice on how to be a better traveler. Then this top one here, "Weekend Cure," is a destination piece that is a three-day itinerary. Okay? So, here we've got 500 to 1,000 words, 700 to 1,000 words, and 300 words, okay? And these are all different types of pieces. We've got something that's kind of destination in focus, but itinerary in structure. We've got something that's very service, very tips, very focused on sort of how to travel, rather than what to do when you travel. And then we have one that's very narrowly a profile of an individual thing, and it has to be a thing that's available as an Airbnb experience.

Now, if you aren't sure yet, if you're new enough to travel writing, and you haven't had a blog before, and you really don't know what type of articles you're capable of writing, or what you're interested in writing, then what I'm saying right now with the types of articles might





# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

kind of go over your head. It's something that you'll learn. You'll learn what you really, really don't like writing and what you do, but you'll have to try a couple things first. If you have written, either in the travel space or somewhere else for a while, you will have a visceral reaction to certain types of articles, okay?

I know people who have science backgrounds who just think narrative features are, like, "weww"...they just kind of, you know, like, make a little thing like you've seen something disgusting, or something like that, right? Then I know people who feel the same way about service articles, because they are of the narrative bent, perhaps even of the literary bent, okay? Then there's people who think that three-day itineraries are easy as pie, and their favorite thing in the world, and they would love to write them until they die, and people who perhaps have been travel consultants in the past, and had to write these all day, until they felt like they wanted to die, and never want to see another one of them again.

So, when you look at these magazines that we've accumulated, in this big list that we've created here, I want you to look out at what types of stories they have. Because if they are types of stories, even if the magazine topically is something great, that you feel like you'd really be happy to write for that magazine, if the types of stories they're actually commissioning from freelance writers are of the type that you really have no interest in writing, it doesn't matter how much you like the magazine. You only like it as a reader. You don't like it as a freelancer, okay?

You have to jump that loop and realize that there's two different people in your head. One of them is a consumer of writing, and one of them is an actual writer, who needs to find articles to get paid for, okay? So, you need to be really honest with yourself about what type of articles you're up to write, you want to write, you are going to write, you would be okay writing, okay? Now, in some cases, that's just the type of article, like we talked about, but it can also be the word count. Some people are at a point where they don't want to write small articles anymore. Some people are only comfortable writing smaller articles.

Then you also need to think about what are you good at, not just in terms of writing, but also in terms of coming up with ideas. What can you come up with ideas for all day long? What are some things that you might be interested in writing, but you haven't written yet? Because that's important to delineate, because you might end up with a bunch of magazines, they're all features, they don't have any other types of articles open to freelancers, except for features, and you are just dipping your toes in features, and if you don't balance that out, and make sure you have some other types of articles that you're more comfortable with right now, then you're gonna get anxiety trying to put the pitches together for these magazines that you're trying to target, okay?

So, you need to think about what you're interested in but not comfortable taking on too much of. But then you also need to think about what seems easy, okay? What topics do you just look at, for instance... We'll go back to this one we had over here from Airbnb, okay? What



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

do you look at, like, this "Weekend Cure," right? Like, I know a lot of cities all over the world really well, there's places that I visit every single year. I look at this, and it's not just that I know an itinerary for New York where I live, but I can probably think of itineraries, you know, off the top of my head and just spit them out verbally in an hour, for, like, 30 different destinations, right? Because I think in that way, I think of planning trips for people, because I used to write, ghost write blogs, for people who plan trips for people, right?

So, that's something that I could just have ideas for all day, and not just about one destination, okay? Because it's really common that people look at that kind of thing, and they say, "Oh, itineraries are really easy." But can you actually think through writing that piece out for enough destinations that you could pitch that editor over and over again, okay? And then which ones do you look at, and you have a really great idea, but not more than one or two? Okay?

So, what we really want to look for, at this phase, we started with this list of at least 30 magazines, right? At least five magazines for each of three topical and three geographic interests, okay? And what we're looking for now, I say "at least," because we want to find love at first sight. We don't want to find which magazines you could write for, you could have ideas for. Pitching is hard enough. Getting yourself to focus on something, getting yourself to jump over that barrier of inhibition, and send somebody that you don't know your baby, you know, coddled idea, that you've worked so hard on, and to wait to see if they even bother to reject it, or if they don't email you, that takes something, and you need to make sure that it's as easy as it can be. And that's why this stage of narrowing down the magazines is so important, okay? Find love at first sight. Don't settle, okay?

There are so many magazines out there. We have more than 500 in the database, okay? And there's so many that I don't even have in there, because they only accept one article from freelancers, of one type, in a narrow niche area, they don't bother to put them in there, or something like that, that might be the perfect magazine for you. There are thousands and thousands of magazines that can become your best-friend editor, or something like that, okay? You do not need to settle. Look for love at first sight, where you look at it, and you just have ideas for every section, and you can't wait to pitch them, because that's the attitude towards pitching that you need to have, that you can't wait to share with your editor friends, who love your ideas, who really get that you get their audience, these new ideas for your trip, because you know that they will be excited about them. That's what we need to look for, okay?

And that's this big shift in magazine-first pitching, that I want to make sure that we understand, that magazine-first pitching takes the drudgery out of pitching. If you do magazine-first pitching and feel drudgy, then you need to revisit which magazines you're pitching. It's all about this step, okay?



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

So, once we've gotten down to this love at first sight ones, then we still need to pass it through another layer of scrutiny, okay? And that is what I call, like, the parent of a college student approach to splitting up your pitching. All right? So, I'm not sure if you guys, in the chat box, if any of you have been through this particular thing, either as a parent or as a child, but there's this idea of splitting up the list of colleges that a student is going to apply to. And obviously, this applies more to places like America, where you're looking at a lot of different colleges, and price is a factor, and you also are trying to get scholarships, than places, for instance, in Europe, where you would just be going to the local university and paying very little, and that's kind of where everybody goes, okay?

So, in this setting, people talk about this idea of having three categories, okay? You have safety, which are places that you should apply to and get into no matter what. There should be absolutely no question that you will get into these places, okay? But, of course, the safety things have to be places that you're willing to go, right? Because you as the university student will spend four years, probably, of your life there, right? So, safety has to be something that you will go no matter what, you'll be able to get in, you'll pass the criteria, but you would also be happy there, okay? Those two attributes are very important.

Then there's match, where it's a place that you think you should be able to get in, where it's right exactly on the level that you think that you're at right now, but because it's right on the level that you're at right now, if there's kind of like one snag, if they already have too many writers, you know, if they maybe, just, you caught them at the wrong time, that maybe it won't work out, okay? Because the match is really, it's right on the even level, okay? That's how it is with colleges, that, you know, maybe they already took too many violinists this year, or something silly like that, okay? So, with the match, it's something where you really are kind of right in their framework.

Now, for the reach, these are places where you have a chance. This is super important here, okay? I see a lot of people spending a huge portion of their pitching time on places where they have a 0.025 chance, okay? Percentage chance, okay? I know because I have to sit there and calculate all these pitch success chances when we do our business model analysis in our big mastermind that we do every year, okay? So, when I say places that you have a chance, I mean you have, like, more than a 1% chance, okay? So, for a lot of people, that's going to cut out Condé Nast, or Nat Geo, or something like that right there. I mean places where you have at least a 5% chance, at least, okay?

So, when you think about your reach, your reach is going to be different than someone else's reach. So, I've made up sort of, like, a hypothetical one if I were to start pitching these magazines tomorrow, that I'll show you in a second, and I'll explain to you why I picked the ones as a reach for me that I chose, and why they wouldn't necessarily be the same ones for you, and how I came to those, okay? So, let's look at how I split up the percentages here, okay? So, safety should be 30% of your list, match should be 40% of your list, reach should be 30% of your list.



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

Let me tell you, if you are super, super new, I would actually potentially advise for these percentages to be different, okay? New people, 20% reach, 30% match, 50% safety. Now, why do you think I'm saying this? Because new people tend to completely over-balance on reach, typically doing reaches that are like what my business mastermind coach calls "delusional reaches," rather than risky reaches, okay? But they have pretty much no safeties, or it's the other way around. They have all things which are safe to the point of being the bottom end of safety, and very few match, and very few reaches, okay?

So, you need to balance in this way, that if you're new, it's more important than ever to build up confidence, so you need things that are quite likely to get back to you, to turn around quickly, in enough proportion, and given the whims of the publishing world, that you're going to get some assignments going, okay? So it's when we need more safeties. But you also need to keep that enthusiasm that you have for those kind of dreamy, starry-eyed places.

Again, realistically, not delusionally, though, okay? But you also need to keep moving up. This is really important. A lot of people start out, and they pitch us some things, maybe that are below them, maybe that are their level, whatever, and they get some pieces, and then they stay at that level, and they never move up. So we need to, even if you're new, keep some things at the next level above you constantly going, because when you first start out, your skills are also constantly improving, okay? So you need to be constantly nudging yourself up to the next rung on the ladder, okay? But typically, I say, and when I say "new" here, I mean, like, has no clips, has no writing experience, so on and so forth, okay? If that's your case, then make sure that you get really clear on what's reach for you, as in has a chance, and what is safety for you, and start getting those assignments.

Now, typically, like I said, I advise 30, 40, 30, and this is how that breaks out. If you are going to be having 10 magazines in your rotation... We're going to talk in the upcoming weeks about how many magazines you have in your rotation, how that looks like on a regular basis, but think about it that each magazine is going to require at least one new pitch every month, okay? So if you have 10 magazines in your rotation, that means that you need to have time to do 10 really fleshed-out, awesome, thought-out pitches for each of your magazines every month. Ten is really the minimum that I recommend, to make sure that you get some traction. If you have a totally consuming full-time job, on top of what you're doing, you could slim it down to five if you really want, and then I would do maybe two safety, two match, and one reach, okay? But if you're gonna do 10, then you would do 3 safety, 4 match, and 3 reach. Now, what if you're looking at 15? Then I weight it a little bit down to safety, and we've got five safety, six match, and four reach. If you're going to do 20, then we're just doubling if it was 10. So you've got six safety magazines, eight match magazines, and six reach magazines. Okay?

Now, let's look at another criteria here, okay? So, for these magazines that we're pitching, how often are you expecting to get an assignment with them? Because this should also help you understand how to choose, how to narrow from the ones that you've already looked at



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

and started to fall in love with. But remember, we're keeping our options open, we're on "The Bachelor," or whatever, where the magazine matched our ad, or something like that.

So, as you're narrowing further, you need to look at it this way. Something safety should be something that you feel, like, really reasonably confident, okay? Like, really, like, the writing is such of the level that you feel like something is very, very much wrong with the world if the editor is not immediately giving you an assignment every issue. So, that's what I mean by safety, guys, okay? That, as soon as the editor hears from you and sees that a person such as you exists, with your writing ability and your background in terms of knowledge and everything, they will want to give you an assignment every single issue. That's what I mean by safety. If you're thinking of things in your safety category that do not apply to that definition, please repack that category with things that this definition applies to, and move those things up over into match, okay?

So, match would be places that you would write for, maybe every other issue, maybe every issue, maybe one in three, it depends how often the magazine comes out. But you should maybe always be working on an article for them, okay? But you will usually get that on pitches rather than assignments. Safety magazines are the place where the editor might just turn around and just start handing out magazines to you. So, you might notice that trade magazines kind of fall into that safety category. And if trade magazines are something that you are working on, then those can absolutely be your safeties, that's totally fine. Okay?

Now, for the reach magazines, I like to think about these as ones that you might do a piece for once or twice a year. Okay? So, let that sink in. So, if you are thinking that your reaches are going to be... let me just think of what the usual list is. Okay. I'll just kind of tweak it a little bit. Like, "Garden & Gun," "National Geographic Traveler," and... I don't know, "Wanderlust" would probably be a match for some people. So, let's say "Garden & Gun," "National Geographic Traveler," and "Hemispheres," okay, or something. So, if that's your reach, do you feel like from the pitch success that you have had thus far in your career, that those are things that you can reasonably, pitching every month, get an article in once a year? If so, great. That's a good reach list for you.

Now, as you're gonna see, when I go over and look at this list that I put together of ones that, you know, I might theoretically make up for a list for myself, and I explain why I've chosen those thing, kind of by way of example, okay? You want, in the reach, to have magazines that have sort of different angles. When I say angles, I don't mean what the magazine covers, but I mean, your "in," okay? You'll see this in a lot more practice when I show you on the next page.

But it's because of the reach ones, they're tough enough to get into in the first place, that we want to be thinking about our reach pitches in terms of figuring out which approach, which area of expertise, or background, or whatever, is going to work best for you to get your foot in the door for all reaches, generally, so that we can make the best success of that category.





# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

Now, important note, before I go to the next page and show you this theoretical example that I made up with some magazines that I might pitch, and tell you why, is that these things should be not constantly, like every month, but every six months or so, you should reevaluate, okay?

If there's a magazine that really, like, the editor is kind of rude, or tells you that they're going to take the story editorial meeting, and then just never gets back to you, whatever, if there's an editor that's rubbing you the wrong way, if there's a magazine that you're finding it too hard to regularly come up with pitches for, get rid of it. If there's a magazine that was in match, that has now become something you have assignments for every month, move it to safety. Replace it. If there's magazine in reach that you're now writing for more regularly, move it to safety, or... Sorry, if there's magazine in reach, you should move it to match, okay?

But this should be something that, like you raise your rates with content marketing clients or something like that, every six months, but for sure, every year, you should be reevaluating this list, tweaking based on what's working and what's not working, and putting fresh blood in, particularly also in the cases of things that need to be moved to another category because of the level of achievement you've reached with them, okay? So, if I were to put 10 magazines together for myself... Now, as some of you know, I've been so busy with this company, like, I don't sleep and I don't see my husband, that I've not been able to write for magazines for some time, as much as I would love to get back into it. So, this is... I was kind of trying to reach back, like, from the type of work I was doing before, what would be the best way to segue into this.

So, here's what I put together, and I will explain what these magazines are and why I've set them up like this. Okay? So, I've also put a couple other notations on here. Now, this is for me, and for where I am as a writer, but also where I was as a writer, probably more than where I am right now. So, I've put these financial benchmarks, because for me, I know that to take on a client, I have certain, or I had, I guess, certain minimums. Like, I wouldn't bother to take somebody on unless it was on a very regular basis for this amount, or if it was on a sporadic basis for that amount, because to me, it's not worth the time to get to know that publication. So these are my financial benchmarks. They might not be yours. Yours might be lower. Yours might be higher. Okay?

So, for me, I envision these safety things as something where it's a feature, that would be worth \$400, I would have a lot of leeway in terms of what I would write for it, and of course, it would be very, very easy for me to place. Maybe once a year, at the beginning of the year, I would send the editor a big list of ideas, and they would tell me which ones they wanted, or they might give me things on assignment. And I have a couple of things in here that I haven't written for regularly or maybe I have a relationship with them, but I haven't done a story, something like that. But these are all ones that are very close to my areas of expertise.



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

So, obviously, my background is in Italy, I've spent tons of tons of time there, I've been, you know, a correspondent for "Italy Magazine." So I've got two Italian ones in here, one of which is "Ambassador," which I've written many features for in the past. And then "Italia" I think is its name, but I've not written for them, for a reason that I don't even know why. I've just not pitched them. And "International Living," because I'm super, super nomadic, this is one that I have a lot of different story ideas for them as well, and I have a relationship with the editor, and I know about what they pay.

Now, in the match category, these are all ones that I've never written for before, but I've specifically chosen ones from a number of different subject areas or different types of article areas. Okay? Now, "Ambrosia" is one that is an independent magazine, but they pay quite well. It's like \$750 for a 900-word article or something. And it's very much about sort of craftsmanship and culture food, so it's something that I just, like, live and breathe and research all the time, without even thinking. "WIZZ" is an Eastern European carrier that just had a lot of magazine sections that I really like. So, this one is on my list because I really like the sections that they have in there, I find them really easy to write, and I have a lot of Europe-based ideas that might work for them. "Taproot" is, again, sort of like a culture of food, but more essay-type market, okay.

So, "Ambrosia" is more of, like, a long narrative feature market, but "Taproot" is more of an essay market. So, I enjoy writing essays, I have a lot of ideas around, sort of, like, you know, farm life, and food generally, and different things like that. So I feel like "Taproot" is something that I could come up with a lot of pitches for them. Because it's essays, you're never quite sure if they're all going to land. And then, I put two on here because I didn't want to take the time to go...I think one of these is not in the database, and I didn't want to go kind of look up and see how reasonable it was. But the two that I've gotten here are "Standart" and "Barista," which are both coffee-oriented magazines.

So, cafes, I spend tons and tons of time in when I'm traveling. I kind of make a study of them, and talk to a lot of baristas, and know a reasonable bit, enough about coffee, to do good interviews, and to kind of get some story ideas in the door. But it's definitely something where I don't have, like, a super solid credential in, so I'd be almost kind of taking the fact that I have the journalism experience with the interest in coffee, to try to segue myself into that market.

Now, so, what I showed you here is that you'll see kind of in the safety, I address some of these geographic areas. In the match, I address more of these topical areas. That's just completely incidental, how that turned out. But like I said, you're going to start with this big list, that looks at geographic and topical, and then it might change, which ones you actually end up, once you've put them through the ringer, of the type of articles, what you really have ideas for, and all that. What actually ends up on your list might end up being a little bit skewed, and this is why, like I said, we revisit them periodically.



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

So, on the reach list, and these are going to be markets where, like I said, they should not be delusional. So, "Food & Wine," I know an editor there. I only don't pitch them because I don't have time. Bon Appétit, same thing. There's an editor who's invited me to pitch her some variety of things around having a house that we teach at and everything. But those are both markets that, to me, would feel like...you know, you've probably heard me profess my lack of love for these really big outlets, where they're gonna put your article through seven rounds of edits, and you're going to constantly be on call to change story, so it's the kind of thing that even if I were to build a relationship with them, I don't know if I'd want to write for them regularly. But for me, still, it would be kind of something of break-in, right?

Now, I put "Delta Sky" in here, as opposed to "Hemispheres," which I've mentioned a couple other times in this call, because, if you've noticed, if you've gone through any of our series that we did on article nuts and bolts, I just love the sections in Delta Magazine. I really love the rubriced sort of articles that they have, the departments and everything. I just really enjoy the way they're put together. It's something that I have a lot of ideas for. I also have a lot of admiration for how they put it together. So that's something that I put in here, more from the type of articles necessarily than the geographic spread. Although Delta is an airline that I fly a lot, so you know that's something that I can certainly kind of use to pad out, that I know their routes well, or whatever. But that's how I came up with this list.

So, it's interesting because I took a little bit of time to do this, but not a ton. But now, looking back at this, I look at it and I'm like, "Yeah, this would be a really solid list for me." But I didn't go through that whole thing at the beginning, I didn't go look at every single magazine, like I'm telling you to do. And so I also, looking at this, see the danger that there might be other magazines I would actually really prefer to build a relationship, that aren't on here.

Okay, so, I'm telling you firsthand, having just made this list, doing only the last part of the exercise, I can see how this list might not serve me, sort of, you know, like, full through, like, in the end, okay? So I want to put that out there. It's really important to set aside, if not five hours, like, two hours, something at the beginning, to be really broad on that brainstorming phase, and to really look at the types of articles that each of the magazine has. Now, like all these magazines on here, I know them well enough that I didn't go through and actually look through Database, but I didn't do it with other magazines, right? I kind of brainstormed these, thought that they were okay, and then moved forward, okay? So I just want to put that caveat out there, that this is not my perfect list, and I want you to understand that. Looking at it, I can see where it might get me in trouble down the line, so it's really important, do that broad brainstorming phase that we talked about at the beginning.

So, we've covered a lot. This is actually... I'm taking less time than we usually do on the webinar, but this is a big exercise, and I've covered a lot of sort of important little nuances of it. There's just a couple things before I let you go that I want to mention to not forget when you're doing that final check. And by final check, I mean when you're finalizing this. So, you're also checking to make sure you have enough in these categories. But here's a couple



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

other things that you would look for. And it's interesting, because some of these are the ones that I know for me wouldn't work on this list.

The very first one, frequency. If we go back to the list that I have, I know that "Ambassador" is quarterly. I think "Italia" might be, like, bi-monthly or quarterly. "Ambrosia" might only be biannual. "Taproot" I think is maybe quarterly. "Standart" might be biannual. So, if I was full-time freelancing again, and not running this company, I would want all of these to be monthly, all of the magazines on here, just because I write fast, and I research fast, and I like to have a lot of articles on my plate, so if I'm not getting traction on one article, I can jump to something else. So, I know, just right off the bat, from that frequency level, that these ones don't fit for me. Okay?

So, for some people who have a lot of other things on their plate, like, there's somebody on this call today who I know is also a professor and has a very hectic travel schedule as well, she might like the quarterly ones. Those might be perfect for her, because that's the right match of, kind of, you know, how often she would want to be thinking about ideas or working on pieces. The types of magazines that are quarterly might appeal to her more, something like that. Okay?

Circulation, same thing. So, you need to look at circulation when you're looking at the safety, match, reach. I've often had people come and tell me, when they're really not getting traction with their pitches, and I tell them, "Okay. What are you pitching? That's all you're pitching? I think we really need to introduce some places where you're gonna have a better chance of success." And they said, "Oh, but I really thought all the places that I was pitching was, like, a tier-three magazine situation." And I look, and they're all tier one. So, we've talked about these tiers in different magazines, but you can think of something tier one as something that's higher than 1 million circulation, something that's tier two with something that's higher than 100,000, or maybe 70,000 circulation. Tier three is 70,000 or below, okay?

So, I don't want to say that reach should be tier one, match should be tier two, safety should be tier three, because that's not accurate, okay? Because everybody's reach, safety, match are going to be different. Okay? The same thing with the pay. So, when I built out my list, you'll see that I put different pay things on there. That was just kind of for myself, to help think about what those levels would look like for me. But each person's pay is going to be different, but you need to think about it, okay? You need to look at it both to figure out what you need, but also to make sure that you've put things accurately in the right safety, match, reach categories.

Now, I'm put here on pigeonholing, and I want to go back to the list that I made, to talk about this a little more. So, you'll see here that I have "Bon Appétit," food, "Food & Wine," food, and "Standart"/"Barista," you know, coffee/food, "Taproot," kind of food, "Ambrosia," food, "Italy," by nature, a lot of food. So, you'll see that on here, there's, like, a big food focus. And



# Dream of Travel Writing

## Your Personalized, Goal-Oriented Approach to Deciding Which Magazines to Pitch

there's other things that I'm interested in, that aren't captured on here. So, I might also look at this from the lens of, well, what about my other interest?

So, I need to see if I can actually find a magazine to cycle back in for something that's more history, or something else like that, that I'm interested in. Architecture, I don't know, something like that, okay? So, you want to make sure that you don't pigeonhole yourself, because what can happen is you can also start to feel like you're getting compression on coming up with ideas, because you're always being really, like, wrung dry to come up with ideas on the same topics, or very narrow, similar variations of the same topics. So, this exercise is so important. I hope I impressed it all upon you today, and I really recommend you take the time before the next webinar to work on this.

The next webinar, we're gonna talk about what to do when you have your list, okay? And how to create a personal "file" on each magazine that you have on your list.

And then, in the last webinar in this series, we're going to create your most excellent and easy-to-follow pitch planner, that will change your life and make pitching so easy, I promise. But it's all based on having a really excellent pitch list to start. So, thank you so much for joining us. And I will see you guys all on the next webinar. Bye.