

PCNY Luncheon  
Teen Magazines  
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## **Tamara Glenny, Executive Editor, YM**

Unfortunately, I don't use the Russian History very often nowadays, but I still like reading it. And the other thing that maybe wasn't on my bio is that I've got 3 teenage kids who are indeed my best channel tool with what we're doing with YM.

I'll just run through a couple of the basic things. We have an almost entirely female readership, age between about 12 and 20. YM is probably the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest teenage girl magazine around after 17. It began as what some of you might know as Young Miss at the end of the 1950's and evolved, as the language began to seem archaic, from a small pocket-sized Young Miss to an 8 ½ -by-11 Young and Modern in the 60's and 70's, and more recently YM stands for Your Magazine, which is how we like to think of it vis-à-vis the readership. I think the numbers, about half a million on the newsstand and about 2 million subscribers, but as most of you may well know, with teenagers the pass-along readership is enormous and it's probably at least triple anything in the actual sales numbers.

There's barely anything to add to what Janet said about how to pitch and what to pitch, I would say mainly it's "Please read the magazine", the magazine itself will tell you much more than anyone can, really, on the telephone. Recently I got sent an email for a pitch for "Dress-in-a-Bag: Colorful Carefree Fashions for Travelers and Busy Moms". Now, why is this being sent to YM? It wasn't clear to me. And I just... these things will not be read, they're just wasting your time and mine.

I think also that there's a tiny peeve I'd like to add, which is that I get a lot of phone calls from publicist's office with somebody saying, "Excuse me, um, I'm just, we're updating out files. Could I verify your name and title?" And all I want to say is, "Please, go out to the newsstand, buy the current issue and look us up on the masthead. That's why it's run, it's there every month. And it's probably more accurate than you'll get from making some phone call to somebody you don't know." Sorry, this all sounds a bit tough, but I just would really like to say, "Don't do things that are going to turn people off or make us not want to listen." Personally, I get emails pitching things, frankly I prefer getting things in the mail myself, actual pieces of paper I can take out and look at and get a sense of what you're talking about. Often emails just seem kind of, as though they're multiple and impersonal, and of course there's nothing personal about something in the mail, but at least it's something I can read and get a sense of at my leisure. And I'm not saying this lightly, when writers, freelancers ask me what I want to see, I'll say, "Don't phone me, don't email me, send me a letter about your idea and put your clips in because I'll get a much better idea about you and what you're trying to sell from reading what you have to say about it. And I think that applies to absolutely to publicity as well. And I like to think that one of the main ways we differ from our competitors is that not only does the magazine have a very broad reach, it's essentially about everything in a teenager's life from clothes to school to family to relationships to every kind of even that's important to a teenage girl. But also it's very driven by the copy and the tone of the articles in the magazine. I can't

stress this enough. Our Editor-in-Chief, Christina Kelly, came to YM from, originally, Sassy magazine via Jane and for those of you who used to know those magazines or still do, not Sassy, R.I.P., you'll know that they have a particular attitude and tone that is very distinctive; it's strong, it's self-aware, it's a bit sarcastic and joke-y, if you know something like the cartoon character Daria, that, I feel, is YM. So often our take is a little bit spoof-y, a little bit, "Oh, come off it," or, "I love this but it's kind of embarrassing to have to admit it," and any way of picking up on that expression of the magazine's attitude is really a good one.

There's one very important thing, which is we have a policy that we do not discuss or publish diets in our magazine. These are teenagers, they are growing, they have a lot of worries, they have many fears both founded and unfounded and one thing we felt was not a good idea was to reinforce weight anxiety and general fear of and worry about looks and appearance, which may sound crazy from a magazine that features fashion and beauty, but in the sense of making you feel bad or different. And that's something we've really tried to pursue, it's not that we ignore the fact that you need to be healthy or eat healthily or get plenty of exercise or any other way of having a good healthy body and body image, but we don't talk about diets. And we try to actually feature as many realistically real looking girls in the magazine as we can, both in the sense of diversity of ethnicity and also of size, age and general feeling like we're portraying girls from all over this country and in every kind of way.

I think probably that's enough. Thank you.