

Working For A Living: The Workplace Beat

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So my background is actually not as a journalist it's in business and I used to hire PR companies all the time, tons of money to PR companies and the publicist would come in and really be doing just really boring that's not changing the world at all. And the publicist would come up with such good ideas and like clever spins on our boring stuff and I was always so impressed with them. And then the when I became a journalist the first time a publicist sent me an email I was like 'oh my god I am getting to talk to a publicist without even paying for it. I am so important'. And that's kind of how I approach the whole publicist emailing me things is that I'm used to having a dialog with a publicist, I'm used to hiring a publicist cause they're innovative thinkers and it's really hard to think that way.

So that's my approach is that I'm totally happy to get the emails all the time and I'll usually send something back. If I think the press release is totally stupid I'm more likely to send an email back asking about it just so I learn something as opposed to, you know, hitting delete. But um maybe if I got like 5,000 emails a day I wouldn't do that, I don't know.

So let me tell you a little bit about the columns I write. The one I write for the globe is called Climb and it's very hardcore, does not go above age 34 for the column. There are tons of readers who are above age 34 mostly because the boomers want to know want to know what they're kids are doing. And um I also get people in generation X, like myself who think I'm in my early 30's but I'm not. But it's targeted, it has to be advice and trends for people in their early 20's to their early 30's

So things that do work are identifying blogging as a trend and then telling people how to do their career; how to like leverage that trend in their career or um there's statistics all the time that people in their 20's switch jobs every 2 years and I get pitched that everyday. Everyday some one sends me that statistic but an interesting thing about that statistic is that it's just because their bosses are so annoying to them; their bosses don't care about them and so a story I did about that is how to get your boss to care about you more and pay for training and things like that.

Things that wouldn't work in my column are like 'what happens when you specialize too much'. Because you only find that out when you're like 35. That's too late for my column, too late for my column.

The hardest thing about my column is there's huge photo and I'm in Brooklyn and the photo has to be in Boston. And I'm never totally sure who I'm taking the picture of because I don't see them before I take the picture. But it has to be a person in Boston and then I profile them in the column and they have to be doing something really cool in Boston so that would be great. If everyone could just send me one person doing something cool each week in Boston I could always have a huge picture of them for you. But the person doesn't actually have to live in Boston. Like, if some is just there to like see their aunt and uncle I can like go in and get the picture and interview them that weekend. So coolness is really important for me for the picture. I also think it reflects really poorly on my writing if the photo is boring. So I get very, very upset at boring photos, especially because it's so big.

So a party, I cover a lot of parties because they're so photogenic. I cover, I've done three surfers cause they look so good in a picture. So that's the kind of thing to think of if you want to send me a person. Just the cool factor is important to me. If they're really, really cool and they're not doing anything interesting to take a picture of I can work with them. So and then the other thing about it is generation Y as experts really gets me going. Like pitch me a 24 yr old that really thinks they know a lot about the world. I'm like the only person in the country who wants to hear that. But I'll generally use those people.

So my other column is Brazen Careerist and it's a syndicated column. It runs like, whose to say, like 100 places. I never know quite which, where it's going to run every week. The interesting thing... I'll also mail it out; if someone emails me and they want to get the column I'll send out the Brazen Careerist. It goes out to about 900 business writers and editors. So it's, someday it will be really great for me. I don't know what it's getting me now but it might be able to get you guys something; if I write about something in the column you know it's going out to 900 rinky dink papers all over the country.

And the thing about Brazen Career is that it's a little more broad. I have kids and I'm a little bit older than my Boston Globe demographic so sometimes I'll rant about kids, sometimes I'll rant about women. I'm much more likely to rant in the Blazon Career column than I would in the Globe. And a lot of things I write in the Brazen Careerist are just what I'm doing like if I go to a party I'll write about the party. My

friends and family are totally sick of being mentioned in the column but I'll use other people's names. I'll write a column about this, this is a good column. Beecher Wells syndicates it and a lot of it is just self syndicated. I've been writing so long that people just contact me just out of the blue. Don't call me; I can't, I couldn't even believe it when someone called me on my cell phone to pitch me something. I don't know who in the world would want that but I don't want that. But I'm totally open to emails and I'm so excited that people are gonna find me people to take pictures of I hope

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T, R, U, N, K like the tree; sometimes if people get it wrong they call me Penelope Tree. Oh wait, I just started blogging. If everyone in this room liked to my blog I'd be so high up on (INAUDIBLE). So my blog, it used to be my name but Mackenzie said that Brazen Careerist is another name for my blog so it's gonna change today, as soon as I leave. It's gonna be called Brazen Careerist and of course I'll be spewing there about everything I think about so a lot of pitches there but don't get into Brazen Careerist column or the Globe might get into the Blog. But to be honest the Blog is not exactly high profile right now because I've only been doing it for two months, but look out for the blog