

PCNY Luncheon  
Planes, Trains and Automobiles:  
Working with the Travel Media in Challenging Times

**Paul Glader Wall Street Journal:** Paula said everything pretty well and I've only been in that department two months longer than her, so I don't have much more of a seasoned, jaded, travel reporter perspective. But the way I understand the Weekend Journal is that the rest of the paper tells people how to make money all week long, and then Friday we tell them how to spend it lavishly. The funny thing is that even our readers, it seems like for the Personal Journal and the Weekend Journal they seem, because they're a lot of business people and that sort of thing, they just love numbers and trends, so our calculators are always smoking.

One thing I would add, that I always look for is: the Takeoffs and Landings column that I do each week is a trend-spotting column, really. And since it does come out once a week there's a lot of news that goes in other parts of our paper and other publications. And we like to be original, but because of the time constraint we can't always be real newsy. So we try to be offbeat or ironic or to break news that other people are not.

Echoing everybody else, the best way to help with that column is to read it. Recently I had a lead item in the column and I got a call 2 days later from someone pitching what was in there, and I said, "Look, you need to read the column."

And when you do, as far as pitches, I agree with Paula in the way I like to get things. I like faxes, because it seems like ever time I go to check the fax machine there are fewer things there than in my email box, so I'd definitely like to shift some of the balance to the fax. It's the same number she gave out, just put our names on there.

And I don't mind getting calls, either, if you think it's a really good pitch. If you read Takeoffs and Landings or features and you think you have a really good pitch and you have numbers to prove it and that kind of thing-- because the reason why I like a call is that, quickly you make your pitch in a sentence, I ask you questions in a couple of sentences and we know if it's a go or not and you don't have to send me any more emails.

We like newsy things, things that have a sassy sense of irony. We usually need several examples to prove a trend, so if you think like a journalist and provide context, if you have your client that you're talking about but you know some other hotels or airlines that are doing the same kind of thing, you're saving me time from having to go research that. If you mention it, I'll have to go research it one way or another, you'll have a better chance of getting it in because I only have so much limited time to go research the trends. I'll give an example of how it worked really well recently: I did something on bedbugs in the column and it was kind of fun, it was like a "Return of the Bedbugs". And the way I found that story was a public relations lady with Orkin who sent me an email, she thought it was newsy and she'd done her homework; she pitched it to us, not to anyone else. Apparently she interviewed people within the company about what were trends and thought this was a good trend for us, gave me a call, told me about it and I read the email. She had really great facts, I asked her for years past numbers, she got those right away

and that was just one piece of the string, but it was a good item. I took it into our meeting, all the editors laughed and we thought about going with a bigger feature on it, but it turned out that, you know, our readers don't want a big feature on bedbugs. Maybe just a small one. Anyway, I thought that was a good example, she did a little reporting and thought like a journalist and helped us out.

That's pretty much all I have to say about Takeoffs. Sometimes some things from Takeoffs will turn into larger stories, I don't mind getting feature pitches as well, I do those on the side, but Nancy wanted us to talk about other parts of the Weekend Journal and how we might cover the travel industry. Paula and I are the main travel people, but some of the other people touch on travel. We have a freelancer who used to work for the Journal Ray Sokolov, who does food reviews sometimes, so you can contact him sometimes, although he really doesn't do trend pieces, his are more reviews. And The Finicky Traveler, Laura Landro -- I've heard horror stories. She doesn't tell you when she stays at a hotel, she'll just go and stay and find the good and the bad and the ugly and write about it. I don't know if you even need to pitch her because she'll pretty much do her own thing.

I don't know if I'm missing anything, we cover travel, we have a Home Front page that covers property, real estate, living trends. We have Hollywood, we have a movie review on the front of a section and a Hollywood Report columnist. We do a little bit of art coverage, museums, anything we can relate, we're interested in. So, I'll turn it back over to Nancy.