

EPISODE 159

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:09] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious how OnePitch can help you find relevant journalists to pitch, including some of the guests on this podcast? Head to our website at onepitch.co to learn more.

Our guest this week on the podcast is Lucia Moses, a senior correspondent at Insider. Lucia writes and reports on media for the publication and how the previous role as deputy editor overseeing media and advertising coverage. During the episode, Lucia talks about the difference in stories that are behind the paywall versus in front of it, why she enjoys covering well-known brands, her openness to feedback on stories, and more. Let's hear from Lucia now.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:00:57] BB: Welcome, everyone. This is Coffee with a Journalist, where we talk to journalists about what they like about pitching and not pitching and exclusives and maybe embargoes and all that good stuff. I'm Beck Bamberger. Happy to be here, listening with you all. Today from live New York is a senior correspondent from Insider. Lucia Moses is here from New York. Hi, Lucia. What's up?

[00:01:25] LM: Hi, Beck. Great to be here.

[00:01:26] BB: Thank you for being here. Now, Lucia, I ask this of everybody, just in case, maybe they're not as familiar. How would you describe Insider overall?

[00:01:37] LM: Yeah, yeah. Sure. Insider is a digital native news outlet. We're a general news outlet. We cover it all. I work on the subscription side of the business news side. It can be a little confusing for people to navigate, I think, because we have a lot of content behind the paywall, and we have a lot in front of a paywall. Sometimes, over the years, we have shifted our approach, as we've started the paywall a few years ago and experimented and seeing what

works and what doesn't. But we strive to be fascinating, right? Fascinating stories and interesting stories that you won't see anywhere else.

[00:02:18] BB: Yes. There is a lot in front of paywall, behind paywall. Is there an easy way you delineate that for, let's say, readers or even just in your own work? Do you just have a disclosure on emails from you of like, "Hey, I'm behind the paywall," or, "No, I'm not," because some of it varies?

[00:02:36] LM: Sure. I think the easiest way to explain it is just that the stories that tend to be behind the paywall are ones that are targeted to a business audience, a specialized audience that we think people need to read to do their jobs, whereas stuff that goes in front of the paywall might tend to be more for a general read, general audience of widespread consumer interest or a need to know kind of story.

[00:03:06] BB: Good. Okay, that's a good delineation. If it's valuable to your job, it's probably behind the paywall. Like valuable emphasizing giving you the secret sauce, I would say.

[00:03:16] LM: Right.

[00:03:16] BB: Yeah. Okay. So now, your inbox, Lucia, how crazy is it? Or are you one of those insane zero inbox people, which there are a few of you out there?

[00:03:26] LM: I wish I could say that. It's a mess. I wish I could start over. But the horse is out of the barn, so I just do my best. Just try to skim it, scan it multiple times throughout the day. I look at my notifications a lot. I can't even attempt to be on top of it. It's hard.

[00:03:47] BB: It is hard, and that's a very honest answer. Thank you for being so honest. So do you do any filing? Or are you a mass delete? What helps a little bit with the sanity, if there's any shreds of one?

[00:04:00] LM: Yeah. I try to, yeah, shred. Mass deletion at the end of the day, which is why – I know you would ask about this later, but I don't mind the follow up. I don't mind if people just call

me and say, "Hey, did you see this email? If you didn't, I'm just following up." It's okay. I'm not going to yell at you.

[00:04:16] BB: Okay. One follow up okay?

[00:04:18] LM: Sure.

[00:04:19] BB: Okay, one. But how much is too much? I know it's later that we'll talk about it but

—

[00:04:23] LM: Yeah. I think one is probably enough, and I do try to respond to people if I think we're going to have an ongoing relationship, "Hey, thanks. It's not for me," or, "Passing on this one."

[00:04:34] BB: That's respectful and that's nice. Are there any pitches from their subject lines that stand out to you?

[00:04:40] LM: Sure. I can think of a couple recently.

[00:04:43] BB: Oh, tell us.

[00:04:44] LM: I don't want to be too specific with the names because I haven't written the stories yet.

[00:04:49] BB: Okay, of course. Fair, fair.

[00:04:51] LM: But the name of the company caught my eye. The theme or the topic that it was attached to caught my eye. So I'm going to make this up. But if it were —

[00:05:03] BB: Yeah, yeah. Tell us.

[00:05:04] LM: Disney and streaming or something. I think, okay, those are companies. That's a company I'm covering. That's a topic I'm really interested in. So company names, exact names,

topic it's about. Of course, if it's exclusive, if that's in the subject line, I know you're going to get to that later, but that's obviously appealing.

[00:05:25] BB: So you want the names, the brand, the detail in the subject line, ideally, for it to stand out to you.

[00:05:32] LM: Yeah. No curiosity gap, please. Just get to it.

[00:05:36] BB: No gap.

[00:05:37] LM: No. I have a secret company you might want to know more about.

[00:05:41] BB: No. Yeah, pass. Okay. I am definitely finding on here, as we talk more about subject lines, with rare exception, but how direct, specific, no gotchas, no secretiveness going on because just tell me what it is in the subject line, please and that's it is preferred.

[00:05:59] LM: Yeah. Definitely, definitely. We're all busy. We don't have a lot of time. Maybe all you see is what's on the notification.

[00:06:06] BB: That's it.

[00:06:07] LM: Be economical with the words.

[00:06:09] BB: Yep. Be economical with the words. I like that. How about then the actual pitch? For you, what's a great pitch?

[00:06:19] LM: It's a pitch about a company or industry, obviously, that I'm covering or that I want to cover more. It's about a topic that's squarely in line with the topics we want to own. It's ideally exclusive to me. It has details about what executives or executive companies can offer up. There's some details about the news they can offer, the data points they can offer. We're going to tell you the first time what our plans are or how much we're going to invest, etc. And there's a timeframe. We can set up an interview this week. We have a story. We'd like it to go live on this day. That helps.

[00:06:59] BB: Yep. You put the desire on it. Yep. You did just say exclusive to me. So there seems to be some murkiness around exclusives or something you hear on the show and in various circles. So exclusive to me, meaning, hey, I am getting all of the news, and there's no other reporter or outlet that is getting a part of this news. Correct?

[00:07:23] LM: Right. I think kind of like how on our end, as reporters, there's some difference in opinion, say, what on background means or what on or off the record means. When people say exclusive, I just like to clarify. Do you mean the whole thing is exclusive to me, or I'm getting exclusive interview with a person, or it's exclusive for half an hour, and then everybody **[inaudible 00:07:48]** news?

[00:07:49] BB: Yes, very good point. When do you ask those details? Is that upon the first email where you're like, "Hmm. Interesting but –"?

[00:07:59] LM: I think it helps to get that out of the way as soon as possible, so we're just on the same page.

[00:08:03] BB: Yes. Good. I like your clarification list because I don't think others necessarily have that. Then there becomes the confusion and all those pieces. Not good.

[00:08:13] LM: Yeah. Then feelings get hurt, and it's unhappy, unhappy situation, so.

[00:08:19] BB: But I have to ask for you, given the Hollywood name brands that you're covering, and I'd imagine some do not want to be teeing up interviews all over the place, given the legacy and the hugeness of the brands, how often do you find that you get an exclusive but, in fact, it's just to have the partial interview, to have the one hour before everyone else and so forth?

[00:08:46] LM: Right. So, yeah, there is a lot of news that goes out there that's widely distributed, for sure. That's where, as a payroll publication, we have to just pick and choose and decide whether something is worth it for us. Because we're a small team, we can't cover everything. So it's not to say we would never cover something that's going wide. But we have to

think pretty strategically about it. Is there some way we can advance it? Is there some way that it helps show that we're covering the beat?

[00:09:15] BB: Yeah.

[BREAK]

[00:09:17] ANNOUNCER: Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to see the unique ways OnePitch helps PR professionals and marketers pitch journalists? Head to onepitch.co to learn about our new OnePitch score, and see how easy it is to find the right journalists to pitch your news to. Sign up for your free account today. Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW RESUMED]

[00:09:41] BB: What do you love to write about?

[00:09:43] LM: Oh, gosh.

[00:09:44] BB: Because, for example, you got Lord of the Rings on here. You got Warner Brothers. Then you have layoff stuff. I'm sure that's not a favorite one. But like NBA, IMG. I mean, there are so many phenomenal, big, huge companies you're covering. I was curious. Just do you have a favorite?

[00:09:59] LM: Oh, gosh. I feel super lucky and privileged to be even covering these companies at all? They represent the biggest, most iconic, and exciting names out there from the big tech companies that are now becoming entertainment companies, the Disney's and the Warner Brothers. I mean, well, there's only one Disney. There's only one Warner Brothers. No, it's super just exciting to be covering these companies that are household names.

[00:10:28] BB: Yes. Then everyone recognizes too.

[00:10:30] LM: And that are at the cusp of the entertainment business. So it's super fun.

[00:10:36] BB: Therefore, there's not necessarily a favorite. You just like the overall industry of the name brands that everyone knows so well.

[00:10:44] LM: I mean, I think, as journalists, we just naturally gravitate toward the disruptors and the legacy companies that are trying to keep up with the disruption and try to reinvent themselves. So I know journalists get associated with doing the takedowns all the time. But we like to do the turnaround stories too, the success stories, like *The Little Engine That Could*.

[00:11:11] BB: Yes.

[00:11:11] LM: So I love all of it.

[00:11:13] BB: That's great. I always love having someone on here who is like so into their beat and just voraciously consumes it, wants to be in it, is about it. It's so fun. We have a audience ask from Sabrina **[inaudible 00:11:27]** Miller from her agency it looks like. Are you ready for a little audience ask, Lucia?

[00:11:32] LM: Oh, yeah. Go for it.

[00:11:33] BB: Here we go. How do journalists feel about publicists asking for corrections in digital articles, name corrections, punctuation, etc.? Do you get those?

[00:11:46] LM: I never make a mistake. No.

[00:11:49] BB: Oh, yeah.

[00:11:49] LM: Of course.

[00:11:49] BB: Me, never. Yes, yeah.

[00:11:52] LM: We have a really strict corrections policy, and I feel like it's kind of fundamentals, right? Getting the basics right. When I was an editor or now as a reporter, if I got a request that

there's like a basic factual thing wrong or like a title is wrong or a name is misspelled, I take it really seriously, and I want to correct it as fast as possible.

[00:12:14] BB: Oh, good. So as fast as possible. Noted.

[00:12:17] LM: Yeah. I want people to let me know.

[00:12:20] BB: Yes. Okay. Good. So you welcome that.

[00:12:22] LM: Yeah.

[00:12:22] BB: I'm assuming, though, in the other category of like, "Well, I don't like how that's phrased," that's just – No, there's no correction for that because, factually, it's not a correction.

[00:12:33] LM: Right, right. Well, our policy is that we don't change things because somebody didn't like them, right? We adamantly will absolutely correct factual mistakes. But I still want to hear all kinds of feedback from people, even if it's negative, and I want to have a conversation with them about it. It doesn't mean it's going to change. But I'm open to a healthy conversation about it. I am always just curious how things come across to people.

[00:13:01] BB: Yes. How often do you get feedback, by the way, like reader feedback?

[00:13:06] LM: A lot.

[00:13:07] BB: Oh, really? Oh.

[00:13:08] LM: Yeah, a fair amount.

[00:13:09] BB: Okay.

[00:13:10] LM: We post a lot on LinkedIn, and LinkedIn is a great place for feedback. I feel like it's healthier than some other places.

[00:13:18] **BB:** Yes, yes.

[00:13:19] **LM:** Sometimes, it's in my inbox. Sometimes, it's just a text.

[00:13:22] **BB:** A text? People will text you? Oh, those must be people you know, of course. Thank God, right?

[00:13:26] **LM:** Yeah.

[00:13:27] **BB:** Okay. Good.

[00:13:28] **LM:** My DMs are open. My phone number is out there.

[00:13:31] **BB:** DMs, okay. Okay. All the places. All the places. Was there recent feedback you received that you thought, "Oh, that was actually helpful."?

[00:13:40] **LM:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:13:41] **BB:** Yeah. Okay.

[00:13:44] **LM:** Are you asking for specifics?

[00:13:45] **BB:** Yeah. Just like – Were you like, "Oh, this person reached out, and they said this, and that was helpful."?

[00:13:49] **LM:** Yeah. What I always want is, "Yeah, I saw your story, and I have this feedback." I always ask. I try to send around a story to the subjects of it and the sources I talked to. I say what did I miss? What'd I screw up?

[00:14:05] **BB:** Oh, yeah. What'd I miss?

[00:14:07] **LM:** I genuinely want people to tell me what'd I miss or what's the next story I should do on this topic.

[00:14:13] BB: Oh, yes. Oh, okay.

[00:14:15] LM: So it becomes an ongoing topic and an ongoing conversation. It's not a one and done.

[00:14:21] BB: Yes. I'd imagine, just for the level of the legacy brands you work with, there's always more stories. There's always more things coming about. So must keep you busy. Okay. What about relationship building, Lucia? If no one knows you, they haven't met you somewhere in New York, or they haven't interacted with you before, what's your advice to building a relationship with you?

[00:14:46] LM: I'm relatively new to covering his beat. I've been doing it for a few months now, and I'm trying to just meet people in person as much as I can. I love to grab coffee. I love to grab drinks with people, even if it's just a phone call.

[00:15:00] BB: Coffee, drinks. Great. Got it. Got it.

[00:15:02] LM: Yeah. Yeah. There's no substitute for meeting people in person.

[00:15:05] BB: There's really not. There's not. So this is one thing I'm further asking people who are like, "Yeah, invite me." Do you have like, "Oh, I like to have coffee at this place in Soho."? Or like do you have like your favorite spots you want to go to? Just say.

[00:15:21] LM: I love getting all around the city. I live in the city and work in the city, and I'm up for going anywhere.

[00:15:27] BB: Okay. She's open for anywhere. Oh, this is so exciting. I hope you get some emails and post this podcast here. Okay. Now, we have a little rapid fire section. So I'm just going to give you the A or B, and then you say what your preference is. Then we'll wrap up. Does that sound good?

[00:15:45] LM: Go for it.

[00:15:46] **BB:** Okay. Here we go. Video or phone interview?

[00:15:49] **LM:** Phone, unless I've never met the person, and I expect to be talking to them a lot. It's nice to see what people look like.

[00:15:56] **BB:** Yes. Bullet points or paragraphs?

[00:15:59] **LM:** Short paragraphs are nice.

[00:16:00] **BB:** Okay. Short or long pitches?

[00:16:03] **LM:** No more than one screen.

[00:16:05] **BB:** Ooh, that's a good – No more than one screen. Okay. Images attached or a Dropbox zip file?

[00:16:11] **LM:** Attached. So I don't have to click 1,000 times.

[00:16:16] **BB:** Go to the thing, to the find the thing. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Everyone likes – Yeah. Everyone is preferring an attachment. Pitches in the morning or at night or no preference?

[00:16:24] **LM:** I would say the morning.

[00:16:25] **BB:** Okay. Morning ET time too, just so people know. Yeah.

[00:16:28] **LM:** Morning. Yeah. Yeah. I mean, really anytime but –

[00:16:31] **BB:** Any time, yeah. Email or Twitter DM?

[00:16:34] **LM:** Email is better, even though – Despite what I said about my inbox being a hot mess. I mean, it's just hard to monitor all these other places, and I do sometimes miss Twitter DMs. So I don't want to miss your pitch.

[00:16:47] **BB:** Yes. So put into one place. One follow up or multiple? I know we've covered this.

[00:16:52] **LM:** I think one is fine. If I haven't responded the second time, it's probably just not for me, and I just haven't had time to get back to you.

[00:17:00] **BB:** Direct or creative subject lines? We covered that a bit.

[00:17:03] **LM:** I would keep it direct. Keep it simple, economical.

[00:17:08] **BB:** Economical, economical with your words. Yes. Then press release or media kit?

[00:17:14] **LM:** I just like to get the press release. I just like to see it in the email.

[00:17:18] **BB:** You just want to see Yes. Oh, like copied and pasted like right there?

[00:17:21] **LM:** Right there. Yeah. Again, the fewer things I have to click and open, the better.

[00:17:25] **BB:** The better, the better. I like it. Lucia, is there anything that you want to promote, highlight, brag about, etc.? We're here for you.

[00:17:37] **LM:** I'm just really interested right now, as I'm sure as a lot of people are, in how chat AI is taking the industry by storm. Really fascinated with that part of the industry, how it's going to affect what media is made, how people work, the output.

[00:17:56] **BB:** Are you hearing anything so far from these big brands that are like, "Oh, oh, oh," sweating it a little bit or no?

[00:18:02] **LM:** I think there's naturally a lot of fear, but I don't think it's necessarily warranted. I don't think things change that fast. I think it is smart for media companies to be thinking about how the rise of conversational search will change what people come to them for and what they need them for.

[00:18:21] BB: We shall see. I'm sure some of these big companies are maybe sweating a little bit. But like with all technology advances, there's always the sweaty period. So I guess we will see. I guess we will see.

Lucia, thank you for being here today. Thanks for taking some time, and I love your be economic with your words and invite her to coffee, drinks, etc. all in New York City.

[00:18:45] LM: Absolutely. Thanks so much, Beck. Great to be here.

[00:18:48] BB: Thank you. Appreciate it.

[00:18:49] LM: Have a good one.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:18:51] ANNOUNCER: Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, featuring Lucia Moses from Insider. For more exclusive insights about the journalists on this podcast, subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter at onepitch.co/podcast. We'll see you next week with even more insights about the journalists you want to learn more about. Until then, start great stories.

[END]