

EPISODE 147

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:09] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist brought to you by OnePitch. The guests on our show include some of the most notable journalists who write about topics ranging from technology, to lifestyle and culture, health, and science. We discuss the types of stories they cover, their thoughts on exclusives and embargoes, their favorite pitches, and how they connect with sources. Head to onepitch.co and look for the video page to learn more about our new video series, featuring journalists from the show.

Our guest this week on Coffee with a Journalist is Kimeko McCoy. Kimeko is a senior marketing reporter for Digiday, who covers media buying and ad spending, along with marketing strategy. She also covers the DENI and the future of workspaces from an agency perspective. During the episode, Kimeko talks about the importance of an email follow up, the in and out mentality when it comes to cold sources, her pitching pet peeves, and more. Let's hear from Kimeko now.

[INTERVIEW]

[00:01:18] BB: Welcome, everyone. I'm Beck Bamberger. We are here with Coffee with a Journalist, where sometimes we drink coffee. Sometimes, it's later in the day, and we don't have time for that. So today with us, live from Atlanta, not drinking coffee at this point because it is late, is, well, maybe, we'll see, Kimeko McCoy. She's from Digiday. Specifically, she's the senior marketing reporter, and she'll be chatting with us about all things marketing, as it relates to Digiday. So welcome first, Kimeko.

[00:01:47] KM: Thank you so much for having me. No, I do not have coffee. It is about 6:00 PM here, so I'm trying to tone it down for the day. Water though.

[00:01:54] BB: Tone it down. Yep. Water. Water is always good. But for people who listen to a little video vignettes, yes, you do like coffee. She likes to be invited to coffee, so definitely invite you if you happen to be in Atlanta, right, because you're based there?

[00:02:07] KM: Absolutely.

[00:02:08] BB: Okay. If you're coming by, do that. Okay. Kimeko, I feel like you already want to say a lot about your inbox because you already alluded to it on the other thing. So what's in there? How's it going?

[00:02:20] KM: If I look at it right now, it is a massive flood of everything from do you want to do a book review to here is a really good story about an organic brand on social media. It runs the gamut.

[00:02:34] BB: Do you have – How many pitches a day would you say?

[00:02:38] KM: Oh, man. It's got to be at least 30. It's got – Yeah. I'm looking at about 30 to 50.

[00:02:44] BB: Okay. 30 to 50. Okay. Wow. Okay. Do you have some kind of sorting system you do? Or are you a let it ride it person? Or you're a master leader. Everyone's a little bit different.

[00:02:57] KM: Oh, my goodness. My system is actually extremely chaotic. I actually like take notes of the emails that I have to respond to because we've already started correspondence. But otherwise, this is why I say make sure that you follow up with me because sometimes I wait for somebody to email me twice to see how important it is.

[00:03:12] BB: Oh, interesting.

[00:03:14] KM: If you follow up, then I know you mean business.

[00:03:16] BB: Oh, I haven't heard that before on here. So you want to see the follow up to see the intent. It's like the little measurement.

[00:03:25] KM: Yes, exactly. It's such a terrible thing that I do but –

[00:03:28] BB: That's okay.

[00:03:29] KM: If you're pushing for it, then I know I've got a source. I've got potentially a story, and the lines of communication are more open.

[00:03:36] BB: So let me ask you, though, what's the number of people who follow up percentage-wise?

[00:03:42] KM: You know what's so crazy? Most people do not follow up. Most people do not follow up. So I think by the time it's all said and done, I would maybe have less than half people actually following up.

[00:03:54] BB: Okay, dang. Oh, less than that. Well, even that's a high percentage I would say. But wow, the follow up. Okay. Good to know. Then do you use your inbox at all like kind of your own personal like Google search, like where you go in there and search for something from four months ago and try to find it and reach back out?

[00:04:15] KM: Oh, all the time. Because Digiday does a lot of analysis stories and insights and plug things like that, I often find myself having to circle back around for stuff, so a lot of that.

[00:04:25] BB: So you'll let that be in there. Okay. But like look back at it. That's what I do for my emails, by the way. But the problem with that is then you see stuff you're like, "Hmm, 2016. What was happening then?" You do get a lot, but thank God for a lot of data. So that is good.

Kimeko, you came prepared on our little video interview with your whole sheet of notes on pitch tips. Do you have preferences for the pitches you like to receive?

[00:04:57] KM: The pitches that I like to receive are the ones, and I've tweeted about this several times, I stand 10 toes down on it, are the ones where you can tell that the person is interested in what it is that you do, and they're trying to find synergy, as opposed to trying to like fit a circle into a square with something that neither I nor Digiday has ever reported on or done. If there's a valid attempt to say, "Hey, I know you cover this. I'm going to get you who, what, when, where, why, and how, some time to chat," you've got my attention.

[00:05:30] BB: Okay. Do you even want to see it spelled out as explicit as that bullet-wise, like what, who, where, what?

[00:05:37] KM: Yeah. That absolutely works for me. Absolutely, that in and out mentality, I think, is fantastic.

[00:05:44] BB: Yeah. So I take it you don't want the like, "Oh, Kimeko, like how was your summer? And did you have a good break? And did you go to the –" Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

[00:05:53] KM: Absolutely not. After we've built the rapport and I feel like I know you on a first name basis, then like yeah. Now, I'm asking about like how are the kids and the dog But at that initial contact, just tell me what you need, and we can get into that.

[00:06:06] BB: Let's keep going. Let's keep going. Yes. Okay. Okay. So for the stories that you do, Kimeko – Well, actually, and I forgot to do something at the top of this here because I've been a little maybe rusty. But could you first tell us, what in your view does Digiday all encompass? Then we'll get into specifically the key stories you wish to hear about.

[00:06:28] KM: Absolutely. Amen. We run the gamut when it comes to covering all things digital. That's marketing on platforms, marketing on television. We cover up fronts, ad tech, MarTech, all of it. You name it, we cover it but, again, with that in-depth analysis. Did you ask my favorite stories to write? I talk so much.

[00:06:46] BB: Yeah. So you do – It's quite a wide – Let's just say it's wide, I would say, your coverage. I'm looking at like, oh, direct to consumer stuff but experimental channels. You have like this fun confessions thing I like, by the way. Tell us about that. I want to hear about that.

[00:07:01] KM: Oh, my goodness.

[00:07:02] BB: Yeah. The confession sauce.

[00:07:02] KM: Those are my favorite. That's where you get the juicy scoops.

[00:07:05] BB: Oh, okay. So go ahead. Tell us about that.

[00:07:08] KM: Yeah. So we run our confession series, which is essentially an anonymous Q&A. Obviously, we verify who it is that we're talking to on our side, but for the purpose of keeping their identity quiet so that they can speak freely. It's kind of how we approach it. We've done everything about media buying, media spend, DENI, all types of things, the pressures of work during COVID. We've gotten some really interesting pieces that have started conversations in the industry.

[00:07:34] BB: I don't know any other outlet that does that.

[00:07:37] KM: It is a good talking point.

[00:07:39] BB: Yeah. So this last one, for example, you did starts with "I'm burning money": Confessions of an ad exec on the current volatile digital ad landscape. Burning money is not a good luck these days I got to say in the tech world, but okay.

[BREAK]

[00:08:00] 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]

[00:08:23] BB: Wow. That must be fun. You also mentioned when we were doing the little video vignettes like profiles. You'd like to have profiles. Who pitches you a profile that you're like, "Oh, I want to do that."?

[00:08:35] KM: You know, the profiles, I typically have to go hunting for those. I'll get pitches every once in a while. I'm like, "Yeah. It's interesting." But my favorite ones are the ones that I

have to like hunt the source down, where I'm talking to them. I'm talking to their colleagues, people that they used to work with. I think those probably make for the best stories. The most recent one I did is about Tiktok's Head of Creative Agency Partnerships team, Krystle Watler. She was a fantastic person to talk to. I've got a couple more coming up before the end of the year. So I hope you guys are ready.

[00:09:05] BB: Hopefully, hopefully. Okay, good. So profiles. And then since those aren't really pitched to you, you got to hunt those down. Is there anything that you maybe have found a preference for that comes via a pitch? I know you like the short and sweet and just tell you the things, but is there anything that you're getting recently that you're like, "Oh, thank you for doing a good job."?

[00:09:25] KM: Yeah. On those profiles – So again, if there's like where I can tell that you've read some of the other stuff I've written, I'm a sucker for a good pitch. There's a handful of people in particular, where they'll come in and say, "Hey, I'll tell you how this company is spending their ad dollars, or we can get something on the books about how this person changed this marketing industry from inside out." I'm like, "Yep, I'm sold. You got me."

[00:09:48] BB: Okay. Okay. Do you have any pet peeves of pitching? I know we talked a little bit about that, like the name spelling, but the pet peeves.

[00:09:59] KM: Yeah. In addition to spelling my name wrong.

[00:10:01] BB: Yes.

[00:10:02] KM: Pet peeves would be if there is a clear lack of synergy happening there. I've had a couple of times where somebody will pitch me and say, "Hey, we've got this pre-written article. We'd love for you to publish it," and it'll be four or five times that they followed up with me. I'm like, "We've never published a pre-written article." They'll be like, "Oh, yeah. I had no idea." I'm like, "If you scan the website even once."

[00:10:24] BB: Even once, you would see. Jesus. Okay. That's a bad look. Okay. Anything else really grinds your gears, as my dad likes to say?

[00:10:33] KM: Yeah. I think I'm pretty forgiving when it comes to pitching. I couldn't do my job without a lot of the communications professional, so I'm incredibly grateful but I'm – So I don't keep a whole lot of pet peeves. Like I said, the only one would probably be – Or every once in a while, I'll have somebody find out like my personal number and call me like eight o'clock. Then I'm like, “Um, hello.”

[00:10:54] BB: Oh. Eight o'clock at night?

[00:10:57] KM: Yeah.

[00:10:58] BB: What?

[00:10:58] KM: They'll be like, “Hey, I know that I pitched you earlier.” I'm like, “Yeah.”

[00:11:02] BB: Oh, no. Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no.

[00:11:06] KM: Like, “I'm in bed with my jammies on. Maybe we can talk about this tomorrow.”

[00:11:10] BB: Yeah. Wow. That seems to be very much the lost art or acceptance because who has a desk phone, like who's calling people? That's weird.

[00:11:19] KM: Oh, my gosh.

[00:11:20] BB: Do you get a lot of calls?

[00:11:21] KM: Not a lot. It only slips through every once in a while.

[00:11:25] BB: Yeah. Fascinating. Okay. Is there anything, Kimeko, that you're reading, watching, binging, listening to? We'll take all types of stories because we'd like to know what journalists are listening to and getting with their stories.

[00:11:39] KM: Oh, my goodness. Besides our own stories, I binge a lot of my morning podcast, Up First. It is one of my favorites because, again, I am a sucker for a get in and get out type of deal.

[00:11:51] BB: Yes, yes. Do you do the daily ever –

[00:11:53] KM: I do the daily. I do the daily.

[00:11:56] BB: Sometimes, I find them a little long, though. I have to say.

[00:12:00] KM: Yeah, they are. There's another one by Vox. I can't remember the name of it. I think it's called like – I'm actually going to look up the name. American terrorist, American something. But it is so –

[00:12:14] BB: I know which one you're talking about.

[00:12:16] KM: So good. I love it so much. But, yeah, that's the only other one that I've been like bingeing, besides a podcast called Ear Hustle, American Terror.

[00:12:24] BB: Yes. Okay. Ear Hustle, that's the one where they do it from prison.

[00:12:27] KM: Oh, my God. It's so good.

[00:12:29] BB: It is so good. I have started that, and it's just the wild world. It's like Orange Is the New Black but factual, not fiction.

[00:12:40] KM: It is such a good –

[00:12:40] BB: I think that show is super factual-based apparently, so wow. Oh, it's great. I highly recommend it too.

[00:12:46] KM: Yeah. 10 out of 10. 10 out of 10.

[00:12:47] **BB**: 10 out of 10. I'm like – I have also wondered too, like how did that get approved?

[00:12:54] **KM**: I think about that a lot.

[00:12:56] **BB**: Yes. Who was like, “Hey. You know what, prison guard?” I don't even – Who do you even go to? I don't even know. But just to be like, “Yeah, we want to do a podcast about what's going on in here.”

[00:13:06] **KM**: Yeah. But what an incredible opportunity to go from –

[00:13:08] **BB**: What an incredible opportunity.

[00:13:10] **KM**: Inmate to cohost of a really good show.

[00:13:14] **BB**: Yeah. Can you imagine that on your LinkedIn?

[00:13:17] **KM**: Oh, my goodness.

[00:13:17] **BB**: [inaudible 00:13:17] for the last five years or whatever, God, long time you've been doing. Anyway, anyway. Yes. Okay.

[00:13:23] **KM**: Incredible work.

[00:13:24] **BB**: Incredible. Kimeko, is there anything you're doing outside of all the reporting that you do that's just like for fun?

[00:13:31] **KM**: Oh, this is assuming that I have a life.

[00:13:34] **BB**: Yes. This does. This does assume that. Yes.

[00:13:37] **KM**: Outside of work, I spend a lot of time reading and hanging out with my newly adopted dog, a two-year-old Yorkipoo.

[00:13:47] BB: How did you find your dog?

[00:13:49] KM: I had a friend rehome him. She had a zoo. It had been growing at her house. I said, "Well, if you want, I'll take one of them off your hands. I've been looking to add something to my little family." So he's here and hanging out, loud and proud.

[00:14:04] BB: What have you learned so far?

[00:14:06] KM: Oh, my goodness. I have gotten a whole new crop of patience. He actually just threw up on my floor a second ago.

[00:14:12] BB: Okay. Great. Yep. Yep. Sounds about right. Oh, my. Great.

[00:14:17] KM: But lots of snuggles, lots of cuddles. So it's cool.

[00:14:20] BB: Yes. This is redeeming of the dogs. Kimeko, kind of just to round us out for the rest of our day today, what do you feel is the future of journalism?

[00:14:33] KM: Oh, man. There is so much to be considered, and it's going to sound so trite. But I think it's a matter of getting back to the basics. We have got to build, and we'll build and renew the relationships with our readers by being trustworthy over being fast. We're competing in an environment where news is at your fingertips, and there is not always a good way to verify the source. So we've got to get back to the basics and make sure that we're building ourselves up to make ourselves first and foremost with our readers.

[00:15:05] BB: Yes. In your view, what does that look like perhaps?

[00:15:09] KM: I think it's a vetting process, making sure that, again, instead of being first, you're focused on being right, providing analysis, so less than trying to move at like breakneck speed that we've grown accustomed to with very much digital landscape. If you'd need some extra time with that story, take it. Get into the weeds, and don't be afraid to ask questions. We've got to get back to the basics.

[00:15:32] BB: I love nothing more than the 7,000-word piece. That has been researched for probably even a year in some cases. As we know, it's some of the in-depth pieces, but those are just so – They just made me so happy because it's like, wow, someone's real dedicated work really went into this and you know that was not produced in 48 hours. Just it's not. Kimeko, thank you for being here. What a joy.

[00:16:00] KM: Thank you for having me. It was such a pleasure.

[00:16:02] BB: Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving. I know you are super excited.

[00:16:08] KM: I am. I think I mentioned at the beginning of this that I specifically want to go buy pants for Thanksgiving.

[00:16:12] BB: Pants. She has the pants. Send her. Don't send her any pants. She only needs one pair. She only needs one pair. But invite her to coffee, if you happen to be in Atlanta.

[00:16:23] KM: Send me pitches. I've got the pants.

00:16:25BB: There you go. Kimeko McCoy, thank you. Thanks so much for being here on OnePitch today. Appreciate you.

[00:16:31] KM: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:16:33] ANNOUNCER: Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, featuring Kimeko McCoy from Digiday. To learn more about the latest tools on OnePitch and to subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter, head to our website at onepitch.co. We'll see you all next week with even more insights about the journalists you want to learn more about. Until then, start great stories.

[END]

