

EPISODE 216

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:08] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist, brought to you by the team at OnePitch. Are you looking for a more efficient way to find and pitch the right journalists? Head to our website at onepitch.co to learn more.

Our guest on today's episode of Coffee with a Journalist is Kelsey Ramirez, Strategic Initiatives Associate at Fox Business, where she edits the team's coverage about personal finance. During the episode, Kelsey discusses her strategy for managing and prioritizing emails using color-coded tags, what she likes to see in a subject line, timing preferences for exclusives and her favorite newsletters for staying inspired and on top of the latest headlines.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:46] BB: Welcome everyone, this is Coffee with a Journalist. We cover a lot of things here on this lovely podcast, mostly about what journalists dislike, yes, but also like about the publicists that are in their world, because we both meet each other and this show hopefully helps that become better and a more salient reality, because we all need to work together and function together as publicists and the great media and journalists that we have. With us today coming live from Texas, where it's raining, I heard, is Kelsey Ramirez. She's the personal finance editor at Fox Business. Kelsey, thanks for being here.

[0:01:24] KR: Thanks for having me.

[0:01:25] BB: Yes. Okay, first for maybe those not as familiar and I do ask this of many, many outlets. How would you describe the coverage beat of Fox Business as it relates today?

[0:01:37] KR: I am more on the personal finance side where we write about anything, personal finance, anything affecting the economy, mortgage rates, what they're doing, the auto market, the housing market, anything in the economy that's affecting people's personal pocketbook.

[0:01:54] BB: Also, further on Fox Business is like, yeah, markets, some lifestyle stuff, real estates on there, some tech stuff too, but yes, Kelsey, in your particular realm, I like how you describe that, like it's in your pocketbook, it's in your pocket. Yeah, how was it hitting you basically? Tell us a little bit more, because when we first got on here, you said, "Oh, I used to do a lot of the writing." But now you're more as the editor. How did that transition occur?

[0:02:18] KR: I was a writer for a long time. I actually wrote at a publication called HousingWire before this. Now, just strictly housing market. Then I transitioned to Fox where I was continued writing. Then I think the position just opened up where there's a possibility to be an editor. I had experienced at HousingWire also, I used to edit a magazine and I was like, I think it's time I'm going to try to step into that full-time editor role and just see how it goes and haven't looked back since.

[0:02:46] BB: Hey, good to go. When we do have editors on here, it's way different than, let's say, a reporter or necessarily a freelancer who's in pitching receiving pitching, and then have to like pitch themselves. How would you describe – well, let's go with your inbox first. How would you describe your inbox first?

[0:03:04] KR: Just a wild west in there. There's a little bit of everything coming everywhere, probably during this call, I might get a couple hundred emails just while we're talking here.

[0:03:13] BB: A couple hundred on this call for 20 minutes?

[0:03:17] KR: Yeah. Maybe closer to the 30 minutes here. Yeah, if I'm gone for too long, yeah, my inbox really, really builds up.

[0:03:23] BB: I think this is a record then that I've heard, a couple hundred.

[0:03:26] KR: I will say I subscribe to a lot of –

[0:03:29] BB: Okay. Okay, fair.

[0:03:30] KR: A lot of that is my doing. I miss any news that's coming out. Of course, I have my personal favorites that I follow. If there's newsletters, if there's news alerts, like I subscribe to all of it.

[0:03:41] BB: Okay. What are some of your favorites, by the way?

[0:03:43] KR: I really like to just keep it beat on what's going on in the economy. I was actually at Morning Brew is one of my favorite newsletters.

[0:03:51] BB: Oh, yes, yes.

[0:03:52] KR: It's a five-minute read. They'll give you everything going on, high level in the finance world, and then a little bit everything else too. I really love that one.

[0:04:01] BB: Wait, what was the second one? The Morning Brew and it covers finance world, but it also covers what's going on, just outside of that as well, just a snapshot.

[0:04:11] BB: You have to get your bearings. Okay. So, you admit that a lot of the emails that you have, okay, newsletters, you do it to yourself. That's okay. Every journalist that's been on here talks mentions that you're like consuming other journalists' material and stuff, which is great. What would you say, though, is the ratio of pitches that you get?

[0:04:31] KR: I would say probably, oh, that's a tough one. Again, just going by when we're on this call, I might get like, yeah, maybe like 10 within a 30-minute time period.

[0:04:43] BB: Okay. That's a lot or at least it feels like a lot. What do you do with all those pitches? Do you have a sorting mechanism or you just doing what you're doing? Let it ride.

[0:04:55] KR: What I usually do, I skim through, I kind of have this system, I'm a little bit OCD.

[0:05:00] BB: Good. What's the system? I want to hear?

[0:05:03] KR: I have this system. I go in this like, okay, between every single task that I do that's on my to-do list for the day, I go back and I check emails again just to make sure that they don't build up or something doesn't wait a couple hours before I'm able to see it. I'll just go back and I'll skim through if it's something that I can address right then I do it. Then if it's something that I need to come back to later when I have more time to focus on it, then I have like different color stars or tags that I put on that.

[0:05:29] BB: Wait a second. You have different color stars?

[0:05:32] KR: Yeah. I either star or tag it with different colors to know is this like urgent, I'll put it green, is this can this wait a little bit.

[0:05:39] BB: Well, this is the most elaborate I've heard. Stars, various systems and self-proclaimed, like you're pretty on top of it, you're pretty – does this system work for you?

[0:05:48] KR: It really does. It allows me to see, like whenever I look at my inbox, is it a bunch of things I need to do? Is it stuff that's already done that I just need to keep the email still for a little while? Of course, I have folders where I file some of it away as well, but I've done that before where I delete an email that I shouldn't have deleted that had notes from an interview or something that I needed or information that I needed. I learned that lesson the hard way. This just helps me to see like at a glance, it organizes the chaos, so I can see what's actually stuff I need to do and what's there, just because I need it to be there.

[0:06:27] BB: Wow. Kelsey, hats off to you. I feel like you are the most proficient in inbox management here. You should maybe leave a course for the other people that get on this little podcast, because mayhem is out there. Mayhem.

[0:06:39] KR: Probably miss my calling.

[0:06:40] BB: Maybe. Maybe. Inbox management by Kelsey. Okay. With the pitches that you receive and you're doing your flagging, you're doing your coding, you're doing all the things. Are you sending a number of those directly to your staff, let's say? Are you keeping any of those to write yourself? Because you mentioned, hey, you're really in the editor role now, so it's different

and I like to describe how it's different when it's an editor versus maybe a reporter. How would you describe?

[MESSAGE]

[0:07:09] ANNOUNVER: Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch.

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Now, back to today's episode.

[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[0:07:32] KR: Right now, I send most of the things, if it catches my interest, if it's something I think we should write up, I'll send it to the writers. If there's like an occasional all step in, but it has to be whenever I step in and write something, it's something I really want to write, like this really piqued my interest. I want to look into it further, because I'm interested. Now, I would say probably most of them at this point I'm sending on.

[0:07:57] BB: Got you. Okay. Then how do you manage that? Are you like, okay, I know my – how many people you got to dispatch stuff to, but there must be some process, but I think this is an illuminating thing to get over or to mention, how do you pick who you pick?

[0:08:12] KR: As far as who writes it up?

[0:08:13] BB: Yes.

[0:08:14] KR: Yeah. So, that one's a couple of things that would go into that. If I know someone likes a particular field, then I would send it to them or if I know that someone has a light plate right now, they don't have too many stories on that plate, then I might send it to them. What I'll also do is I'll just send it to everyone and say, "Hey, does anyone want to pick this up?" Then

decide if they're also interested in the story, if they think it looks worth their time and then they can decide if that's something they want to grab.

[0:08:42] BB: Okay. Got it. It's sound like a good process. Then it sounds like, but illuminate this for us, that you are looking at every email or is that not true? Like you're opening it?

[0:08:56] KR: I would say I probably do open every email as far as do I read past the subject line.

[0:09:03] BB: Questionable.

[0:09:03] KR: Maybe not.

[0:09:05] BB: Got you. Got you. Okay. So, then what in the subject line is a must for you to go, "Oh, I want to read that whole thing."

[0:09:12] KR: I would say things that might be my interest, if the subject line shows that they either know me or know what I do, I get a lot of pitches that is like, did you even read my bio? Like I don't even, this is not what I do.

[0:09:26] BB: They don't read your bio. That's the problem. This whole thing.

[0:09:28] KR: That is true. If it shows that they know me, or know what I do, or if the subject line looks close to maybe what you would think of a headline or something that puts an important stat out there, or something that within the piece, that catches my eye a little bit more just because it's kind of like, you can see that it's Newsy right from the start.

[0:09:49] BB: We want a headline. Got it. Okay.

[0:09:52] KR: This is something that our readers need to know about this. This is a stat that we need to get out there. I like seeing exclusive in the headline, so if I do see – exclusive. I'll read on. A lot of people use that term and then I really, it's just like – exclusive interview to sell their –

[0:10:09] BB: I know. Wait, explain that a little bit more, to sell their what?

[0:10:12] KR: To sell their products. Those can go wrong really quick, but I will say I will keep reading if I see the exclusive in there.

[0:10:20] BB: Okay. To define also, because I think it is helpful, what do you define as a true exclusive?

[0:10:27] KR: If we can get the news out before anyone else, and it is news that other people will also want.

[0:10:32] BB: Key criteria that other people want. Yeah, in other words, like you feel like, “Oh, goody. I got this before my competitors.” Right? Exactly. Okay. This is good to go. For you, especially since you're dispatching it to other reporters, what is the preferred timeframe you would like for an exclusive? If you have one. Some people like send it whenever. I don't care.

[0:10:55] KR: Like how long do I want it to be exclusive –

[0:10:59] BB: Well, actually, that's a good point. How long would you want it to be an exclusive for? Yes, but my original thinking was, if there is an exclusive, someone wants to tee up for you, how much time would you want the heads up for? You don't want two hours, for example, to like run an exclusive, but would you prefer like, “Oh, I'd have a week heads up.” I don't know.

[0:11:18] KR: If it's real news, I understand like you can't wait forever for one person to publish it to see if they're going to publish it before you start announcing it to other places. I get that on their end as well. You can't give too much time. I would say, I mean, at least a day or two.

[0:11:34] BB: Okay. A day or two.

[0:11:36] KR: Ideal just to get something out there.

[0:11:39] BB: Okay. A day or two. That's a tight time frame to get it pumped out. Good to know. Is there anything, Kelsey that really just irks you with pitches?

[0:11:48] KR: I think my biggest pet peeve is when someone, probably what I mentioned before, when someone sends something that's just way out of left field, like maybe wouldn't even go on Fox, kind of, like for your personal finance, like we wouldn't even write this up. When it's like has nothing to do with me or what I write, I think whenever you're sending stuff out, it should be, if you're taking the time to send it out, don't shock on it. You're going to get a lot more response. If you carefully pick who you're sending it to and why you're drafting it a little bit better.

[0:12:22] BB: What's the most outlandish pitch you got like, "Wow, that's really not at all for me." I'm thinking like someone sends you like, "Oh, our new lip gloss product release."

[0:12:33] KR: Yeah. We'll get that, we'll get weight loss kind of, we'll get all kinds of –

[0:12:41] BB: Not good. Not good. Are there any sources you're looking for or like sources where you're like, "Oh, I always want to hear from..."?

[0:12:49] KR: I love economists.

[0:12:50] BB: Economists. Okay.

[0:12:51] KR: They bring a great perspective. They're usually not trying to sell company products as much. It's more about just getting their brand exposure, name exposure thing. We are in turn getting that expert level view on what exactly is going on and I love talking to economists.

[0:13:12] BB: To clarify, are these like the ones in academia that are professors necessarily or you're like, "Oh, they're working at big institutes, whatever, and they're the economists on staff or does it matter?"

[0:13:26] KR: I think, honestly, in any of those would be.

[0:13:28] BB: Both, fly. Okay. Now, you Kelsey, we were talking about this earlier, are in Dallas. you're not in a major, let's say, well, you're in a major metropolitan, but not maybe a media one necessarily. Is there a way for publicists to make in-person relationships with you or just relationships in general? Let's just start with that.

[0:13:48] KR: Yeah. I think I have made most of my relationships on that in whenever I get to conferences.

[0:13:55] BB: Okay. You're out and about at conferences.

[0:13:58] KR: Yeah. That's a really great time to just connect. I'm there away from family anyway, trying to figure out what to do with my time there. So, using those opportunities to just like connect while we're all there.

[0:14:09] BB: Oh, good. What conferences can we see you at?

[0:14:13] KR: Let me see. I have one coming up in New York. I'll be in New York in July. The team hasn't really talked about.

[0:14:19] BB: Oh, okay. We can't say what it is yet.

[0:14:21] KR: Yeah. I don't know.

[0:14:23] BB: Okay. All good.

[0:14:24] KR: I might be in Atlanta this year.

[0:14:26] BB: Okay. Okay.

[0:14:27] KR: But still.

[0:14:28] BB: What maybe have you historically gone to that you're like, "Oh, I love that conference."

[0:14:32] KR: One of my favorites is back when I worked at HousingWire. I've gone to a couple of years with Fox actually too, is the NBA annual.

[0:14:39] BB: Oh, okay.

[0:14:41] KR: That one's for mortgage bankers. It's usually in October. It's the NBA's biggest conference of the year and it's usually a lot of fun. You get to catch up with all the people in the housing space.

[0:14:53] BB: Okay. Housing people. What a fun time to be in the housing space right now with interesting things?

[0:14:59] KR: It has been crazy.

[0:14:59] BB: Yes. The realtors getting slapped on not their commissions and all the things.

[0:15:06] KR: Yeah. I was shocked. I was shocked.

[0:15:08] BB: I was shocked too. Okay. For everyone who's maybe not as familiar, I own property. I want to know about this stuff and this is why I know this, which is the big huge real state association got slapped around basically to say. You all cannot take these ridiculous, huge commissions like you have historically. The US apparently is one of the highest commission rates and it's like, just because you opened up the door to show me an apartment doesn't mean I need to give you 6%. This is ridiculous. Things are changing in that space, which I think it's still quite ambiguous as to what now can be set. Kelsey, you probably know a lot more than I do on this of like what are the rules now?

[0:15:51] KR: I think they're trying to go for more like you set a flat fee from the being that you all agree on instead of putting that percentage out there, which erratically you could still set a pretty high flat fee and just not a percent, but the homeowners now seeing from the very start what they're going to be paying and I don't know. Well, it remains to be seen – how to fund when they actually feed the dollar amounts at the net.

[0:16:14] **BB:** Yeah. I'm freaking curious to see. Anyway, we digress. Kelsey, I have a quick rapid fire question series. Can I tee it up for you?

[0:16:25] **KR:** Yeah. Let's go for it.

[0:16:26] **BB:** Here we go. Video or phone interview?

[0:16:29] **KR:** Oh, phone.

[0:16:30] **BB:** Yes. Bullet points or paragraphs in a pitch?

[0:16:34] **KR:** Bullet points.

[0:16:35] **BB:** Yes. Short or long pitches?

[0:16:38] **KR:** Short.

[0:16:39] **BB:** Yes. How short, by the way?

[0:16:41] **KR:** If I can get through it in a couple sentences then that's a –

[0:16:44] **BB:** That's a win or bullet points. Great. Images attached or a drop box zip file?

[0:16:50] **KR:** No. Attached.

[0:16:52] **BB:** Email or let's say a DM on Instagram or X or wherever the hell you can get a DM these days?

[0:16:57] **KR:** I will say a DM I will usually always respond to, but I will want you to roll up through email.

[0:17:04] **BB:** Okay. Well, wow. Okay. One follow-up or multiple direct or creative subject lines?

[0:17:11] KR: I think both, depending on your –

[0:17:13] BB: Both. Okay. Not many people have said both. Okay. We're going to go with that. Press release or media kit?

[0:17:20] KR: Press release.

[0:17:22] BB: Time that you read pitches or is it all the time?

[0:17:25] KR: All the time.

[0:17:26] BB: Kelsey, is there anything that we can promote, tout, celebrate, etc. for you?

[0:17:33] KR: Oh, that is a hard question. I think just promotion wise, if you want to tell people look me up on LinkedIn. I love to connect, LinkedIn, Twitter. I love connecting through there. Usually, if I connect with you through there, I'm also more likely to respond through via email and all that as well, since we've established that connection.

[0:17:51] BB: Yes. Okay. Find her on email. She's getting 10 emails pitches every 20 minutes. It sounds like Kelsey. My God. But shout out to you again for your phenomenal. It sounds like email system management. My God. I think you got to teach a little course or something. Maybe we do another podcast. I'm just like, "Hey, journalists. This one's for you. Kelsey's system of managing pitches/everything else.

[0:18:17] KR: You can see all the color stars I have.

[0:18:19] BB: Oh, my God. How many colors do you have, by the way?

[0:18:21] KR: I think I'm at five, right now.

[0:18:23] BB: Five is pretty good. Okay. I was going to say, don't tell me 36 or something. That would be wild. Kelsey, thank you so much for being on today. Kelsey Ramirez. She's with Fox Business, the Personal Finance Editor, everybody. Don't send her a lip gloss pitches.

[0:18:41] KR: Do not. Thanks so much for having me.

[OUTRO]

[0:18:44] ANNOUNVER: Thanks for listening to this week's Coffee with the Journalist episode, featuring Kelsey Ramirez, Strategic Initiatives Associated at Fox Business. 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, but until then, start great stories.

[END]