

EPISODE 261

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:09] ANNOUNCER: Welcome to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist brought to you by the team at One Pitch. Are you looking for a more efficient way to find and pitch the right journalists? Head over to our website at OnePitch Co to learn more on this episode, we sit down with Tanya Mitra, a senior reporter at citywire usa, who offers some great advice for publicists. Hoping to catch her attention, chats about the art of building authentic source relationships in a compliance heavy industry and much, much more. Enjoy.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:00:42] BB: Welcome, everybody. This is Coffee with the Journals. I'm in a coffee shop, can you tell? And I actually got coffee. And people are having coffee back there in San Francisco. So it's a little loud in here today. That's okay. We've got to run with it. And today with us, I think in your h, you're in your house, right, Tina? Yeah.

[00:00:59] TM: Yeah.

[00:01:00] BB: Okay. She's cozy in her house. This is Tina Mitra. She is a senior reporter at Citywire USA and I'm excited to have you here today. Yay. Yay.

[00:01:12] TM:

Thank you. No, I'm definitely excited to be here. Thank you so much for having me.

[00:01:15] BB: Yes. First off, you're based in New York City. Tell us a little bit about City Wire because that's maybe not as known of an outlet perhaps or some thoughts. What do you all cover? What do you not cover?

[00:01:28] TM: Okay, so, well, first of all, our headquarters are in London, so we're London based, but I work for our US office in New York and we cover the asset and wealth management industry. We're a trade publication, so our readers are people from the industry as well. And that's pretty much what I do. So I cover your big companies like your blackrocks and Vanguards, Blackstones. That's kind of the world we cover.

[00:01:54] BB: EFT, SCC stuff, Chief Investing Officer, JP Morgan. Yeah, all the things.

[00:02:01] TM: Yeah, all of those things.

[00:02:05] BB: Okay. Now, you used to be at, you know, Times of India. You've been at the Statement, you've been at various things. Do you like this nitty gritty financy world?

[00:02:16] TM: Yeah. You know what? I didn't expect to be in finance journalism, but I went to grad school and this was really kind of the first job I got. So I took it and it was totally new to me. But I always say that nothing's empowered me more than my job because before this job I really knew nothing about money, period. So I feel like props to that because I just learned so much. Yeah, absolutely. So. And now I really enjoy it. I actually find myself thinking about ETFs even when I'm not working, which I think should say something so.

[00:02:48] BB: Oh, yes. When it's just to infiltrate your brain. No.

[00:02:52] TM: Yeah.

[00:02:53] BB: Yes. Okay. I imagine the pitches you get are dry, but tell us first, tell us about the inbox. Tell us about the inbox. How is it in there?

[00:03:04] TM: It can get rough sometimes, but I think that most PR people do try to be at least somewhat relevant to what you're doing and that's helpful. But that's what the inbox looks like. You're getting pitches every day. Because, you know, part of our job is covering like product launches and stuff like that and products are getting launched on the daily. So that, that's a great chunk of the inbox. But we also get some really good stuff as well.

[00:03:32] BB: Do you have any right now that you would be willing to share that you're like, oh my gosh, love this, don't love this. It's okay if you don't have any examples, but.

[00:03:42] TM: It's not a pitch for a product or anything. But one of the issues that I'm covering, not the issues, one of the things I'm covering right now is in the ETF world. ETF share class applications. You know, it's basically a whole thing where ETF ETFs could become a share class for mutual funds. It's kind of a niche thing, but it's a very big thing in the asset management industry. So I've got a bunch of people in my inbox pitching people I can talk to about this and the various issues around it. And that is something I'm interested in. And you know, I like to talk to people about things I'm learning more about and things that are currently happening.

[00:04:16] BB: Okay, what. And source wise, who are you looking for CIOs?

[00:04:26] TM: Anyone. Anyone who will tell me anything, basically. And I think that's pretty.

[00:04:32] BB: Love it.

[00:04:33] TM: Pretty much the run of the mill for journalists. Of course, like we have our people we go to for interviews for like interviewed articles and that could be your CIOs or in our case, you know, wealth heads and stuff like that. But generally a lot of good stories will often come from people who may not want to go on the record with you, but who will give you a nugget of information that you can then follow up on.

[00:04:56] BB: Oh, let's get into that for a second because there we've had many topics on here and we've had many discussions about, you know, on the record, off the record, etc. I imagine for you specifically There's a lot of people who are like, you cannot be mentioned in my damn name because they're telling you some juicy tea that should not be existing right in the, in the world. How do you define and delineate this is on the record versus not well.

[00:05:21] TM: So there's a couple of things. Number one, a lot of the people I talk to come with their own PR professionals, they're being babysat by you, by their compliance teams, by all of that.

[00:05:37] TM: And so with those kinds of interviews, it's like from the very beginning it's very clear what's the conversations on the record, off the record, in between, if they want to go off the record. So that's very well set out. And oftentimes most people will have their PR representatives on the call, etc. And that's one kind of interview. But I think the real source building outside happens, a lot of it happens outside of that where you know, you have sources where you're not, you don't even know who their PR is. And it's a very down low relationship you have with them where it's completely independent and probably nothing they ever tell you will be on the record. It's just all, they're just giving you information and it's kind of off the official channel kind of a source. And so there's value in both of those kinds of relationships.

[00:06:23] TM: Obviously you need to quote people, you need to have people who will contribute to your stories. But it's also important to have the sources you're just going to talk to just get information from and for no other reason.

[00:06:37] BB: So I like that distinction where you're saying like, oh yes, they are coming with the compliance officers, the IR people, the PR people. Yes, yes. In this world, I imagine no one's going off the cuff like, no, no, no, no, no, no. Okay, so that leads me then to relationship building.

[00:06:56] TM: Yeah.

[00:06:57] BB: Because you are always going to see the PR people like you're going to. This is regulatory compliance, federal stuff. How do you like to make relationships with publicists, if at all? Maybe you're like, I don't want to see him on a call and forget it.

[00:07:10] TM: No, I actually happen to think, at least for the industries that I cover, it is one of the most important things that you kind of have to do because a lot, a lot of times you know the people that you want to interview, whether it's a CEO or a CIO or Whatever, they are not going to reply to you. So you have to go through their priority. And it pays off to have a good relationship with the pr because they control who gets to talk to that CEO, who gets to talk to that cio. And it is like a reciprocal relationship where I want to be upfront with the PR as well, that these are the topics I want to cover. You know, it's not a gotcha, it's not something seedy. You know, if there is something going on that may be not so favorable towards the company, I'd be like, hey, I am going to ask about this, but that's my job as a journalist, that you are going to

ask about all those things. So it is very important, I think, to have good relationships with the PR people. And not to mention when it comes for embargoes or when it comes for the time for exclusives, that's really what's going to pay off as well.

[00:08:10] TM: Because there's 100% been times where you get an exclusive because, you know, you have a good relationship with the PR and that kind of blends with, you know, what you're covering, fitting what their company does.

[00:08:23] BB: Good to know. Now, being in New York, do you want to see people in person ever, like publicist specifically or you know, what actually? And do you even want to do? I mean, New York is the center of running, of course. Do you at all like to do interviews in person?

[00:08:37] TM: Yes, I love an in person meetup. I love an in person chat. But a lot of it is unfortunately on Zoom or teams or whatever. Even for people who are in New York, it just happens that the people I interview or want to talk to, they're busy. Their calendars are booked like back to back to back. So a lot of the times they can only do meetings on Zoom. But where possible, 100 in person is the way to go. It just makes people more open, I feel, I think.

[00:09:05] BB: Yeah, exactly. Like to you, do you want to be like, yeah, tell them more. How's it going? Okay, so she likes to make in person contacts. Okay, this is good. This is good. Organizing the pitches that you get. Let's get back to that.

[00:09:23] TM: Yeah.

[00:09:23] BB:
How do you do it? Or what do you do? Some people have no process and that's okay too.

[00:09:27] TM: Yep. Yeah. Yeah. It's kind of like that for me, where it's no solid process, but in my head, like, I do know what kind of coverage is priority for us and that may be in terms of what the firm is or what the product is or you know what the topic is. So when I look at a pitch in the first three sentences, I'll know whether or not this is something like how interested we'll be in covering it. And if it's high on that interest scale, I'll probably pick it up immediately and be like, hey, I am interested in this, I would love to talk more. If it's not an immediate thing, a lot of times I will just flag it.

[00:10:04] TM: And this is kind of my red flag. I'll just flag everything and be like, that's the problem for another time. So sometimes that does happen as well.

[00:10:12] BB: Yeah, okay, got you. And then further question, because this is so common, do you go back six months, three months later, or whatever and pull up pitches you've gotten before?

[00:10:26] TM: Not three to six months. Because usually by that time it's, it's probably redundant by that time, you know, unless it's a, it's like a trend thing that I'm following where I

feel like I would reach out to the PR and be like, hey, do you have like an expert I could talk to about this? Or, you know, XYZ person or XYZ firm is doing this thing and I'm know, following this story. So if it's a continuous story. Yes, but most of. Most pitches are not. Most pitches are like, this happened, this launched, or you know, the, the Fed said that these are the. Et cetera. So no, in those cases.

[00:10:57] BB: Okay, got you. What do you love when publicists do something like, actually, you know what, I'm going to start a new thing on this thing. I love it when publicists inserts.

[00:11:10] TM: I love it when publicists just know what I'm covering, know my work, and they're just very direct with it. And I think this is probably what a lot of journalists attend you. But I mean, it is, it is really, it's really true because, you know, I've gotten pitches for cars and stuff and I'm like, you haven't even marked at my. Yeah, yeah. You haven't even looked at my author page. So, you know.

[00:11:34] BB: Yeah, no, very clearly. Do you ever write back, by the way, to anybody like, hey, this is not what I cover, like. Or you just, you don't, you don't respond?

[00:11:43] TM: Well, no, not for the car type pictures. No, I just don't respond because it doesn't make sense for me at all.

[00:11:50] BB: But yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:11:52] TM: But there, there are times when it's still in the finance world, but maybe not exactly the world that I cover. But. So in those cases, I'll usually Go back and be like, hey, you know, this is exactly what I cover. And I might explain what I do so that they have a better understanding as well.

[00:12:06] BB: Yeah, but it's so nice when someone actually, like, looks at your outlet and knows and kind of get it. Okay, what about the opposite? Anything specific where you're like, I cannot stand. Obviously, you don't look at my stuff. Yes, that's the opposite of what you just gave us. But like anything else, like a pet peeve for you.

[00:12:28] TM: I think it's when, like a PR person, they'll send me a pitch if I don't respond. And if it's something that's happening today, they'll resend that pitch a couple days later or next week, and it's already all news. Like, you know, it's old news by then, too. So that kind of. Because then it's just the same thing again. And to me, that's like, if we haven't covered it, we're probably not going to cover it if it's like, you know, news. News that's happening.

[00:12:58] BB: Okay, so you're not covering it. You're just like, it's not interesting.

[00:13:02] TM: No, no. Yeah, exactly. But they'll send the same pitch, like, say the following week, and it's already out of.

[00:13:09] BB: You know, like, you're. You get the exact same pitch where it's just a different week. Like, someone just is, like, pitching you again. Thinking it's the first time.

[00:13:20] TM: Not necessarily thinking that it's the first time, but more so just like, oh, bringing this up again. But for instance, like, you know, if an ETF launches yesterday, that's yesterday's news. So if you send that same thing to me again Thursday, that's redundant. It's A, already out there and B, you know, I've probably taken a look at it and it wasn't again, high up in the priority list for the day or for the week. So it's one of those things.

[00:13:48] BB: Not good sauce. May we play Tina, our fast question segment? If that sounds like fun?

[00:13:57] TM: Yeah, that sounds okay.

[00:13:58] BB: Okay, Sounds good. Sounds good. Here we go.

[00:13:59] TM: Yep. Okay.

[00:14:01] BB: Video or phone interview?

[00:14:05] TM: Video.

[00:14:05] BB: Like in person?

[00:14:05] TM: Yeah..

[00:14:05] BB: Now, why do you like video? Because you get to see people?.

[00:14:09] TM: Yeah. You get to see people. I just feel like as a journalist, more personalization always helps. The more you can make someone feel comfortable and the more, you know, you can show them that you are a real person, too and not just someone to approach with skepticism, that that's always better.

[00:14:27] BB: Yes, yes. Bullet points. Or paragraphs in a pitch?

[00:14:27] TM: Bullet points.

[00:14:27] BB: Yes, my favorite. Okay. Short or long pitches, I imagine. Short.

[00:14:37] TM: Short. Yeah, yeah.

[00:14:39] BB: Images attached or a Dropbox zip file? Although I don't know who is sending you images.

[00:14:44] TM: But if at all. Any kind of attachment. Just attached, attached.

[00:14:49] BB: Okay, great. But in the way, why? People have very distinct answers on this one.

[00:14:56] TM: I just like to click on it and I mean, I don't know, it's just. I just feel like I can click on it. I don't need to. I don't know, it's just one of those things.

[00:15:05] BB: Yep, it's just an email.

[00:15:05] TM: Exactly. I don't want to click on another thing.

[00:15:05] BB: And then the link is old and then I need a login for the saying and then I got to sign in with my app. Exactly. That's just me too. Okay. What about email or a DM of some sort?

[00:15:20] TM: Email is probably better because I check my emails every day and not to mention email or LinkedIn, I do check my LinkedIn as well. And you know, sometimes people reach out and that works.

[00:15:33] BB: Okay, one follow up or multiple?

[00:15:37] TM: Depends on the topic. But I feel like if it's something that I really want to cover, you won't need to follow up, so.

[00:15:43] BB: Okay. Okay. Direct or Creative Subject lines.

[00:15:48] TM: Direct.

[00:15:49] BB: Direct. Press release or media kit?

[00:15:54] TM: Press release, but again, it just depends on the topic.

[00:16:06] BB: Although for your space, I mean, who's sending you a media kit with like images?

[00:16:10] TM: That's true.

[00:16:11] BB: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. Okay. Now you mentioned just earlier you're reading them. You read pitches every day, but do you have a time that you specifically read pitches or is it like all the time?

[00:16:23] TM: I am the kind of person that if something hits my inbox, I need to open it immediately because I am one of those people.

[00:16:32] BB: Are you unread email zero girl?

[00:16:34] TM: Yes.

[00:16:35] BB: Oh, me too. Yes.

[00:16:37] TM: I can't do it.

[00:16:38] BB: Nothing more satisfying than the 0.

[00:16:40] TM: 100%. Yeah, I can't. I can't do the whole. Especially because like I have Google alerts set up for every single thing. So it would be impossible.

[00:16:48] BB: So yeah, you're like, okay, impossible. Okay, great. And then, and then my last question here. Oh yeah, we already talked about sources. You said everybody and anyone who's talking to me, who wants to talk to me. So.

[00:17:00] TM: Yeah, yeah.

[00:17:01] BB: Do you wanna, do you wanna hone in on that one though, just a little bit more?

[00:17:05] TM: Yeah, absolutely. No, definitely. I think a lot of the sources that I would like to make actually are on the. On the more investment banking side because I know that they have always had good info on like deals and stuff like that. And, you know, and analysts at the banks, for instance, they cover the companies I cover. So they will. They will probably have a lot of inside info that I won't know. So far I've been stonewalled by them. But we're working on it. We're working on it. And then the other side of it, I would say within the asset and wealth management space, we cover a lot of the gatekeeper teams. They call the gatekeeper teams. They're responsible for the funds that get on their platforms. For instance, at Morgan Stanley, there's a team that decides which funds their advisors will have access to. And that is a core part of our audience. So them as well.

[00:17:56] BB: Oh, they get access to. Okay. Tania, is there anything you want to celebrate, promote, etc, about you? About anything? We're here. We're going to be PR people.

[00:18:12] TM: You know, that is, that is true. But I just go read my work if you can. I think that's the only thing I try to. Yeah.

[00:18:20] BB: By the way. Okay, one last little nitpicky type of question. Hotly debated is the pitch. Oh, my gosh, Tania, I read your article on X and I loved it so much. What's your opinion on that?

[00:18:36] TM: I think it's nice when people do read your work, but not maybe in a. In a way. Yeah, not in a performative way because I've definitely had PR people who generally read my work and then I've had very enlightening conversations with them because you'd be amazed at how much knowledge the PR people in the industry have because they kind of have to have that knowledge sometimes just the conversations with them are great. And if they've read my work and I know about their company, it's a great conversation and that I really appreciate.

[00:19:05] BB: Okay. Okay, so. Okay, sounds good. This has been a joy, Tina, thank you so much for being here. I love that you're thinking about ETFs all the time in your sleep when you go to bed, all the things. I think this means you like it.

[00:19:19] TM: Yeah, Yeah. I feel like I'm stuck here now. I'm going to be here a while.

[00:19:23] BB: I love it. I love it. Now you know all about money. See?

[00:19:26] TM: Yeah.

[00:19:28] BB: Well, everyone, this is Tina Mitra, who is the senior reporter at citywire usa. If you're in New York City. Listen, she likes to meet in person. If you're talking about money. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, exactly.

[00:19:40] TM: Exactly.

[00:19:40] BB: Hit her up. Perfect. Well, thank you so much, Ms. Tania. Great job. We'll see you in New York.

[00:19:46] TM: See you. Thank you.

[OUTRO]

[00:19:52] ANNOUNCER: Thank you for listening to this week's episode of Coffee With a Journalist. Do you want to pitch our next guest or ask them a specific question? Head over to our website at OnePitch Co to learn more about our private networking community for PR pros and apply to join. We'll see you next week, but until then, start great stories.