

**EPISODE 97**

[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 includes some of the most notable journalists from the top US-based publications who cover topics including technology, lifestyle and culture, health, science, consumer products, business news, and beauty and wellness. We discuss their role, the types of stories they cover, what their inbox looks like, and how they connect with sources. Check out our new video series featuring guests for the podcast, including today's guests. Head to [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co) and look for the video page to learn more.

On today's episode, we sit down with Emma Sandler, Senior Beauty and Wellness Reporter for Glossy. For those that don't know, Glossy is a publication from Digiday Media that covers how technology is modernizing the fashion and luxury industries. At Glossy, Emma covers the shifts and power between legacy companies like L'Oreal USA, and indie brands like Glossier and Huda Beauty. During the episode, Emma gives us a quick overview of Glossy's coverage, her three types of story pillars, what she's learned from quarantine, and lots more. Let's dive into the episode with Emma now.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:01:25] BB:** Welcome everyone. I'm Beck Bamberger, the founder of BAM. And this is Coffee with a Journalist. I almost forgot. Is it drinks with the journalists? Water with the journalists? No, it's Coffee with a Journalist. I'm also the founder of OnePitch, which created, of course, this show and the platform to help pitches get to the right journalists. So that's why we are here. And we're here today because we always talk to a fabulous journalist and get to know what they like, what they don't like, all the good juicy details. Plus, also the stories they like to tell and even like to watch, consume, etc. With us today, how exciting, coming live from New York, Brooklyn specifically, Emma Sandler, who's the Senior Beauty and Wellness Reporter at Glossy.

Hi, Emma.

**[00:02:10] ES:** Hello, how are you?

**[00:02:11] BB:** I'm good. I'm just excited to chat with you. We had a nice chat about Gen Z yellow already in the pitch tips and the stories and stuff. So we're having a great time already. But first, for everybody, tell us what Glossy is as a publication. And what it is also not for everybody listening?

**[00:02:29] ES:** Yes. So Glossy is a digital business publication focused on beauty and fashion. The way we approach our publication and our stories is to ask ourselves, "What is the shift in power taking place within the industry?" For example, indie brands like Glossier versus a heritage brand like Estee Lauder, or L'Oreal, or even innovative technologies, like live stream shopping and augmented reality, and what that's doing to upend the retail experience.

**[00:03:04] BB:** It's a great publication, by the way. Do you have, would you even say, general consumers, looking at Glossy on a consistent basis?

**[00:03:11] ES:** That is something we are working towards. We launched in the spring of this year a section or vertical called Glossy Pop, and that's meant to be our consumer-facing vertical.

**[00:03:26] BB:** Got it, which is right in the main menu section for anybody going on the website right now. Looking good. Including, I was looking at this piece, seven new beauty brands to know for November. There's a lot of good stuff in here. I love it. And what is your inbox like?

**[00:03:43] ES:** My inbox at the moment, because I am a perpetually inbox zero person, I currently have seven unread messages. But my inbox has roughly 8400 emails in it. I save emails that I feel are relevant so I can better find and search them later. So in terms of the unread emails I have, most of which are irrelevant to me, I'll be honest, I have a pitch about eyewear. I have something about the actress January Jones. I have a product launch for a manicure top coat that will give you a map. I have something launching on Amazon. I have a holiday gift set. And then I have something from the cosmetics beauty group called CEW Beauty.

**[00:04:39] BB:** Now, these are all the pitches that you're looking at? Clarify.

**[00:04:43] ES:** Some of them are pitches to the new product, potentially the January Jones thing, the gift set. But like I said, most of these are relevant to me because of what Glossy covers.

**[00:04:57] BB:** Yes, gotcha. Are there quite a few irrelevant pitches you get?

**[00:05:02] ES:** Oh, absolutely. But I will also say that depending on the product that's being pitched to me, it might not be worth this story in and of itself. But if I end up seeing a lot of that similar product coming through, or maybe it's a new category for a brand, or it's a new approach to a category that a brand is doing, then I will save it, and I will wait for the other shoe to drop and see if a trend comes through.

**[00:05:31] BB:** Okay. It's common, we've heard on the show, that journalists do what you're describing of kind of, "Okay, I'm keeping stuff coming along. I haven't deleted it, but I haven't responded." And then you get a few other pitches that are in that same genre, maybe in the month or the week, and you go, "Wait a second, I think this is now a thing. It's a trend. It's a piece." So it sounds like you do that too.

**[00:05:53] ES:** Yes, yes, absolutely. I have done my fair share of trend stories, but it's always about understanding if this trend that's happening signifies something larger. Three brands out with a matte nail polish doesn't really appeal or make sense for me. But maybe it is why is everyone suddenly caring about – I'm trying to think of a good example, and I can't at the moment.

**[00:06:19] BB:** Yeah, but that's okay. Like, why everyone is looking for matte maybe? Or the yellow as we talked about for, if it's a Gen Z things, it's like is yellow the new everything.

**[00:06:27] ES:** Right. Right. That's really good example. Maybe it's something where I started to notice a packaging trend. Everyone turned to sustainability in the last year. So that was something that's certainly covered over time.

**[00:06:39] BB:** Very true. What then, Emma, gets your biggest attention for a pitch? Is it the subject line? Or do you open every single email? Or is it the shortness? The brevity of the pitch? Is it new, distinct, interesting, on point? They spell your name right. I don't know. What would you say?

**[00:06:57] ES:** It's definitely the subject line when it has something that has an eye-catching phrase like launching X or exclusive Y. Or even if it's from someone I know and it says, "Hey, what are your thoughts on this?" That's something where I'm like, "Okay, maybe I should actually look at this." If it is something like the January Jones swears by Allies of Skin for a glowing complexion. I don't care. No offense to January Jones.

**[00:07:30] BB:** Yeah, exactly, exactly. So then for pieces like – I'm looking at all your pieces that you've written recently. You have one about a particular VC who's saying, "Oh, direct to consumer. Oh, it's dead." Or you're stuck in everything. You have love, beauty and planet. You're talking about complete your holiday shopping by December 4th, because they can't get it shipped to you. The various stories you cover for the industry, how do you get the inspiration for the story, if you do?

**[00:07:57] ES:** Oh, that's an excellent question. I think there's three main ways that I end up getting my stories. There is the traditional pitch. I've built, over almost four years at Glossy, a decent network of executive publicists, venture capitalists, other people in finance, who come to me and understand what I'm looking for. Then there's also times when a person, usually a publicist, says, "Oh, hey, this brand is doing this, or this brand is launching that." And I say, "Okay, I don't really care that they're doing this one thing. But this brand actually interests me, or this is part of the trend I'm seeing. What else can we explore here?"

And then the other probably third pillar of stories I find is really from just paying attention, and really being curious about what's going on in the industry from either a product trend that I'm seeing, or a strategy trend that I've seen from companies or from investments.

**[00:09:00] BB:** And are you just like walking around, walking the streets of Soho? Are you scrolling through Instagram? Are you look at a Tik – Like where does that then come to you? Just curious.

**[00:09:13] ES:** Also a good question. I'm probably not walking around Soho as much as I was pre-pandemic. I will say that I read a lot. I read Glossy's competing publications. But I also read more than just what's going on in the beauty world. I also read about what's happening in technology. What's happening in venture capital and private equity in the public markets? I'm reading just general business news. I love Bloomberg. I love Fast Company. Sometimes they have things that straddle more of a cultural story than just a straightforward business story.

**[00:09:51] BB:** Mm-hmm. Okay. I'm hearing a lot of reading. Lots of reading, consuming, consuming, consuming. Do you ever read for fun?

**[00:09:59] ES:** Well, yes, of course. I tend to lean towards biographies and commodity histories. Again, I think it goes back –

**[00:10:06] BB:** Commodity history.

**[00:10:09] ES:** Biography of stuff or places.

**[00:10:12] BB:** Oh, I haven't heard of that categorization. Interesting. Commodity history. Okay.

**[00:10:17] ES:** Yes, yes. If you ever wonder, "I mean, hey, what's the history behind the pencil? Or what's the history behind the computer — **[inaudible 00:10:25]**."

**[00:10:30] BB:** Oh, I love it. Okay, well, we're going to get to favorite books, and what you're listening to, or reading, or whatever, a little bit later. But why don't we go into our fill in the blank section here? So I have a couple phrases and you fill it in from here, Emma. Does that sound good?

**[00:10:45] ES:** Sure.

[00:10:46] **BB:** Let's do it. My favorite sources always –

[00:10:51] **ES:** My favorite sources always have distinct viewpoints.

[00:10:57] **BB:** And distinct meaning?

[00:11:00] **ES:** Something refreshing. Something that is unique to their position.

[00:11:06] **BB:** Controversial perhaps?

[00:11:08] **ES:** It can be, but it's not a requirement.

[00:11:11] **BB:** Okay, that's good. The most annoying sources always –

[00:11:15] **ES:** The most annoying sources use phrases like surprise and delight, or say [inaudible 00:11:26] things.

[00:11:29] **BB:** In their pitch?

[00:11:29] **ES:** In their pitch or in their conversation.

[00:11:32] **BB:** Like how? Like, “Emma, I’d like to surprise and delight you with this fascinating new shampoo.”

[00:11:37] **ES:** No, it's more like tell me how it is that you worked on this kind of product collaboration. What is it they’re going to do here? And they say, “Well, we're always just trying to surprise and delight our customers.” It always irks me, because it's not a real answer. And it doesn't carry any weight to it.

[00:12:00] **BB:** Yeah. Hmm. I'm glad I clarified that because I would be curious. Okay, so no surprise and delight our customers. Got it.

[00:12:07] **ES:** None of that. No.

[00:12:08] **BB:** You'll get a response from me if –

[00:12:12] **ES:** If I know you.

[00:12:13] **BB:** Okay. What if I don't know you? Can I meet you? What can I do?

[00:12:18] **ES:** I think the best way to get to know me is through that professional capacity. Bring me stories. Bring me interesting people be of help and usefulness. And then we can get to know each other more.

[00:12:32] **BB:** Okay, good tip there. You'll never get a response from me if I don't know you?

[00:12:39] **ES:** If it's clear that you were just doing a blast email to anyone and everyone in your inbox.

[00:12:48] **BB:** Yeah. Or the favorite, as referenced on the show often, “Dear blank.” Yeah, it's not good.

[00:12:54] **ES:** Exactly. The number of times I have seen that.

[00:12:56] **BB:** Yeah. Let's see. It would be a huge help if sources –

[00:13:00] **ES:** Shared more numbers. That's always something I love to hear. Our readers love to hear. I know it can be bit tricky sometimes, because everything's proprietary, or trade secrets, or what have you. But at the end of the day, it also validates what you're trying to tell me about how amazing your brand product.

[BREAK]

[00:13:26] **ANNOUNCER:** Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to see the unique ways one pitch helps PR professionals and marketers pitch journalists? Head to [onepitch.co](https://onepitch.co) 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 CONTINUED]

[00:13:51] **BB:** The best compliment I received about my work was –

[00:13:55] **ES:** I will say that when I'm speaking with someone and I ask them a question and they say, "Oh, that's a good question." I always have a sort of beaming feeling during that moment. So I'll say that, because it never gets old.

[00:14:11] **BB:** Oh, that's good. My favorite stories to write are –

[00:14:15] **ES:** Ooh, there's so many. I love writing stories when I'm the first to really follow something that no other reporter or no other publication has done yet.

[00:14:35] **BB:** So you're the first and hopefully the only. No, actually, you might be the [inaudible 00:14:39].

[00:14:39] **ES:** Not necessarily the only. Because it's nice to see when others, a month later I'm like, "Okay, I see you there other reporter, and I did that story before."

[00:14:49] **BB:** I already broke that one. Yep.

[00:14:51] **ES:** Exactly.

[00:14:51] **BB:** Mm-hmm. My favorite Sunday is –

[00:14:55] **ES:** My favorite Sunday. I want an ice cream sundae.

[00:14:59] **BB:** Yeah. Oh, I like that. No one's given that response yet. Okay, that's perfect. Unless you want to do like the Sunday as the day. But we'll take that too. That's pretty cool.



**[00:15:10] ES:** I'm sticking with my answer.

**[00:15:11] BB:** I love it. My favorite hobby is –

**[00:15:15] ES:** Ooh, my favorite hobby. At the moment, baking. But I will say that if I had a little bit more time and maybe a little bit more space physically in my apartment, I would take up millenary. I love hats.

**[00:15:33] BB:** Hats. My God! Who makes hats? I mean, besides people on Etsy. But I do love a damn good hat. Yeah, the English. Yeah. Okay. Okay. Oh, wow! That's the first. I've never heard that before on this show. That's amazing. Okay, the last song I listened to was –

**[00:15:54] ES:** Ooh, I have been lately very into the Zedd remix of Do It To It, which you may have heard on TikTok, because they use a snippet from the Squid Games theme song to build into an existing song called Do It To It. I heard that and I was like, “Okay, this is a banger.”

**[00:15:54] BB:** Oh, wow. I just pull it up on YouTube. Okay, I'm going to have to listen to that. Would I know it? I watched Squid Game. Would I know it?

**[00:16:29] ES:** You probably would. I mean, if you listen to this song and then you go on TikTok, you'll see it all over. **[inaudible 00:16:35]**.

**[00:16:37] BB:** Okay. Okay. All right. The best part of winter is –

**[00:16:40] ES:** Apres Ski

**[00:16:41] BB:** Yes. I'm all about that.

**[00:16:43] ES:** Mm-hmm. Apres - ski sweater. That's perfect. Too bad this is a podcast. Otherwise I'd show it to you.

**[00:16:50] BB:** Oh, dang. What does it look like? Describe.

**[00:16:54] ES:** It is kind of boxy. It is for the most part white. It's a chunky [inaudible 00:16:59] and very soft. And it has a sort of black checkered, almost black checkered design on it. It's the kind of thing that I imagined myself wearing that with some like 1960s Cigarette pants, black, of course. And like standing from the fireplace with my imaginary husband —

**[00:17:25] BB:** Yes, I love it. Emma, clearly, you work in fashion. I love it. Okay. 2022 is going to be — Oh boy.

**[00:17:35] ES:** Oh, God, I think everyone stopped making predictions at beginning of 2020. Like we've learned our lesson as a society. 2022, for me, both personally and professionally will be busy. There's a lot of things to cover, a lot of movements to make professionally, and a lot of personal events happening. My sister's getting married so I am a maid of honor —

**[00:18:02] BB:** Oh, yay! Yay, sister. Okay. Well, speaking of, quarantine has taught me —

**[00:18:12] ES:** Quarantine taught me that we are a lot more capable of doing things than we initially thought. I think we're so used to, as individuals, or as a society, that there are certain things that you need to have from like fancy tech or gadgetry or, “Oh, I need an Equinox membership.” It's like, “No, you don't.” You get a yoga mat and like some water bottles and that's your workout routine.

**[00:18:47] BB:** Yep. There you go. I agree with that. Good answer. I haven't heard that yet. That's good. Okay, now, Emma. Now, what are you reading, watching, consuming, listening to? We'll take it all. Let's get into this genre that you just mentioned of history. Please tell us. Have you any books on this?

**[00:19:07] ES:** I'm currently reading a proper biography about Julius Caesar.

**[00:19:12] BB:** What's it called?

**[00:19:13] ES:** It is just called Caesar.

**[00:19:14] BB:** Oh, it's just called Caesar. Okay. Simple enough. Okay.

**[00:19:17] ES:** It's a book that my grandfather had owned. And every book he read he would mark on the 100th page his name. So I haven't gotten to the 100th page yet, but I'm looking forward to that and sort of seeing his name written there. That would be a nice.

**[00:19:33] BB:** Oh, that's fun way. Do you get these books from your grandfather?

**[00:19:39] ES:** So he passed away end of 2020 not from COVID. He was a rightful age of 96 years old. So he had a very extensive library. So prior to him passing away, he said, "Go through the library, take anything and everything you want." So I took quite a few books including that one.

**[00:20:00] BB:** Oh, that's lovely. How cool is that? How do you know that 100<sup>th</sup> page thing? Did he tell you?

**[00:20:05] ES:** That was something my mother had mentioned many, many years ago. And it was just something I kind of remembered. And so I have seen in his other books that he has done that.

**[00:20:16] BB:** That is lovely. What a fun little cookie sprinkle.

**[00:20:20] ES:** Yeah. My favorite book is *And the Band Played On* by Randy Shilts. That is not necessarily a commodity history in the sense that it is about stuff, but it is about – I would describe it as the biography of a disease, which in this case is HIV AIDS. It is so well-reported and so extensive. And it honestly just blew my mind reading that book.

**[00:20:48] BB:** Wow! It's huge. I'm looking at it on Audible. 31 hours here. Wow! But amazing ratings and reviews. Wow!

**[00:20:56] ES:** Incredible. My favorite book immediately.

**[] 00:20:58 BB:** Really? Okay. I'm adding it to my wish list.

**[00:21:01] ES:** I will say also Malcolm Gladwell. I would fit that within the kind of commodity histories. Because the way he writes about things, a lot of exploration of why is there only one kind of ketchup, but 30 different kinds of mustards. I think that's a complete explanation of the world we live in.

**[00:21:21] BB:** True. Good point. Yeah, he's known for Blank, The Tipping Point, David and Goliath, a lot of great ones. But he's been doing more and more history, if I recall. I think he's in podcast now.

**[00:21:34] ES:** Yes, he does. But I haven't listened to it. I tend to enjoy more narrative podcast. I listen to the New York Times' The Daily pretty much every day. And then I recently started listening to Wall Street Journal Bad Bets. It's the 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Enron scandal. So that was what the first season was about. I'm looking forward to seeing what they do next, of course.

**[00:21:59] BB:** I watched a documentary on that when I was all the way back in MBA days, and I was like, "Oh, this is –"

**[00:22:05] ES:** Oh! Was this the Smartest Guys in the Room?

**[00:22:06] BB:** Yes. Yes, I think so.

**[00:22:09] ES:** I saw that the other day. I'm going to read the book because that would really interest me. I loved that. I loved Bad Blood by John Carreyrou **[inaudible 00:22:18]** podcast.

**[00:22:20] BB:** Oh, I was just going to say. Are you listening to the podcast by ABC?

**[00:22:24] ES:** No. So the ABC one, that's The Dropout, right?

**[00:22:28] BB:** Yes. That's The Dropout, following Elizabeth Holmes trial.

**[00:22:30] ES:** I didn't really like it. I'm going to be –

**[00:22:32] BB:** Really? Oh. I don't love it. I like it. But I don't love it. It's so limiting. Because of course they can't take the actual audio from the courtroom. That's a laugh. So they had to repackage it, paraphrase. And I'm like, "It kind of misses some legs there," I think. But still, man, that story is just so deeply horrible and satisfying in weird ways.

**[00:22:55] ES:** It's wild. It's wild.

**[00:22:58] BB:** The edge of my seat.

**[00:23:03] ES:** Yeah, I could have the corporate scandals.

**[00:23:05] BB:** Oh my God. There's just no end. Yeah, there go. Okay, Emma. Well, what about the future of journalism? Positive, negative, neutral? What would you say?

**[00:23:17] ES:** Neutral, leaning towards positive. I'm going to take the anachronistic positive viewpoint. I think we're going to see a lot more consolidation. I don't think it's good that we are losing so much local journalism, because so much of what we end up covering in the national sense comes from the hard work of local journalists.

**[00:23:42] BB:** Very true.

**[00:23:44] ES:** But I do think that there is, or have been recently some wonderful publications like Morning Brew, where the information created. I love seeing what the Washington Post is doing on TikTok. When I think about what's going to be going – Or what will happen in 2022, I think we're going to see some innovation. I think we're going to see some creativity. And those are the things that I have a positive outlook on.

**[00:24:16] BB:** Yeah, that's good. I will say, on this show particularly, the local news aspect. No one solved that yet. Not yet. And it's like, "Shoot, what are we going to do about that?" I don't know.

**[00:24:30] ES:** Yeah. And I've seen one of corporate interests around private equity, getting into the space. And I would caution against any investor thinking that they could make a newsroom

profitable. I don't think that's really its purpose. Sure, it's a business and has to make financial sense, but it's not something where you're going to generate a 10X return.

**[00:24:54] BB:** Yeah, yeah, exactly. Maybe even if you're lucky.

**[00:24:58] ES:** Yeah, exactly, exactly.

**[00:25:01] BB:** Well, we've come to our mad lib part, Emma, which is usually very fun, and sometimes just silly, and sometimes nonsensical. But we'll see. We'll see. So let me give you the word and I will fill the things out and we'll read back our whole paragraph here. How about that?

**[00:25:16] ES:** Sounds good.

**[00:25:17] BB:** Let's do it. First thing, an emotion.

**[00:25:21] ES:** Happiness.

**[00:25:22] BB:** Happiness. An adjective.

**[00:25:26] ES:** Red

**[00:25:26] BB:** Red. Another adjective.

**[00:25:31] ES:** Round.

**[00:25:32] BB:** Round. But with the alliteration. Okay. A greeting.

**[00:25:38] ES:** Aloha.

**[00:25:39] BB:** Aloha. That's fun. A verb.

**[00:25:44] ES:** Swimming.

[00:25:45] **BB:** How about a noun?

[00:25:47] **ES:** House.

[00:25:48] **BB:** An adjective.

[00:25:51] **ES:** Blonde.

[00:25:53] **BB:** Blonde. Perfect. A cringe-worthy PR term or phrase.

[00:26:00] **ES:** Surprise and delight, of course.

[00:26:01] **BB:** Oh, yes. Surprise and delight. Oh, maybe I'll just use it somewhere for fun. Okay. A part of a pitch.

[00:26:12] **ES:** Does this interest you?

[00:26:13] **BB:** Does this interest you. Yup. Length of time.

[00:26:19] **ES:** One hour and forty-nine minutes.

[00:26:21] **BB:** Okay. Mm-hmm. You're almost done. Name of a real person, ideally alive.

[00:26:27] **ES:** Barack Obama.

[00:26:30] **BB:** And then an emotion.

[00:26:33] **ES:** Rage.

[00:26:36] **BB:** All right. Emma, here we go. When I think of the future of journalism, I feel happiness. The pitches I receive have gone from red, as in the color, to round, as in the ball. I'll put that in there. If I receive a pitch that starts with aloha, I start swimming. When I write stories

on houses, I get blonde. My favorite pitches includes surprise and delight, and does this interest you? I normally take around an hour and 49 minutes to respond to my emails. But if it's Barack Obama, I will respond immediately. If you do get a response back from me, you should know that I am raging for you. I like it. How accurate do you feel, Emma? How is that?

**[00:27:17] ES:** I would say that when I respond to an email, it's either immediately or in about a month.

**[00:27:23] BB:** There you go. So we're quite accurate. I love it. Well, Emma Sandler, thank you for being on senior reporter for Glossy writing all things on fashion. And Emma, what else would you want to say?

**[00:27:37] ES:** Beck, surprise and delight you.

**[00:27:40] BB:** Surprise and delight. Everybody, do not say surprise and delight for the reason you made your customers something. There you go. Straight from Emma. Thank you so much, Emma. I appreciate you being on.

**[00:27:50] ES:** Thank you so much for having me. This was fun.

[OUTRO]

**[00:27:55] ANNOUNCER:** Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with a Journalist featuring Emma Sandler from Glossy. If you enjoy listening to our show, make sure to subscribe on iTunes, Spotify, Google Podcasts, and anywhere else you listen to podcasts. And if you have a moment, please leave us a review to share your thoughts about the show and today's guests. To learn more about the latest tools on OnePitch, and to subscribe to our weekly podcast newsletter, head to our website at [onepitch.co](http://onepitch.co). We'll see you all next week with a brand new guest and even more insights about the journalists you want to learn more about. Until then, start great stories.

[END]