

Jered Martin:

Hello, and welcome to Coffee with the Journalist, a podcast by OnePitch, featuring the tech industry's most well-known journalists. The goal of our show is to uncover the real person behind the real stories you love to read. We discuss their beat in news coverage, what their inbox looks like, and a whole lot more. On today's show we're joined by Joshua Pinkay, a senior editor for OBVIOUS Magazine, as well as SoCal magazine. For OBVIOUS Magazine, Joshua covers various entertainment topics, from interviews and personal profiles, to news and updates within the industry. And for SoCal magazine, he covers events, news, and human interest stories with notable members of the Southern California community. On the show today, Joshua tells us about his focus on human interest oriented stories, his approach to crafting stories that are built for a live audience, and lots more. Let's listen to more on today's show featuring Joshua Pinkay.

Beck Bamberger:

Hey everyone, we are here with another episode of Coffee with the Journalist, and today we've got on Joshua Pinkay, who's the senior editor at OBVIOUS Magazine based in Los Angeles, as you guys probably know. Thank you for being here, Joshua, especially on a Friday, on a beautiful day. Hopefully it's beautiful up in LA.

Joshua Pinkay:

It absolutely is. It's actually pretty hot today. It's been hot all week.

Beck Bamberger:

I appreciate you being here. We have so much to talk about. And first thing I want to just touch on, because we have a lot of folks that are familiar with a lot of the tech media outlets that we work on. But for folks who don't know about OBVIOUS Magazine, what would you say? What would you point them to?

Joshua Pinkay:

So OBVIOUS Magazine is definitely, for the most part it's been very fashion focused. But then it also touches on lifestyle, beauty. And when I was appointed senior editor, I really wanted to amp up the human interest aspect.

Beck Bamberger:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Culture.

Joshua Pinkay:

Culture, all of that. I really wanted to not just highlight people in fashion industry and beauty and all of that, but I really wanted to look at the social impact component of what individuals like them are doing.

Beck Bamberger:

Got you. One thing we always cover here is the damn inbox. So how does your inbox look on a day-to-day basis? Is it crazy? And are you one of those zero inbox people? We have a couple of those people.

Joshua Pinkay:

I am not a zero inbox person. My inboxes, plural.

Beck Bamberger:

Wait, wait a second. There's more than one?

Joshua Pinkay:

Yeah, because I'm senior editor at OBVIOUS Magazine, but I'm also senior editor for SoCal magazine.

Beck Bamberger:

Yes, also.

Joshua Pinkay:

I cover different topics over there. And so I get pitched very different things at both inboxes. So it needed to be a lot.

Beck Bamberger:

Gosh. So then, okay. And I should have mentioned that too. I know Jared just mentioned it in the intro, but you also have the senior editor role for SoCal magazine. And you've also had almost in tandem the... Wow, you've been there even longer than that. So let's even back up for a second with SoCal magazine for folks who don't know, give us the scoop on that.

Joshua Pinkay:

So SoCal magazine is dominantly online, very local based to Southern California culture. We call it the portal to Southern California culture. And I specifically write about food, festivals, lifestyle products. And I review events for that magazine.

Beck Bamberger:

So what do you do to manage those? Are you like, I check it every single hour, both of them? I go on there once a day and spend three and a half hours. What do you do?

Joshua Pinkay:

It's more so, it's like, what would be next after once a day? Because I would drive myself crazy if I'm on it every day. Mind you, my writing is separate to my actual work. I do PR and marketing.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah.

Joshua Pinkay:

And so I would get nothing done if I was in my inboxes, because I am pitched daily. But I do make it a point to go through all of those emails weekly and prioritize what needs to get pitched, what needs to be thrown in a bin, what I want to proceed with. Yeah.

Beck Bamberger:

Yes. And do you have a process for that? I know some people are starers. Some people are folders. What's your process for that?

Joshua Pinkay:

I'm a labeler.

Beck Bamberger:

Oh, you label. Okay. Okay, so how do you label? Like, followup now?

Joshua Pinkay:

So like with Gmail, I create labels and I categorize them by different categories. So for example, I do a better job at this with my SoCal email. But for that one, I'll categorize it by events, hair products, skin products, music, food. And then I'll do sub categories, like food, restaurants, drinks, so wine and spirits, et cetera. And it's very tedious, honestly, but I'm so... I don't know, I'm just so obsessive in that way. I want to be sure that if I'm looking specifically for what I need to look for, I know that it's got to be labeled. And so then I'll just go through those labels individually, and then I'll say, okay, well, this definitely needs to be written about this new skincare product I love. I'm going to review it. They sent it to me. Whereas, there might be another product that just didn't really resonate with me. And so then I'll can it.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah. Got you. And you were saying every day you're getting pitches. How many? Hundreds?

Joshua Pinkay:

Thankfully, not hundreds. No. I'd say a few dozen.

Beck Bamberger:

Sounds about right. I love that. You're the first person I've talked to on this that does labeling as militantly as you do.

Joshua Pinkay:

I was a publicist for six years, and so I learned that by labeling my different clients it helped me stay so much more organized in that sense. It ended up working out that system worked for me. And then I color code them too.

Beck Bamberger:

Oh! Can you send us a picture for this? I want to see. I want to see.

Joshua Pinkay:

I will absolutely send you a screenshot so you can see. It might change your life.

Beck Bamberger:

Seriously. This is the most elaborate process I've heard. Color coded labeling for pitches, both inboxes. Wow. Gold star. Gold star for you.

Joshua Pinkay:

Thank you.

Beck Bamberger:

I'm going to have to do the inbox awards or something like that. Oh, okay. So then with all those pitches, and when you think of the stories you've got to do, obviously you have, well, you have a wide array of what you're covering for both outlets. How are you sussing out the story you want to make? What does it take to make a story?

Joshua Pinkay:

So there's two approaches. For SoCal magazine I pay attention to my audience and who's reading my stuff. And in all honesty, I don't speak to a luxury audience. I like products and items that are accessible. I like experiences that are accessible, because I think that's the wider audience. So that definitely is a factor in what I choose to feature. I want to speak to real people. And so if I'm offering, or writing about luxury items that most people can't afford or probably would never get, it doesn't immediately resonate with me. I'm not really so inclined to feature it.

Joshua Pinkay:

And then when it comes to OBVIOUS Magazines, since I focus more on the human interest side of things there, pitch me all you want. Tell me that you're a great actress or that you are a singer, or that you're this or you're that. But I need to see another layer to that. I need to see another layer to your talent. What is your talent doing? Or what are you doing, rather, to create some form of social impact? How are you changing the world, even if it's just in your community? I need to see that aspect, because we glorify all of these celebrities and these influencers, and that's great and all that, I never want to take away from that. But I need to see the layer of how you're giving back.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative). Then with all those pitches you're getting, so now I'm going back to the inbox. But with those pitches you're getting, is it in order to sort and label and all that good stuff. Is it the subject line that can hook you? Do you read the whole pitch and then go, okay, that is definitely a story, it has those elements, I want to do something? What gets you to respond to a pitch? Especially if someone doesn't know you.

Joshua Pinkay:

Good subject line is always good. Now, granted, I am one of those editors who will absolutely go through every email.

Beck Bamberger:

Oh you do.

Joshua Pinkay:

I do. Even if the subject line doesn't totally call to me, I'll open it and I'll skim. And if it's not something I want, then I'll can it. But, subject line has definitely been a factor in me being like, oh, I know I'm going to

want to read this. And then when it comes to that, I pay attention. Because I get pitched by a lot of publicists, mainly. Seeing as how I was a publicist for six years, I understand the pitching process.

Beck Bamberger:

Yes, you do.

Joshua Pinkay:

I'm sensitive to it, in the best way possible. I want to pay attention to, is this person doing a good job at representing their client? How easy are they making it for the editor to understand what that person or product is trying to sell, or what messaging they're trying to convey? And what access I have, as an editor, to get the resources I need. Do I have the images necessary? Is there a link provided to the person or product's website? How well did they craft a press release, or the pitch itself? All of that matters. Because ultimately, if I read all of that, and if I'm inspired enough, you're helping me craft the story as I read.

Beck Bamberger:

Exactly.

Joshua Pinkay:

You know? And so that's a big factor there.

Beck Bamberger:

Tell me about a time, maybe recently, that you took a nugget of a pitch, let's say, or someone dropped you something, and then the story came from it. How long did that take? What happened with it?

Joshua Pinkay:

Well, let me give you some insight.

Beck Bamberger:

Yes. Tell us.

Joshua Pinkay:

I haven't published anything since quarantine started. One, just creatively, I wasn't in the space to write.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah.

Joshua Pinkay:

Just mentally it was kind of like, oh man, there's a lot going on in the world. And I wasn't in the space to write about food.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah.

Joshua Pinkay:

Or anything like that. Particularly with SoCal magazine, I couldn't do my restaurant reviews like I typically would, or anything. Everything's closed. So I put that on the back burner. And then with OBVIOUS Magazine, it just seemed like the content that I would have been putting out, it just didn't feel right. It felt insensitive.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah.

Joshua Pinkay:

And so it's been a thing where I've had to find the right timing to make sure. And I'm not insensitive to what's going on in the world, because I'm very sensitive to that.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah.

Joshua Pinkay:

So as of late, nothing's been published on my end. But I'm changing that up, because I'm realizing that I can't withhold content from our readers like that. You know?

Beck Bamberger:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). What a balance you have to be in if we're in the climate we are, and it's not exactly appropriate of cocktail mixes for your barbecue. Who wants to read that?

Joshua Pinkay:

Right. Exactly. You know?

Beck Bamberger:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Got it. Ooh, I'm catching you at a good time of just how this happens. Because, oh man. So I know it's on the mind of a lot of journalists.

Jered Martin:

Today's interview will continue after this brief message brought to you by OnePitch. Are you curious to learn more about the unique ways OnePitch helps connect journalists with brands and sources? Head to [OnePitch.co](https://OnePitch.co) for more information about how we're helping each side save time and connect more effectively. Sign up for your free account today. Now, back to today's episode.

Beck Bamberger:

I do want to do a little word association game. It might be different given the timing of everything going on. You just tell me the first thing that comes to mind with the word association. Are you ready?

Joshua Pinkay:

I am. I think I'm ready.

Beck Bamberger:

Okay. Okay. Let's see. There's no wrong answers. Okay. Food.

Joshua Pinkay:

Life.

Beck Bamberger:

Drink.

Joshua Pinkay:

Cocktail.

Beck Bamberger:

Hobby.

Joshua Pinkay:

Fun.

Beck Bamberger:

LA.

Joshua Pinkay:

Weather.

Beck Bamberger:

Actors.

Joshua Pinkay:

OVERRATED.

Beck Bamberger:

Fashion.

Joshua Pinkay:

OVERRATED.

Beck Bamberger:

Events.

Joshua Pinkay:

I miss them.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah, me too. Branding.

Joshua Pinkay:  
Essential.

Beck Bamberger:  
PR.

Joshua Pinkay:  
Annoying.

Beck Bamberger:  
Talent.

Joshua Pinkay:  
Multifaceted.

Beck Bamberger:  
Social media.

Joshua Pinkay:  
Annoying.

Beck Bamberger:  
Journalism.

Joshua Pinkay:  
Important

Beck Bamberger:  
Pitch.

Joshua Pinkay:  
Stress.

Beck Bamberger:  
Inbox.

Joshua Pinkay:  
More stress.

Beck Bamberger:  
That's the whole list. That was good. Annoying. Funny from a former PR person to, all this is.



Joshua Pinkay:

Yeah.

Beck Bamberger:

It's still annoying. Yeah.

Joshua Pinkay:

Yeah.

Beck Bamberger:

Joshua, what are you reading? How do you read? What do you read? Tell us everything, books, podcasts. While I guess that is listening. But yeah, what do you read?

Joshua Pinkay:

I used to really be into nonfiction. I mean, into fiction. I really like novels. One of my favorite authors was Dean Koontz, because He's fun. I like his stories. I like how he crafts stories. They're very spooky, who done it?

Beck Bamberger:

Yes. Mysteries.

Joshua Pinkay:

There's still a humorous tone to a lot of his stories. So I've been a fan of his for a few years. But as of late, I've gotten into nonfiction, particularly with younger authors whose stories just really resonate with who I am and where I am in my personal intersectionality. For example, I started reading *All Boys Aren't Blue*, by George M. Johnson. It's a memoir of being a black gay man and what his life has been like through his adolescence. Trying to walk that line of intersectionality being a black man and being bullied. He really highlights that in a way that is informative. And I think for a lot of young people who might be reading this, they could really relate. It's far and few where we have these types of stories, and so I really appreciated that from George, and him sharing that memoir with us. So that's something I'm reading.

Beck Bamberger:

And that's a book that just came out, I believe in April. So it's pretty fresh.

Joshua Pinkay:

Yeah. And then, I haven't started reading it yet, but *In the Country We Love: My Family Divided*, by Diane Guerrero. So that book is about the story about her experience being a 14 year old girl coming home from school one day, just to find out that her parents have been deported for being undocumented citizens. And so it's a chilling tale of what that experience was like for her having to not have her family around at such a young age. She was born in the States, so she was American and she was able to stay. But to me, it's such an important story. And it was very personal to me and I really wanted to read it. And then another book that I haven't started yet, but is, *I Don't Want to Die Poor*, by Michael Arceneaux. So he wrote the book, *I Can't Date Jesus*.

Beck Bamberger:

I was like, I know this is familiar. I've heard it. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I Don't Want to Die Poor, yep.

Joshua Pinkay:

Yeah. He's a humorous writer, but particularly from his own experience. So in I Don't Want to Die Poor, it's a book of essays about what it's like for him trying to navigate living in America, trying to pay off his student debt, while at the same time trying to pay off emotional debt. Again, another queer author who I admire and I really like. Stories like that really resonate with me. I think they're really important. And they make sense to who I am and where I am in life right now.

Beck Bamberger:

Great recommendations. Damn. Did everyone get... How about, Joshua, could you say, just for everyone listening here, those three books once again?

Joshua Pinkay:

Yes. So All Boys Aren't Blue, by George M. Johnson. In the Country We Love: My Family Divided, by Diane Guerrero. And then, I Don't Want to Die Poor, by Michael Arceneaux.

Beck Bamberger:

Summer reading for everybody.

Joshua Pinkay:

One podcast that I've been listening to is Con Todo, it was created by Netflix. It's hosted by Dascha Polanco, she's an actress on Orange Is the New Black. It's specifically about highlighting Latinx individuals and how they identify. I always have questions about identity. And so me, personally, it's been the first time I've ever been able to hear stories or first person accounts of how different people in the Latinx diaspora identify. And what their experience has been living in America. Yeah. It's a great podcast. And it's in English. It is in English.

Beck Bamberger:

Perfect. Speaking of just books and the media that we're talking about, and podcasts. What do you feel about the future of journalism?

Joshua Pinkay:

You know, the future of journalism, I think it's tricky. Because I feel like a lot of people look at the media negatively.

Beck Bamberger:

Yes.

Joshua Pinkay:

You get politics involved and whatever, but journalism, I feel will always be an essential tool. Like, that's how we get the news, that's how we learn about things. Whether you're learning about something about foreign policy, or whether you're learning about best cocktail, or it doesn't matter. This is how we absorb

information. And so my hope for the future of journalism is that people take it more seriously. That people respect it as a career. That people respect the journalists who want to be the messengers, that want to be the gatekeepers of information. I love having that and being able to do that and provide whatever bit of insight that I can to my readers. I'm just naturally an optimist, and I want to think that only good things can come from real journalism in the future. And that's what my hope is.

Beck Bamberger:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). It's so interesting. The first season we did of this show, with all these journalists, that question was pessimistic and not optimistic in the least. And is kind of downtrodden in a sense of just like, yeah, you know, we need it, but I don't know, you know, oh geez. And this season, despite this pandemic, despite everything, has been refreshingly hopeful, optimistic, resounding. Everyone I ask of like, hey, would you go back into this if you could? Rewind, let's say, back to your college days of what you were going to do. Everyone says, yes. They would do this again. Is that the same for you?

Joshua Pinkay:

I would say, yeah. My scenario is a little different because I didn't even study journalism. I have a marketing degree.

Beck Bamberger:

And fashion.

Joshua Pinkay:

Yeah. But I found writing in high school. I was on the yearbook staff, and I had excellent English teachers. And, I mean, they helped me discover what writing was. I fell in love with words, and it was a muscle that I didn't know I could flex. And so I had instinctively always had that. And so through college I was studying fashion and marketing and all of that. I fell in love with that aspect. But the writing never left, the words were always there. And so when the opportunities came for me to start writing and to be able to use my pen for editorial pieces, it was just like second nature. It was there. And so I still had my other trades, but the writing was just a part of me. And by all means, I wouldn't trade that for anything.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah. It sounds like it's with you for life.

Joshua Pinkay:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Beck Bamberger:

Oh, I love that.

Joshua Pinkay:

I'm going to write a book one day, I'm sure.

Beck Bamberger:

Yes. Oh yeah. Oh, I know you are. Oh yes. It's coming. Well, the last thing, Joshua, for us today, is a fun little mad lib.

Joshua Pinkay:

Okay.

Beck Bamberger:

They're often quite accurate, but we'll see. Sometimes they're just flat out funny. But you know, we'll see. So I'll give you what I need, and then I'll read back to you what we end up with. Are you ready?

Joshua Pinkay:

I'm ready.

Beck Bamberger:

Okay. What's a catchphrase? Just any catchphrase.

Joshua Pinkay:

I said what I said.

Beck Bamberger:

What about a journalist scare phrase?

Joshua Pinkay:

A journalist scare phrase?

Beck Bamberger:

Like deadline.

Joshua Pinkay:

You know what, that is a scare phrase because I really don't have deadlines. Thank God.

Beck Bamberger:

There you go. Let's put that. Okay. How about an empowering journalism buzzword?

Joshua Pinkay:

Authenticity.

Beck Bamberger:

Yes. Let's put that down. Then, what about just an adjective?

Joshua Pinkay:

Optimistic.

Beck Bamberger:

Optimistic. What about a part of a pitch?

Joshua Pinkay:  
Let's say press release.

Beck Bamberger:  
Press release. Okay. What's another adjective?

Joshua Pinkay:  
Silly.

Beck Bamberger:  
Silly. Great. And then part of a pitch?

Joshua Pinkay:  
Closing.

Beck Bamberger:  
Okay. Amount of time?

Joshua Pinkay:  
Six days.

Beck Bamberger:  
Six, that is precise. Okay. Another adjective? And then we're almost done.

Joshua Pinkay:  
Concise.

Beck Bamberger:  
Concise. Good one. Then what about a singular noun?

Joshua Pinkay:  
Shoe.

Beck Bamberger:  
Shoe. Great. And a topic?

Joshua Pinkay:  
Let's just go with social impact.

Beck Bamberger:  
Social impact. Mm-hmm (affirmative). That is a good one. Then a verb that ends in -ING.

Joshua Pinkay:

Sowing.

Beck Bamberger:

That's the first time I heard that. Okay. And then what's, just a verb? Any verb.

Joshua Pinkay:

Run.

Beck Bamberger:

Okay. Here we go, Joshua. Are you ready?

Joshua Pinkay:

I am ready.

Beck Bamberger:

Okay. You tell us how accurate this is. Okay. To me, journalism is, I said what I said. It consists of deadlines and authenticity on the daily. If a pitch has an optimistic press release, I will absolutely respond to it. However, if a pitch has a silly close, you can expect no reply for me. If six days goes by and you don't see an email back for me, you can just assume I am not concise about it. The best stories always have shoes and are usually about social impact. The best way to reach me is by sowing it over to me. But you can also run it by me.

Joshua Pinkay:

I love it.

Beck Bamberger:

I love it too. It's so good. These are remarkably on point for a lot of people. It's just, it's great.

Joshua Pinkay:

Wow, that was awesome.

Beck Bamberger:

Yeah. Joshua, this is so fun. Thank you for joining me today.

Joshua Pinkay:

No, no problem. Thank you for having me. This was a great conversation. I really appreciate it.

Beck Bamberger:

This was fun. This is delightful. Have a good rest of the weekend too, because it's Friday.

Joshua Pinkay:

It is Friday. I will thoroughly enjoy my weekend. And I will get back to writing, because I've got somethings to put out. And so I'm really excited.

Beck Bamberger:

And now people know how to pitch you, so hopefully there'll be labeling up a storm with you.

Joshua Pinkay:

Exactly.

Jered Martin:

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Coffee with the Journalist featuring Joshua Pinkay from OBVIOUS Magazine and SoCal magazine. If you like our show, make sure to subscribe on iTunes, Spotify, Google podcasts. And leave us a review if you've enjoyed what you heard. If you'd like to learn more about OnePitch, head to our website at [OnePitch.co](http://OnePitch.co) to see the unique ways we're helping journalists and public relations professionals start great stories. We'll be back next week with an all new guest, and even more insights about the tech journalist you want to learn more about. Until then, start great stories.