Wired World INAFU6059

Preparing a Pitch
Pitches are More Difficult than Pieces

• Before every assignment, comes the pitch. A pitch is the teaser to get an editor interested.
• Everyone has to do them—freelancers and staffers.
• A good pitch can get you an assignment or a contract.
• That can be hard to write, partly because you do them without having all the information (like doing a book proposal without having spent years researching a book)
Before the Pitch

• Know your outlet. Essential to spend some time looking at the website you want to contribute to. Same is true before pitching to a magazine or radio station.

• Be aware of which section you want to pitch to. Sometimes people start sections and are then forced to scramble for copy to fill them.

• Do research to make sure it has not been done. (Especially check the place you want to write for).

• Do a bit of reporting so you know, in fact, there is actually a story. Often the story will fall apart as you report it/turn out to be different. That’s to be expected. Be open to that.
Getting the Editor’s Attention

• Plus the balance of power is off.
• You may be pitching to someone who doesn’t need you, isn’t interested, is very busy, receives hundreds of pitches a week.
• The usual response is no reply at all.
• It’s discouraging but don’t be.
It’s Good Training

• Writing a good pitch is an excellent exercise.
• It helps you figure out what exactly you want to say,
• Why what you have to say is important,
• Why someone might be interested.
• Writing a pitch forces you to be clear and compelling.
What Should be in a Pitch

• It’s a bit like the first two grafs of a newspaper story:
• The pitch should include
• A summary of the main point
• Why it’s important (the “so-what”)
• Why it’s timely (if you have a peg)
• How you will report it
• Why you are the person who can do this piece.
What Editors Want

• They want to see that you can write so the pitch should be in a similar style to the piece you will write. Don’t send an academic pitch to a feature editor.
• Be aware of the writing style that they use.
• Of course they want something new, interesting and relevant.
• They want to know it’s doable. Don’t be too ambitious. Narrow down to one subject that you know about and can deliver.