

"Successful Opinion Writing and Pitching" Breakthrough Workshop | Eric Finley

Drafting considerations

- What are you trying to achieve?
- Type of publication or media outlet to approach.
- Know the audience of the publication you are writing for.
- Consider mentioning your organization in the body of the piece or at least the bio line.
- Hyperlink all sources; don't use footnotes unless requested or required.
- Use the best and most appropriate sources.
- Bio line should include your name, title, hyperlinked website, social media link, and other relevant information to the piece.
- Consider including trackback information at the end of links to your website (e.g., “?utm_source=*publication*&utm_medium=*oped*” at the end of a link).

Submission considerations

- No attachments, unless requested or required.
- Header block with name, title, and full contact information.
- Format in an easy-to-read manner (line spacing, font type and size, etc.).
- Submit to the correct person and/or e-mail address.
- Intro pitching paragraph vitals.
- Don't submit to multiple publications at once.
- Query in advance in certain important situations.
- Don't supply your signature block if it won't help your case when seeking to get a piece published.

Follow-up tips

- Don't follow up sooner than 24 hours.
- Don't write long-winded follow-up e-mails.
- Rarely call the editor, but you can do so in certain situations.
- Move on if publication is non-responsive within their stated timeframe for consideration of submissions.
- Have a prioritized list of target publications in mind for the piece you are submitting in case you are declined.

Handling acceptances/declines

Handling requested edits

- If the publication requests edits before publishing or before deciding to publish, be reasonable, but you don't need to give up your absolute limits on changes; getting published at that publication may or may not be worth going the extra mile, but no publication is worth giving up your foundational convictions.
- Be clear on what's acceptable to you (e.g., “*As long as you are okay with the minor edits I have provided below, this is good to go*”).
- Provide your response to the editor's edits in the form he or she requests.
- If your edits are minor, you may be able to simply reply that everything is fine except this or that; if they are more substantial, you may need to provide highlighted changes or tracked changes in Word, depending on what the editor wants.
- Beware of e-mail security software that changes your hyperlinks in the body of e-mail replies (e.g., Mimecast).

Q&A