How To Pitch: The Improper Bostonian

Pitch local trends, happenings, and playful features to this beloved Boston book
By Kate Parham – April 15, 2011

How To Pitch: The Boston Globe Magazine
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The information in this article is current and accurate

Circulation: 86,500
Frequency: Biweekly

Special issues: Boston's Best, Year-End Double; Bartenders, Spring and Fall Dining

Background: Since its founding in 1992, The Improper Bostonian has become a Beantown staple for those who live, work, and play in the city, particularly the most influential consumers (i.e. well-educated and affluent men and women in their 20s to 40s). With an emphasis on the city's latest trends and happenings, The Improper Bostonian's irreverent tone and playful approach -- suggested in the publication's title -- to all things Boston set it apart from the competition. Available at over 700 restaurants, bars, health clubs, hotels, tourist centers, universities, convenience stores, offices, coffee shops, and special events, the magazine covers a wide territory of highly populated areas within a 10-mile radius of the city.

Leadership of the publication changed hands recently when Andrew Rimas took over as editor. Under his helm, the publication is now revisiting the front-of-book sections and updating the look.

What to pitch: "We don't actually use a whole lot of cold calls or freelancers who come to us out of the blue," says Rimas. "Sometimes we do, but for the most part, we go back to the same writers we've been using for a while; so we're not the easiest magazine to break into." Rimas says he usually pursues writers whose byline he has seen in a different publication and whose work he admires. "It's a tough market, and we've been taking fewer risks and going out with people who don't have a stellar book of clips and references."

That said, if you've got a great idea for the front-of-book or for a feature, don't hesitate to pitch it. "It's always good to receive information about the town that's out there, but we typically chase down writers who we want to win over." That's not to totally discourage you from pitching, though. Rimas says "every pitch will get read, no doubt about it. And, if there's a new voice who comes in with an amazing pitch, then sure, we'll act on it." Features and profiles are most likely to be farmed out. It's best to check the editorial calendar for issue themes.

What not to pitch: Most of the magazine's food coverage is farmed out to the same writers each month, same with sports and fashion. "Imperatives" is less open to freelancers than it has been in past years, and the back-of-book section entitled "Impulses" is closed to freelancers. It involves detailed calendar listings,
which are compiled in-house.

**Online opportunities:** Rimas says the newly redesigned Improper.com is continuing to improve and expand its content with original pieces from bloggers and growing video coverage. But freelancers should stay away from video submissions, as Rimas says they are typically generated in-house.

**Percentage of freelance content:** 25 percent

**Percentage of freelance submissions accepted:** About 10 percent

**Recent freelance stories pitched and published:** Although Rimas couldn't recall any recent successful pitches, he says that these older stories are good examples of the types of content he's looking for. "Will Play for Praise" by Carmen Nobel -- a piece on student musicians who play around Boston; "It's A Trad, Trad World" by Nathaniel Adams -- a story about the traditional style of dressing and its local roots; and "Buying the Cow" by Jolyon Helterman -- a feature on the glut of steakhouses on the Boston dining scene.

**Etiquette:** Send pitches by email, along with a couple clips.

**Lead-time:** At least two months

**Pay rate:** Varies depending on section, up to $1/word

**Payment schedule:** Within 30 days of publication

**Kill fee:** 30 percent

**Rights purchased:** "We keep exclusive rights for the period of the issue date range, and we retain use permanently for online purposes, etc., but ownership is the author’s after publication," says Rimas.

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