Module 19, Lesson 2 Pitching:
Autoimmune Symptoms

Whether you're reaching out to brands on your own, or hiring someone to pitch on your behalf, working with brands as an influencer and an endorser takes a lot more than just one quick email exchange. Thankfully, with two key tools and a bit of know-how, you can confidently contact brands using strategies that lead to deals, and have the knowledge to manage these deals as successful partnerships.

Pitching

As you grow your business, opportunities to work with - and for - brands will begin to appear all around you. Inbound pitches from Public Relations Agencies hired by some of your favorite brands looking for paid and unpaid partnerships will surely hit your inbox. Or brands might begin to contact you via Instagram saying they'd love to work together. Are you willing to post on their behalf in exchange for product? Are you looking for a minimum amount of money? Do you align with their beliefs and marketing? Before responding, ask yourself the questions we covered in the previous handout to help you decipher between an opportunity that will elevate your brand, and one that will distract you from your true mission.

While inbound offers can suddenly fall in your lap, *paid* partnerships and influencer opportunities usually take a bit of outbound pitching on your part. Especially when you're first starting out.

These two tools will help you pitch with confidence:

1. **Media Kit:** A document or deck that highlights key information and statistics about your blog, brand, or platform that a company would be interested in. A media kit serves as an intro to any brand you are hoping to work with, and shows them how partnering with you would be beneficial to them. If you haven't been in contact with them before, a media kit can accompany your first email to a brand or PR company of your choice.

2. **Rate Sheet:** Exactly as it sounds, this document details the rate for each product or service you are offering the brand. Considering bundling these offerings into packages. How to choose your rates? They will all be super specific based on your specific platforms, audiences, expertise, and what you want to offer. A little online research will reveal some going-rates for these partnerships. Know your worth. Each correspondence with a brand

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will be different, but avoid sending a cold email to a brand or PR company with your rates included. Save sending your rate sheet for later in the conversation.

Securing Deals

Before sending an email out to a brand you'd like to work with, think of all of the other people attempting to do the same. This statement isn't meant to be discouraging, but rather it should serve as motivation to be creative in your initial contact. Below are a few key components of a pitch that will definitely make you stand out in the crowd and secure those life-changing brand deals and partnerships.

An outbound pitch should include:

1. **Who you are:** Using your short, intriguing elevator pitch, explain who you are.

2. **What you do:** Describe your area of expertise and how you will use it to help elevate their brand.

3. **Specific ideas:** Rather than asking if they'd be interested in working together, provide specific examples of exactly how you see this happening, so that they can easily envision it, too.

4. **Love for their brand:** Include a short, concise story on an experience you had with the brand you're contacting. By adding this quick warm and fuzzy, it lets them know you are just as passionate about their products as they are!

5. **Media kit:** This attached or linked document serves as your 'learn more about me' to accompany what you wrote in your email and give a more visual representation of you and your brand.

Maybe the most important key to securing deals though, is *building the relationship*. Influencer marketing is largely about relationships. Brands, marketing teams, and PR agencies don't expect to rely on isolated emails to confirm influencers, and you shouldn't feel that way about *your* outbound pitches either! Most opportunities will come about after a relationship with that brand has already been established. As you stay in contact, you also stay top of mind when the right opportunities arise. Stay in contact and build rapport.

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Contracts

Always sign a contract. No matter how simple or straightforward a confirmed partnership may be, a contract is always a good idea. If the drafted contract is provided by the brand, read thoroughly, request edits as needed, and don't hesitate to relay to your lawyer if possible before signing.
In addition to outlining the agreed upon specifics of what the partnership entails, there are numerous other details that can be helpful for mutual understanding between you and the brand hiring you. When they know exactly what to expect from you and vice versa, this leads to the most successful partnerships.

This could include details such as:

- **Number of rounds** allotted for client content feedback and approval. Say it's a recipe you've been contracted to create using a food brand. Do they have one round of edits on the recipe, and one round of review to request a re-shoot on the photos?
- **Posting disclosures.** Are you willing to put "#ad" at the beginning of a social media caption, or use Facebook Business Manager to whitelist the company as promoters of your content? These details can and should be discussed before the content is created.
- **Deadlines.** A specific content timeline for delivery of creatives, feedback and approval, and expected live date is best for assuring you and the brand are happy. Get them in writing, and respect them.
- **How long the content must stay live.** Be sure not to overlook this detail if it is in a contract you've received. It may not be an issue at all to keep the photos live on your Instagram for the next year, or maybe it is depending on your business and the other partnerships you expect to confirm in that time. Sometimes, this portion will outline how long the brand has rights to use your content for. Especially if the time is indefinite, it's a detail worth discussing for mutual understanding between parties.

Resources

Contacting a brand *directly* is always the best idea for building rapport, gaining a deeper understanding of the brand, and securing partnerships as an influencer of the brand.
However there are also numerous digital databases for creators like yourself. Brands seeking to work with influencers are also in these databases so they can directly contact influencers they see as a good fit for their campaigns. Many of these types of influencer marketing platforms also allow for on-site partnership management, so that all of the nitty gritty details you would have to handle via email—

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contract, campaign management, analytics reporting, etc. is done through the software. Here are some to check out:

- Upfluence
- HashtagPaid
- AspireIQ
- ACTIVATE
- Influence.Co
- Markerly
- NeoReach
- Popular Pays

Partnership opportunities beget more partnership opportunities. Remember, there are no cut and dry rules when it comes to working with brands, so go with your gut, follow your heart, and lean on the TNS community any time you have questions. Best of luck!

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