

Editing for Magazines Panel: The How, When, What, and Why

Panelists: Josh Perkey and Jannalee Sandau

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Josh Perkey: Hi, everyone. I'm Josh Perkey, the assistant managing editor of the New Era magazine, and with me is

Jannalee Sandau: Jannalee Sandau. I'm the Senior Editor at LDS living magazine.

Josh Perkey: And we're going to talk to you today about the how, what, why, when, how you make it into publishing and editing in the magazine industry.

So first, we thought would be helpful for you to know a little bit about our products, and what we're managing, and what we're producing. Jannalee's going to talk about her work.

Jannalee Sandau: So LDS living is a magazine that's owned by Deseret book. And we have a bi-monthly printed magazine, which is something that is given to Deseret Book customers—platinum customers, mostly, but we do have some other subscribers. But our main presence is actually online. So we have an email list of about 200,000 people. We send out—

Josh Perkey: I'm one of those! Super cool, super cool.

Jannalee Sandau: We send out daily stories and updates, and it's a really fun list. We have lots of people that like to stay caught up on news and Latter-day Saints. So we are a culture magazine, which is why we have some of those news aspects and articles as well.

We also, in the last few years since I've been at LDS living, we've started adding video components. We recently started three different podcasts. So if you've heard of "All In," or "This is the Gospel," or the "Sunday on Monday" podcast is the most recent one. That we will do

podcast, but we also turn some of those into articles and videos. So we've started doing a lot of different things. So magazine editing, as we're talking about it, might include some of those other components as well that LDS Living has started incorporating in the last few years.

Josh Perkey: That is super cool, and you know, I actually really love LDS Living. I love all that you guys are doing.

I love the way you're expanding in the new products, and I think that last comment that you made about magazine editing isn't just print. And it's not just what you would think of 20 even 15-10 years ago.

Right, interesting, because I can see all my stuff for LDS Living online, predominately through your email distribution, but I love it, all this great content. So thanks.

Yeah. Oh go ahead. You have something else you want to share?

Jannalee Sandau: Oh just I think that it's a lot of fun to be part of magazine work, and I think I'm excited about this conversation because I think what you do with the Church magazines can be a little bit different than what LDS Living does, but it all kind of has things that we'll be able to share with everyone else about magazines.

Josh Perkey: Cool. So my current job is the assistant managing editor of the New Era Magazine and with the youth team.

Been there for about eight years. Before that, I was working with the Ensign for five years as a senior editor with that team.

And then before that I was in publishing with the McGraw Hill companies doing textbooks. So I've been in the professional world as an editor for quite a while doing different products.

The Church magazines are really interesting because we have a really large worldwide distribution and we publish in 48 languages in the Liahona magazine.

Also there are local pages so areas that have just very few Church membership receive some local pages that they produce there themselves, so lots and lots of languages are represented.

It's really, really cool to say that I've written, I've been published in 52 languages, including [word inaudible] and, you know, Tagalog and all kinds of other things. Super cool.

So, With the magazines and with the youth division, the editing teams are broken up in the audience groups. We now have four audience groups, including the adult team.

We, our digital components are growing, and we have an emphasis, we're thinking about expanding, but many of you may know about the young adult living or YA weekly—I said young adult living—the YA weekly section in the gospel library app that largely expands three to six additional articles per week for the eighteen- to thirty-year old audience.

We also have the Gospel Living app that's been launched this year in January, predominantly right now focusing on youth, but we'll expand when we're prepared to do that to the adult and children audiences and the parents and leaders of those groups. And so the youth team right now is intimately involved in helping produce a lot of digital content as well as traditional print content.

We also know that our magazine website landing pages are not, they're not places people go as for consumable content directly.

Most of our stuff is found through social or through searches. And so we're trying to expand the good experience with video and other content for the website because that's a landing place from searches, rather than a go to place, but you get there through the back door. So although I've been new Go ahead.

Jannalee Sandau: I just didn't realize that that's a really cool new thing you're working on.

Josh Perkey: Yeah. And so my job actually just changed a couple weeks ago to focus more on the digital product.

And I've got a companion. I was coming into focus more on the print so we'll be conceptualizing content as a large team together. But then, we'll be figuring out where the messages go and focusing on message content strategy first rather than a print article. And my job is if you're, how do we expand? And if we had all the money in the world and we could do whatever we want and all the approvals, could we do texts? Can we use Twitter? Can we use Instagram? Could we use whatever channels are happening out there? And of course the Church is careful and methodical in how it approaches those things. What amazes me as a magazine team member is I'm focusing on digital product and digital production. So it's pretty crazy, pretty interesting.

So let's yeah, isn't that fun? Jannalee: That's a lot of fun. You do a great job looking on the camera. I keep wanting to look down at you. Look at me.

Jannalee Sandau: I'm trying.

Josh Perkey: So that's about some background on who we are and our products that we produce and who we work for. And I think the next question we want to address is, what's a day in the life like for each of us? And how about you go first, while I grab a drink of water.

Jannalee Sandau: Okay. Sounds good.

So this is kind of a tricky question. We have a very small staff at LDS Living comparatively, from my perspective, so we actually do a little bit of everything. And it's hard to really describe an exact day to day experience, and maybe this is the same for you.

Josh Perkey: It is true for me. Yeah, and it'd be more like describing the day in the week.

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

But a lot of what our jobs entail especially LDS Living, we have a daily news component, so a lot of times in the morning, we'll start with an editorial team meeting.

We'll talk about different news stories that we've seen—things that we want to look into more, things that we want to write about or link off to. So we have a few different ways that we do journalism and promote stories. So sometimes we'll write stories from scratch; somebody will do an interview and write something, or maybe we found a story that potentially is related to a member of the Church, but the story we found doesn't say that. So we'll do a little more digging and do our own version of that story with a more faith-based component. So stuff like that we'll talk about in the morning, if we want to link to things or what everybody's working on. So you kind of are in charge of figuring out your priorities. For me personally, I'm over our print magazine. So a lot of what I do is working with the designer, or I'm getting articles ready to go to print.

We also take turns editing each other's content online and proofreading, things like that. That's kind of mostly what we spend our days doing.

And then we also, of course, are touching base and our other teams. We'll work with our marketing team to put things on social media. So you get really good at learning how to create

social copy to go along with the articles you've written, or you learn how to interact with the video team to help them write up things to promote videos, things like that. So there's a lot of different things that any of us could be doing at any given point of the day, but mostly kind of just looking for stories is a lot of what we do.

Josh Perkey: That's really, really cool. Do you, hearing what you're—I'm going to talk about mine just a second, but I had some thoughts about what do you guys do that might be helpful because it'll put in perspective.

Seems like you guys are a little bit more news features than we are a little bit, more rapid in your content production, probably.

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah I would think so We do because we'll have stories that we find that the beginning of the day, and by the end of the day they're up on our site, so a fast pace sometimes, yeah.

Josh Perkey: So the Church obviously has a PR department or division, and their job is they do a lot of daily publication. There's news or news things that are coming out that they're gonna prepare for but we're not quite in the news cycle where I am.

Although we do have the Instagram channel that the youth Instagram, Strive to Be channel. So we have some things that happen more quickly. But just to put it in perspective, we just planned this week, we brainstormed and content development for July 2021 content. So we're almost a year out, we start thinking about what's been going to print product, which is crazy.

Jannalee Sandau: It is crazy.

Josh Perkey: Wow, I'm just so grateful for that article that I read. It was so timely. And we're thinking—

Jannalee Sandau: Had no idea what it was. That's funny.

Josh Perkey: So much of what you described, generally in the day in the life of what you do is similar for us too. We've got team meetings. Of course COVID has changed everything right, we're not in the office.

Jannalee Sandau: Absolutely.

Josh Perkey: When we're in the office, I just go over and say, "Hey, David, what's going on," or "Hey, just so you know," or "Priscilla what are you doing over there?" And, you know, it's not like that. So we have daily huddles the beginning of the day and end of the day to figure out what's going on where our deadlines are. We find, actually, that we're working longer hours, and it's harder to turn off because you're at home, right.

It's true. Yeah, because you're at home, it's like you're always on the clock. But in the world that we have, we have our planning meetings, we got strategy, we have a lot of time for personal development of content, I mean not me, not you. But you're developing your work individually or with teams if you're writing with a team. A lot of our articles come from members who submit them, and we review those. We get quite a few that we are trying to edit and improve.

Of course, the adult team has a lot of online content they're already doing. The youth team's online contents are gospel living.

And they have their own little team, but we're becoming more and more like this. In fact, the change I've described with you, and then if you go about me becoming more of the digital focused assistant managing editor is that Gospel Living's here and Brent was here.

And there's a few of us in the middle of here saying let's pull it together. And so we're trying to figure out how to get our team to be how's this message that I'm developing going to look like in that channel, and that channel, and that channel. Does it have an Instagram feature. Is there a video feature we can grab or produce. Is there an audio or is there podcast version if we can get in that sphere.

That happens, you have to get that approvals. But definitely, we've got print, and we have gospel living, and we have the online website, so yeah, more of the day in the life. We, a lot of independent thinking, a lot of independent work, but also a lot of collaboration.

And it depends on sort of your preference. We have eight interns in our division, and they love to collaborate. We give them a lot of assignments, we treat them just like—we're gonna talk about internships and how to get into the path of writing in a minute—but we treat them, in our group, just like team members, just a little bit less experience. And so they quite love it, and they are often collaborating. We review each other's contents. We give each other feedback with your egos at the door, which is hard when you're, you know, at your house.

Oh my ego is still here! Ahh! But I'm currently not as involved with video production than you are. You are way more evolved than I am with that, and I'd love to see more—we have a big

team that does that in the Church hierarchy, or the Church organization, but it's not quite my division. So we'll figure that out.

We have a design team of about five people, who I say about because a couple of them are part time, we have that work with us and produce all the content. In using InDesign, they lay out and create. I was gonna say digital. But, you know, everything is digital, so polished.

As we're looking at this whole transition that's happening over this last month, and we're thinking, not just in the print product, but how is this going to look when it, when we're integrated with Gospel Living, we're more integrated with our other digital channels. It's just really interesting to think differently. So we work closely with our design team. In fact, of all the magazine groups, ours is the most integrated, which is pretty cool. But the adult team and the children's team, they work closely with our designers as well. So you don't have to have a design background where I work to do editing and writing, but it is helpful, because we have lots of conversations with the design team, and you learn things. So I'm still not very savvy with InDesign. I'm really careful not to get in their files; I don't want to screw anything up. But we have you—

Jannalee Sandau: No, that's, it's a good point, though, so we actually outsource our design for our print magazines, but that's definitely a skill. I know we're going to talk skills a little more later as well, but I think part of magazine and being in that space is also learning to have a little bit of a design eye. Obviously, designers have had more experience and education, but being able to look at it as a viewer and say, "Oh, that's a little hard to read, or maybe how do we how do we present the text in a way that is readable but also interesting. I think that's a great point to bring up that is part of what we do.

Josh Perkey: Speaking of skills, I mean it's, I'm going to shake my table writing too much. I've got this little—But I love that you brought up skills because that reminded me that we have audiences that we're trying to reach.

My audience is different than the adult audience, is different than your audience, is different than the children's magazine audience.

And so one of the skills that you really need as you're developing not just an idea for how design works and what kind of imagery will attract or tease your audience into going to look further when they see that, you know, the whole idea of visuals is to grab your attention and inspire you to get a little bit further.

Is learning how to write for your audience and Jannalee: Absolutely. Josh: attract your audience. And then you talk about mediums, all the different mediums. You guys are working with video and press and podcast and digital and email and all that. All those are different. You can't just write once, and publish it everywhere. You got to think.

Jannalee Sandau: Right.

Josh Perkey: How does that work for you, then? How do you figure that out? How do you manage that kind of editing approach?

Jannalee Sandau: Well, it's definitely something that we are still practicing and we're still experimenting with, but I do think it's an important skill if magazine, the magazine world is something that you're interested in. I think one of the best things that you can do is practice and learn how to write in different styles, because just like you said, if we're writing an excerpt from a podcast interview, you're going to format it differently. You may write a little differently. We have a number of different contributors. And so, learning how to let voices come through is kind of, I think part of learning different styles. Sometimes we have personal blog reflection posts that are a little more personal, less formal, but then we also have pieces that are history based, which is what I personally enjoy writing a lot for our site. And so how do you write about research in a way that's accurate and still interesting that still fits our voice? I think there's a lot of different things you can practice, and I like that you talked about how your interns get an opportunity to do that as well because that's something that we really love about our intern program as well. We don't have quite as many interns as you do, but we love that we can give our interns opportunities to practice writing and different ways to have their own voice, but to also be able to learn how to write newsy style or magazine style or personal style. I think that's one of the really fun things for me about magazine writing that's a little different from maybe newspaper or book writing. It's, there's this whole world of different styles you can explore.

Josh Perkey: It's really interesting to me because some little nuggets I'm pulling out of what you just said that relate to what I do as well is that we write, and we edit and we conceptualize. So we're thinking and planning short-term like you said, you guys can find something in the morning and publish later in the day and of course you enter long-term strategies.

We've got things that we're working with, with some of our news people that happened pretty quickly, relatively speaking.

And we have our long-term strategies and our medium-term strategies. But your Gospel Living is planning out—they've got things in the works for August through December.

They have a kind of a multi tiered approach in thinking how they're going to develop stuff, particularly those things like video. I'm sure you're finding the same, it takes longer to produce and more costly.

So, there's a skill set. If you want to get really into magazine publishing, you can't just think about, "I'm going to write a few articles for this really narrow niche—demographic niche." You got to think, "Well, that may be part of it. But how do you attract them? How do you reach them? Well, if you're thinking Pinterest is one of our strategies, writing a Pinterest post is very close to the Gospel Living, actually, the little cards, right.

It's very different than a Facebook post. Very different than the way you do and Instagram, which is different than the long form. So We're always trying to develop those skills, and we look for those in our interns. And with those for people that we're considering hiring is can you—in fact, I'm going to cut myself off there.

The first managing editor of the gospel living app got hired predominantly because he had a marketing and PR background, twelve years in New York working for PR firms.

So he comes in. He was working with the Ensign for quite a while but then he got, I mean a year. Then he was hired as the Gospel Living managing editor in large part because he understood how to produce those cards and see how that's going to grab your attention, whereas some of the other magazine editors, like I'm used to writing a 800 to 1000 word article. Well, how does that, you know, how does that fit five words with the picture? Is it really interesting. So to go back to what Jannalee was saying, if you're interested in this industry, you're transitioning into it, developing your skills by looking at different social platforms as well as written platforms that are longer is really, really helpful.

And how do you engage with podcasting as Jannalee was talking about podcasts and video is a major part of her strategy for getting messaging out there.

Having some experience with a lot of that is really helpful. So let's transition into how do you get into this industry. And I think when we do those describe our own personal journeys and maybe some of our colleagues, we can describe that to you. But do you wanna go first with that?

Jannalee Sandau: Sure! So I actually started as an intern at LDS Living, so I've kind of seen LDS Living grow. And a lot of the times, the people that we have hired have been former

interns. And I think part of that is because it's a great way to gain skills and a great way to build relationships.

So I would say that's probably still one of the best ways that I would recommend is to find a place that you are interested in working at, and start as an intern is, I still think it's the best way to get your foot in the door. That's where I started.

And then I was fortunate enough to transition to a part-time job. Somebody quit right as I finished my internship and then from there I transition to full-time.

And then in the last year, I've been working as the senior editor doing all of the print magazine.

So a lot of it I think it's just kind of sticking it out through things that you maybe don't love, but you're learning and just being able to practice and grow and build relationships. That's really another big part, I think, is if you have a network of people that you can find stories from that you can collaborate with, people that can just help you expand yourself and put yourself out there, send recommendation letters to other places. I know we've had a few interns that we've sent recommendation letters over that have worked, maybe not for you specifically Josh, but over in that department with the Church magazines.

I think just learning to find people that you want to work for. And then tailoring your skills and your resume to that is a great way to start.

Josh Perkey: Very, very cool. Thank you. What did you study in school?

Jannalee Sandau: I was an English major, which, to be honest, I probably wouldn't have picked that if I had—

Josh Perkey: I wouldn't do that anymore either.

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah, but

Josh Perkey: Although we hire some really good English majors, but, excuse me, I'm getting a little Froggy. We like people with the communications background as well.

Jannalee: Yeah at least a few editing classes. You gotta be better than just, oh I wrote some papers and edited a few papers. You've got to understand how to really craft and re-craft somebody else's work in a way that doesn't do damage to their voice.

Jannalee Sandau: Right. And that's one thing I actually wish I would have done a little more in school, I discovered communications toward the end of my college degree. So I just decided to push forward with English and just take a few communications classes on the side, but I definitely agree that looking back, that would have been a much better option to learn how to do the editing and to learn how to learn how to preserve voices, things like that. So I loved my degree, but I would have, I probably wouldn't have done it again.

Josh Perkey: Yeah, me too. Mine would have been very different if I knew where I was gonna end up now.

My background is actually Classical Studies, ancient history, Medieval history, languages—Latin, Greek German.

Jannalee Sandau: Hence the swords behind you.

Josh Perkey: Yes, this is Aragorn's sword, and this is a 12th century crusader's sword. Yeah, I love that kind of stuff, right. So, I got my job at McGraw Hill companies, not because of my editing background but because of my history training.

And they were looking for content specialists that could learn on the job. And so I was pretty well versed in how to be a writer, but how to edit and write for middle school and high school was a bit of a transition.

So, that is to say, you can come from a variety of backgrounds. We have one of our writers and editors came from the newspaper industry, was nominated for a Pulitzer, so he's amazing. We have others that have come, like I mentioned the managing editor of the Gospel Living: PR and marketing. And then we have people come from broadcast industry, the managing editor of the New Era was what his job background was in.

So you can come from a variety of backgrounds, but we also hire a lot of interns. Our interns have to have been connected with school within the last six months to a year. So it's a little more difficult. If you're been out of the industry or you're looking for career transfer, getting in with us as an intern isn't going to be quite as successful. It does get you trained if you had that opportunity when you're younger in your career.

But as I said, and as Jannalee was mentioning, we're really looking for, in our industry—in magazines, is people who have a desire to learn and grow on messaging in general, how to

communicate. That's why I love people who have, when I say communications, and that's actually a technical degree, but it's also a term that I use loosely for you know how to interact and communicate with people.

So the broadcast major, that's kind of a communications area, but it's not the same as a print magazine writer. He had a lot to learn when he came in. He said, "You guys are going to teach me how to do print product, but I can tell you how to communicate. I can tell you to understand your audience. I can tell you how to grab and reach your audience." So all those skills are really important.

a tenacious desire to learn and to learn how to communicate and be effective, that way. But if you're going to be an editor with our team, necessarily a manager but an editor, you gotta learn how to edit and write.

Cool. I'm just going to move over here and look at a couple of our questions and see if we have Um,

Jannalee Sandau: Well, I think maybe one thing we could transition to Josh: Yeah, Jannalee: We started talking a little bit about skills. We've touched a little bit on on interns and internships. But I think one of the things we talked about bringing up was what it takes to be a good intern. What is it, does a good intern look like a magazine.

Josh Perkey: Yeah. Should I go first this time?

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah, go ahead.

Josh Perkey: Awesome. So a good intern, when we're hiring—we're getting ready to set up our next hiring pool. If all goes according to plan with COVID. But in September, we'll start looking for new interns to hire for January.

And we're looking for interns who have school training, as in they've taken classes that have actually helped—and most interns who are still in college or just barely graduating haven't had a full time job as a magazine editor somewhere. So we're not looking for that. We're looking for people we can train So if you can show me in your application process that you've take in coursework that has honed your skills as a communicator, as a writer, as an editor, and your voice. It's so interesting how many people I get who submit an application for one position, and they want to talk about their didactic criticism of 19th century writing. I'm like, "Okay, that's like this, you know, .0001% of the world cares about that." There are other people and that's great.

But my audience isn't reading that. My audience is 11 to 18, and they're interested in fun inspiring content. So I want you to show me that you have the ability to adapt to my voice. So when the interns come on, The interns who really work well are interns who have a desire to learn, who are teachable, who want to learn and who will work with me on, "This is what I'm thinking, Josh." But they don't give you—we had a couple in the last 10 years who pushed back a little too hard, almost aggressively because they're like, "I'm supposed to be tenacious." Well, you're also supposed to be teachable.

My industry and work with me, but that's by far the smallest number. Most of them are really interested in learning, and they want to be taught the voice. What is the voice of a 15 year old interested in? What kind of voice do they want to hear and read and see? That they're willing to work hard, they're willing to monitor their time, be self-motivated, self-dedicated, being able to manage their time. I get my interns on responsibility, and I'll say, "Okay, I'll see you in six hours.

Call me if you need something". And I'll go to work and go back. Or tomorrow is the day we're brainstorming together, are you ready? And so they have to manage being with people and being on their own and have that be fluid when that happens. So those kind of interpersonal skills I'm always looking for that are important.

What about you, what are you looking for in your interns?

Jannalee Sandau: I think you've covered a good chunk of it.

I think that the biggest part of that for me, I was managing our intern program for a little bit, and I think it really started with the application for me. The types of things that you send in actually say a lot about you.

I always had a hard time when I got three essays that somebody had to write for a class. Well, tell me, kind of what you were saying, how does that relate to what we're doing now.

I think the biggest thing to start with is making sure that you know the audience that you're applying to speak to. Right. So if you're going to apply it to be an intern at LDS Living, be familiar with some of the content that we do share.

Josh Perkey: I can't tell you how many times people apply for us. And like you have no idea what we do.

Jannalee Sandau: Right.

Josh Perkey: Or ever written something like that ever, or—

Jannalee Sandau: Right, exactly. And that is a big turnoff because kind of what you're saying earlier, we want people who are passionate about what we do. And I think one of the cool things about being in the Latter-day Saint media space is that we have a pretty clear audience. So okay to embrace the fact that we're members of the Church, and we're sharing stories of faith. I think that that's something that sometimes our interns might have a hard time with when they apply is they're used to this other space of, okay, be careful how much I say about faith or this, or this, but if you're wanting to be part of the Latter-day Saint media world of LDS Living or the Church magazines, I think I can probably speak for this as well, don't be afraid to embrace that. Just be familiar with the audience that you're going to apply to be speaking to, and just also, along with that being willing like Josh said to learn. I really think that's a big part of being an intern is you're there and we love having interns that have new ideas, new connections, new stories.

But we also love an intern who is willing to do anything that we need them to do. Sometimes those are menial little things, sometimes that's tackling an interview or a new story, or, you know, picking a skill that you really want to improve while you're there. I think that's something that really draws us to an intern is if there's something that they really want to learn and that they're passionate about that we can help them and they can help us—that there's a mutual working together.

So I think that's probably some of our biggest things that we like to look for in our interns is a passion for the Latter-day Saint audience and willingness, like you said, to learn and have some new experiences.

Josh Perkey: Awesome. Thank you! You know, I love interns. I love when they're desirous

Jannalee Sandau: of learning

Josh Perkey: and trying new things and doing different things. That's exactly what we look for in ours, and yet what we just described with interns really applies across the board. If you're interested in a part-time or permanent position in the magazine industry is the desire to learn. I love that you brought up "Look at your industry." So whether it's LDS Living or the Church magazines or anywhere else in the Utah Valley or worldwide, wherever you are, study them out. And this actually leads into another question I was going to have us talk about how to find and pitch stand up contribute articles—contributor articles.

I get excited. Sometimes and I'm like "drdrdr." My mouth can't keep up with my brain.

Is research the industry and what kinds of things you want to do, and then start communicating with the people there. Try to connect with them so LDS Living: now you know who Jannalee is. Perhaps you're interested in contributing to them or to the blog on the Church website or Utah Valley 360, wherever it is. Follow the magazines and the communication people there. Find out who they are and just contact them and let them know that you're interested.

They'll be interested in knowing what you have to offer. So if you were to contact me, for example, I'm interested in reading stories that are inspirational for youth and or written by youth or about you when you were a youth and it's a great story.

I don't want preachy stuff. I don't want Sacrament meeting talks. You'll have never seen a sacrament talk in the article, but I can't tell you—in the magazine—I can't tell you how many of those I had submitted to me. Oh, this is great!

Jannalee Sandau: They must be sending them to both of us. Josh: I know like what does that,

Josh Perkey: so I sent you my talk.

Though, edit it, write it, prepare it for us. So that what that means is, there, we're going to want to see your work. And for me if it's just the one story that you want to share, send it in, but try to write it in a way that would be useful for my audience, not for just, you know, whoever happened to read your blog, but for my audience. And I guess you're saying the same thing is true for you.

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah. I think it's hard sometimes because some people have this passion of I wrote something, and I feel inspired to share it.

That's great, but unfortunately the way that media works, sometimes that's not what's most interesting for our audience. It's not something that's going to be the most helpful. And so I think another important part of being a contributor is not having your feelings hurt if a specific person doesn't want what you submit, right, because like you were saying, we all have different audiences. We have different needs. And so, you know, it might not be something that's a great fit. And sometimes, one of the things that we're considering when we're choosing contributor pieces to share is whether or not it's actually going to be interesting to our audience and if it's not going to reach people that it needs to the way that it's currently formatted or written, we're not going to share it. And that's actually probably a little bit of a courtesy to you sometimes

because it gives you an opportunity to try something different or to realize, oh okay, maybe I need to read how I'm submitting or what I'm submitting or—

Josh Perkey: And can I jump in for just a second, because

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah.

Josh Perkey: I don't want to forget this thought, but what you're saying is, and for us, we want things that are comparable to what we've already run but not the same.

Jannalee Sandau: Right.

Josh Perkey: We really don't need—there are stories that are fantastic, that are inspirational, but we may not run them again because we may have run them a lot. Here's an example of one: how many times have you heard the story about a youth who went to a party, and someone put on a movie that they thought was inappropriate, so they decided to leave.

Or they're really playing bad music, and it was bothering them, so they asked them to change the channel. And they wouldn't and so they just left. These are legitimate experiences that we have. They're totally legitimate, but if we run that every month, it's going to drive our audience crazy.

Jannalee: Right.

Josh Perkey: It begins to be the same old, same old. And so, life is about how do we share our combined and—our mutual experiences that are similar enough that they're relevant and they make sense to me when I read your story, but not just a repeat of something that I've already seen 1000 times. And that's an interesting balance. So studying again your product that you're interested in working for and then finding what's the unique thing about what I'm sharing that will, is sellable

Jannalee Sandau: And I think, kind of going along with that, if there's something that you've submitted that has been rejected or that maybe you got some feedback on, I would say it's not a bad thing to ask for more feedback if you want to know why maybe we decided not to run it. Maybe we'd be willing to share a little more. Well, it sounds really similar to something we just ran, so maybe if you want to try this topic, we might be open to considering that again.

And I think also another thing is to consider what types of content the media shares. So, for example, you talked earlier about you're planning your magazines, almost a year in advance. And so if you have something that's kind of timely, maybe you don't want to submit it to your next, right.

Josh Perkey: Can you guys publish this next month. I thought it would be really good. Actually, we already printed it.

Jannalee Sandau: Exactly. Yeah. So you want to consider. I think when you're submitting stuff, too, you want to consider if it's something that's timely, maybe that changes who you want to submit it to or, you know, you just want to think about that. I know sometimes Church magazines will run poetry, which is not something that LDS Living does. So if you've got a great poem that you think You want to share. probably don't send it to us because we we don't run that on our site, like you were saying earlier,

Josh Perkey: We're creative Writing. We haven't run creative writing in the magazine since the 70s, so

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah.

Josh Perkey: And we're going to do that again.

Jannalee Sandau: And that's not to say that what you're doing is bad or that your story experiences are invalid. It's just not necessarily a great fit for the Latter-day Saint media publication that you submitted it to.

Josh Perkey: Right. Absolutely. And that would be true for any magazine audience that you're looking at, whether you're looking at one of ours, another one of our Latter-day Saint publications, or to the New Yorker or Time magazine or whatever. Do your homework. Research it. It really is about putting some time into that audience and that product and how it's communicating to that channel.

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah, and I think moving away a little bit from the audience because we've talked a lot about knowing your audience, I think there are also some basic skills that can really help you as a contributor Contributing is, I think, a good way to kind of also get your foot in the door if, like you said, I don't think I brought this up when I was talking about our interns, but we also kind of prefer to have interns who are just finishing school, still have some room to grow. So if you're kind of beyond that stage, but you still want to try and get some experience in the

editing, magazine editing world, I think contributing or sending potential contributor pieces is a great way to also do that.

But to that, I also think it's important to be familiar with the ways that publications edit. So, for example, we'll have contributors send something in.

We may want to use it, So we'll use track changes on word, for example. And if our contributors aren't familiar with track changes, it makes it really difficult to have back and forth conversation and to make the piece cleaner. So knowing some of the basic editing tools. I know that sounds really simple.

That's something that you'll learn a lot more in school than you used to, but just making sure you're familiar with those different programs and things that are used to edit and to write your articles can really make a difference as well because it makes it easier on those of us who are reviewing them.

Josh Perkey: Now, our group doesn't hire freelance editors. We do, of course, receive submissions from authors and publish those, and we do a lot of our own writing. But we don't actually use freelance editors. I don't think you guys do.

Jannalee Sandau: Not usually. We have a handful of people that will contribute regularly for us. But most of the time, ours are just submissions from people around the world or around the country that have something that they want to share, and we'll review it. And if we want to use it, then we'll reach out

Josh Perkey: That's really cool. Awesome. Let's see. Look at our list of questions we're running out of time, or we're using our time effectively, and we're coming to an end. To say it more positively.

Did we talk much about the challenges and advantages of a niche magazine. Maybe we can speak like 30 seconds each on that.

Jannalee Sandau: Yeah, do you want to start on that one?

Josh Perkey: Sure. So our audience, of course, is active Latter-day Saints. We love to reach less actives. We love to reach people who aren't members of the Church, but predominantly, we know who reads our stuff.

And so as we write articles, we have to think about that in mind.

We also have a review committee that's very extensive. I mean, not just us, but once it gets approved by the team, it goes up, there's, you know, authorities that review our stuff, the correlation department. And so for us, there's a certain dignity and respect of the gospel that has to be maintained. It's kind of nebulous, but it's at a certain level that we're always trying to push against cause the youth audience wants things different than that. And there's that natural tension, which is healthy. But our probably our biggest challenge is how do we maintain really interesting, grabbing stuff but have it be through the filter of all that review. So it's not as interesting and grabbing as you might do with the LDS Living. Certainly not like a movie.

But yeah that's one of our big challenges is hitting our—when we think of audience, we're not just thinking of who reads it. We're also thinking about our review panels, so. How about you?

Jannalee Sandau: We're kind of in an interesting space. You kind of touched on this. So we're a culture magazine, so I think one of the things we love about our magazine is we're kind of in a space where we really view our position as doing what we can to support the Church and Deseret Book, which Deseret Book products are very carefully reviewed and support the Church as well. And so that's a little bit of what we do as well just by nature of being owned by Deseret Book.

So sometimes that can be a challenge, though, because how do you talk about cultural things in a way that's still faithful? So one of the biggest things—

Josh Perkey: I'm glad you mentioned that one because for us, cultural things sometimes are a bit taboo because we're trying to make sure that when we are—gosh, I don't want to say excoriated—but when people review, out there people are often looking, "Oh, it was printed there. So it must be now the doctrine or the practice or the principle of the Church, and therefore we're going to attack it. And so it's hard to talk about those things, not because we don't care. We do. But we know how it could be perceived.

Jannalee Sandau: Right, yeah. Yeah, I think that's probably a challenge, especially for your publications, and we do have a, I think we have a little bit more leeway. Mostly what we're trying to do, we're not trying to create doctrine, either. We know people come and when there are only a few Latter-day Saint media places, we know a lot of people come and rely on what we say.

To tell other people or things like that. So we're trying to be really careful about not saying, "This is how it is," or we really are, our main purpose is to try and provide spaces where people can have conversations.

And we really are trying to contribute to conversations from a faithful perspective. And so that can be a really fun thing.

But it also can be a really challenging thing because there are members of the Church, there are people who are not members of the Church, who have polar opposite opinions on different things. We actually just ran an article on what Church leaders have said about tattoos. Does not say one way or the other what you should do. But it just explores the topics as here's what's been said and you would be shocked at the different responses that you get from people in the Church or not in the Church. And so that's one of the lines that we kind of try and walk a lot of the time is we are definitely supportive of the Church. We want to be faithful. But how do we also create spaces for people to have conversations about other topics that are related to the gospel.

Josh Perkey: That's one of the cool things about social media is it provides a platform for some of those conversations that people can engage quite the way that that would allow.

I think we're pretty much out of time. Maybe we spend 30 seconds just sharing one last thought each, and then we'll open up the time for Q&A.

Jannalee Sandau: Yes. Sounds great. Do you want to start? You want me to start?

Josh Perkey: I'll start because I've gone first so many times, I'll just go first this time. So I love the magazine industry. I love the opportunity to message and create you talked about social kind of conversations that way. And I love that are our goal and what we do is to help communicate. I find communication fascinating.

And I have been using that to then inspire. For me personally, my job is fascinating. And in the industry in general, if, whatever you're trying to look for, that desire to communicate and help conversations be positive and uplifting, that's a real thing you can do to change the world.

And what we do changes the world, and that's really, really cool. So good luck as you're looking at getting into publishing and magazines and in the writing and communicating industry.

Jannalee Sandau: I think Josh kind of summed it up. I've been amazed as I've worked in this industry, the last few years at the power that words can have. And I think that's one thing that I love about magazine work is there's a space to share things that you discover, things that you learn. There's a way to really influence people for good because of all of the social media platforms and the way things are expanding. It's not just whoever happens to pick up your magazine in a waiting room or who subscribes to it.

You really can influence a lot of people for good. And I think that's one of the things that I really love about the magazine world.

And I wish, like Josh said, wish you guys all the best as you are exploring or as you're pursuing different things in the magazine world.

I hope that you will feel comfortable reaching out if there's questions you have or if you want to participate with publication or have other things that you want to learn about. I think we're always happy to share more thoughts and help you.

Josh Perkey: Please reach out, we'll talk to you soon.

Jannalee Sandau: Bye.