

Writers' Guidelines (Revised Jan. 25, 2008)

Designed using sophisticated reader-behavior studies, Southwest Airlines *Spirit* is a general-interest magazine that appeals to the upscale consumer. We explore a diverse array of subjects, including pop culture, business, personal technology, sports, health, food, and drink. Unlike any other magazine in its category, *Spirit* lets its sources—from business leaders to celebrities—speak directly to you in their own voices.

The magazine is tightly packaged; every piece of copy is created with a layout already in mind. For that reason, we generally don't accept many ideas for regular columns or feature stories. We do accept ideas for certain sections of the magazine, which you will read about below. If a section is not described here, we do not accept queries in that department. We typically pay about \$1 a word.

Please do not submit completed manuscripts. Submit only detailed story queries. (The exception to this rule is the Love Letter department, where we encourage you to submit the entire letter.) And before pitching, we recommend studying the articles we post on our website, spiritmag.com.

Potential Freelance Opportunities

LOVE LETTER

Write a letter to someone, or some thing, you love. This first-person, one-page essay of no more than 700 words must be crafted in literary prose that offers readers some personal inspiration. The experience you describe should convey the depth of emotion you have for a particular person or subject in a heartwarming, though not over-sentimentalized, style. In the past, we have published essays in praise of loved ones, a house where the writer grew up, a beloved family pet, and the baseball star Jackie Robinson.

COMING UP IN...

Gives a head's up on far-reaching, trendy, and future events that have relevance to Southwest Airlines customers. Think one to three months ahead of the issue in which the item appears. We're seeking a broad range of general-interest topics that have crossover appeal to our diverse readership, including articles on what's hot in travel, entertainment, sports, fashion, cars, books, art, business and personal technology, and outdoor recreational activities. Each item should promote action by the readers. *Spirit* typically runs six Coming Up In stories per issue that range between 100 and 350 words apiece. We rarely assign these to freelance writers. No author bylines will appear.

THE EXPERT ON...

Instead of offering editors' or writers' recommendations, we select experts to give our readers their choices for the best values in a variety of categories. The first step is to identify subjects relevant to our readers. These might include parks, movies or recordings of a certain genre, locales, men's suits, tech products, T-shirts ... virtually anything that could be considered hot, trendy, or of immediate interest in the month *Spirit* is on the planes. When possible, try to peg the idea to a current event. Don't pitch subjects that are too broad (e.g., Expert On Hotels). Instead, get specific with sub-categories (e.g., Expert On Haunted Hotels).

Before pitching, locate an individual with special knowledge and credentials in the chosen subject area. Determine the expert's ability and willingness to contribute at least five different items within the particular subject area. Aim for the most credible, widely known, and media-savvy experts as possible: hosts of TV shows, authors of recent books, leaders of organizations, and people with unique first-hand experience in the subject (example: pro hiker Andy Skurka for Day Peaks). Explain to your expert that this is a collaborative process; writers will work with the experts to improve the content and the style. Though most of these are assigned in-house, blow us away with an idea. Lengths run up to 400 words. The first-person stories usually fill one page, although we occasionally run Expert On stories over two pages. No author bylines will appear.

DEAL SLEUTH

This one-page section points readers to websites and stores where they can purchase practical, high-quality products—at bargain prices. Previous themes have included watches, perfumes, and lamps. We average between four to six items in each Deal Sleuth but always have a few extra picks on tap. Deal Sleuth is usually written in-house, though we welcome freelancers with good ideas for product categories. The story usually runs 200 words or less. No author byline will appear.

GROUND FLOOR

This section functions as a profile of a young, trend-setting company, but also embodies a greater business trend. For a pitch to succeed, the writer will describe not only the company's achievements, but will include specific examples of other companies pursuing similar goals. Though the Ground Floor must contain the essential elements of good reporting, the story will also be written in an entertaining, third-person style that will capture the essence of the company's operation and its workplace culture. These stories run 1,500 words.

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW, WHY

This section is packed with short takes on a variety of general-interest topics: fascinating people, must-have products, big events geared to historical themes, specific locales within Southwest destinations, simple step-by-step instructions on tasks that people have always wanted to learn, concluded by a brief but thought-provoking essay that justifies why reasons readers would want to take part in an activity or visit a destination.

Who: This 300-word story introduces readers to a person engaged in a surprising or worthwhile activity—either unknowns who ought to be famous, or famous people who are doing something unexpected that's been hitherto unreported. Most successful pitches will be pegged to an upcoming event in the subject's life. The story is ghostwritten; no author byline will appear.

What: This 300-words-or-less story features an object that's new, cool, and looks intriguing or beautiful. The object must be available for purchase, either in a major chain or over the Internet. No author byline will appear.

When: This 300-words-or-less story takes readers back in time. The When story either focuses on an anniversary with events that readers can visit (for example, the Washington National Cathedral celebrated its 100th birthday with a three-day party) or a specific location evokes a past era (San Francisco's Presidio Social Club brings diners back to the '40s). We generally try to run stories pegged to events a month ahead so that readers will have a chance to travel there. No author bylines will appear.

Where: This 300-words-or-less story takes readers to a specific place at or near a Southwest destination. We're looking for locals-only spots with interesting backstories. We rarely run bars, restaurants, or hotels in this section. No author bylines will appear.

How: This 300-500 word ghostwritten piece explains a fun and simple but seemingly complex skill that Southwest passengers have always wanted to learn. Previous articles have included how to skip a stone, make an igloo, and throw a football like Troy Aikman. An author byline will appear only when the expert has written the article.

Why: These 800-1,500 word essays make an informed but unexpected argument. Previous subjects have explained why you should listen to the old-time *Dragnet* radio show, why you should doubt yourself, and why Tolkien matters. Pitch a subject that you are passionate about—and can be summed up in a phrase—for this first-person essay.

FEATURES

Features offer the reader's eye an attractive place to linger on narrative stories and lavish photo spreads. Our stories run the gamut—covering travel, pop culture, tech gear, sports, personalities, and health—but we avoid articles on politics and religion. A 5,000-word heavily reported story that takes readers behind the scenes of Cirque du Soleil might be followed by a humorous first-person story on how to woo your wife. We are especially looking for stories on profiles and upcoming trends. We are not interested in general destination pieces.

Please note: The Your Adventure In section is not open to pitches.

BLESSINGS COUNTED

This back-page feature offers a bit of inspiration as a parting gift to readers. Blessings Counted generally features a well-known celebrity who explains the things he or she is most thankful for in the form of several brief anecdotes. Although we have featured household names like Morgan Freeman and Heidi Klum, we have occasionally profiled relative unknowns like Andrea Peterson, the 2007 Teacher of the Year. In every case, however, Blessings Counted features people who are at the top of their games, highly respected by their peers, have some kind of wisdom/life lesson to impart—and have some sort of news peg to the issue month that they appear in. The writer must confirm access to the subject before pitching.