“ASK THE EXPERTS”: THE ROLE OF THE ADVISORY BOARD AT WOMEN’S HEALTH AND ITS IMPACT ON THE MAGAZINE’S HEALTH COVERAGE

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by
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I got my first magazine subscription when I was five years old. My childhood love for *Highlights* grew into an adolescent wandering the magazine section of the store while my mom shopped. By the time I reached high school, I knew I wanted to be involved in the process of creating magazines. Never once in college did I question my decision to pursue journalism nor did I contemplate changing majors. In my junior year, I thought my future was in city magazines. I was working at *Vox* and loving every minute of it. But while interning in London at an online women’s health magazine called Healthista.com, I grew interested in health journalism.

The idea for my analysis component involving *Women’s Health* magazine came from that experience abroad. To complement it, I applied for internships at the women’s health website Skinny Mom and several general-interest magazines with strong health coverage, such as *5280*. These would have been great opportunities, and I went through the interview process for several of the publications, but one logistical factor kept holding me back.

I had always planned on moving back home to Minnesota after college. That’s where my family is, and that’s where I have always wanted to plant my roots, as well. Although the magazine industry in Minneapolis is rather small, I was determined to find my way in. I applied for internships at Minneapolis’ city magazines, as well as MSP Communications, an agency that publishes dozens of publications, including *Sky*, the inflight publication for Delta Air Lines.
Interning at MSP-C has shown me a side of magazine journalism that I wasn’t familiar with before my internship. Previously, I had never given a thought to working in custom publications, let alone in-flight magazines, but my internship doing both of these things broadened my spectrum of experience, developed and honed my skills as an editor and helped me break into the Minneapolis magazine industry.

As a custom publications intern, I have a hand in six of MSP-C’s custom publications, including Delta Sky and Sons of Norway’s Viking magazine. I am responsible for fact-checking, proofreading, researching, writing small department stories and compiling calendar events for these magazines and online publications and have used many of the skills I learned in Magazine Staff and Magazine Editing. When I write something for Sky, 5.4 million pairs of eyes will read it each month—that is a lot of pressure to make it perfect. When I fact-check something for Independent Community Bankers of America’s publication, Independent Banker, I am challenged to become a fast expert on banking concepts that were foreign to me just minutes before. This project has taught me many things I wouldn’t have otherwise learned, such as how to relieve diabetic nerve pain and how to play the Swedish yard game kubb. Working on custom projects has taught me to be ready for anything as a journalist.

First it was city magazines; then it was women’s health. Now I’m interested in custom work, but who knows what is next. I have worked on six completely different publications during this internship and learned invaluable lessons from each. Whatever is in my future, I believe the skills I learned during my career at the Missouri School of Journalism and the experience I gained through this project have prepared me for just about anything.
CHAPTER TWO: FIELD NOTES

Week 1: January 9-12

Hi everyone,

This was the first week of my internship, and so far I love it. I am working 29 hours per week right in downtown Minneapolis. I tried to get started on my project this week, too, but unfortunately that has me at a bit of a standstill. I am waiting a few more days until I send a follow-up email.

I hope you all survived the crazy ice storm. I'm sure glad I missed out on that!

Hannah

Internship:

-Familiarized myself with the Sky "style" and voice

-Had "training" for the MSP Communications custom publications I will be working on in addition to Delta Sky: Viking magazine, Independent Banker, Renew magazine, University of Phoenix, and 3M

-Fact-checked multiple stories for Delta Sky, Viking magazine and Independent Banker and finished them days ahead of deadline
  - Most of the pieces I fact-checked were department stories, but I was assigned the March feature piece for Independent Banker, which is about the NASA Twins Study and a Viking feature about ancestry and genealogy. Both had 1/19 deadlines, but I turned them in over a week early.

-Received my first FOB writing assignment for Delta Sky’s “Hot List” department page (March issue)

-Met with the deputy editor of Delta Sky
  - She took me out for coffee to learn about me and my journalism experience and interests
Analysis:

This week was a week of adjustment and getting used to the way things work around my new office. The first day was a bit boring because there wasn't much for me to do, but once I started getting assignments, everything was great. It was a big change to work at a highly reputable publication and see how people responded when I said I was calling to fact-check for Delta Sky magazine versus how businesses in Columbia frequently do when yet another student calls from Vox or the Missourian to quote them in a story. One thing about working at an international airline publication, though, is you have to call all over the world. I learned quickly to check time zones and discovered sometimes email fact-checking is preferred.

Another adjustment was learning how to contact Norway for Viking fact-checks. I am not very familiar with Norway's culture or geography yet, so I spent a lot of time on Google familiarizing myself with exactly what I wanted to ask PR contacts so I didn't sound foolish when I called them. This was especially important since I only had a 1-hour window to do so from when I got to work at 9 a.m. (4 p.m. there) until 10 a.m. (5 p.m.) when they all left work.

I jumped right in and got a lot accomplished this week, and I think the editors appreciated my willingness to get right to it even though I was brand new.

Project:

-Sent an email to Amy Keller-Laird asking to interview her
Unfortunately, I have not heard back yet. I need to interview her first to get background on the advisory board and its history, so I am kind of between a rock and a hard place until I hear from her. I talked with Jen, and she told me to wait a week (until Tuesday) and then email her again. That is what I plan to do.

______________________________

**Week 2: January 16-20**

Hi everyone,

This was the second week of my internship, and I am settling in nicely. I have found a nice work rhythm and feel like I know my way around the company. I also made some headway on my project this week, so I’m happy about that.

Hope the first week back to school went well for everyone!

Hannah

**Internship:**

- Went to a more immersive training for *Viking, Independent Banker* and *Renew*
- Fact-checked stories for Delta *Sky*, *Viking* and *Independent Banker*
- Received a writing assignment for *Viking* magazine
- Met the other two new interns

**Analysis:**

This week went very smoothly. I was completing work ahead of schedule, and people were responding to my emails very promptly. It was a journalist’s dream. The workload from the first week is now distributed among four interns instead of just two, as
the other two started on Tuesday. It is nice to have other people in similar situations to talk to during the day.

It was a bit of a challenge to learn the difference between writing for *Viking* (an insurance and fraternity magazine that’s audience is mostly over 50) and writing for *Sky* (a magazine that attracts readers of all ages). *Viking* stories are much more fact-based and straightforward, while *Sky* writing is a bit snappier and uses more voice. I prefer writing for *Sky*, but it is good experience to do both.

**Project:**

- Heard back from Amy Keller Laird and have an interview set up for January 27 at 11 EST (10 CST)

She did say that she doesn’t know much about the history/background of the board because she wasn’t at *Women’s Health* when it first started using the advisory board, but she will still be a great resource for other basic questions regarding its use.

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**Week 3: January 23-27**

Hi everyone,

This was the busiest week of my internship so far, as everything I was assigned came due all at once. I also had my interview with Amy on Friday, which went very well and will be very useful for my final project. A big thank you to Jen for reviewing my interview questions beforehand!

Hannah
Internship:

- Wrote the opener for our “Despegando” Spanish section of Sky (it’s written in English and translated to Spanish) about actress Ana de Armas
- Wrote a short 150-word story about an Oscar nominated movie from Norway for Viking
- Received feedback for my first writing assignment (March “Hot List”)
- Did research for the March “New and Noteworthy” section
  - Two of my pitches will be printed in the March issue
- Fact-checked stories for Delta Sky, Viking and Independent Banker
- Attended an editorial pinup meeting for Sky with the editors and art directors to observe how they discuss making changes to the issue and choosing the cover, photos, etc., before presenting it to Delta

Analysis:

This week we started wrapping the March issue of Delta Sky. This will be the first issue with my name on the masthead, so I am excited to see my work pay off. Sitting in on the pinup meeting was a fun experience because I got to see all the pieces I had fact-checked and/or written as galley pages for the first time. I also met the executive editor, creative director and other high-level people involved with Sky. It was very interesting to watch how they discussed the issue page by page, much how we do at Vox.

I turned in two writing assignments this week and got feedback on the one I completed my first week. I was told I did a great job but to keep working on the "Sky voice." It was very difficult to do on the “Hot List” assignment because the piece was made up of 35-word blurbs. It is hard to write snappily in 35 words, but I have my work cut out for me next time.
All of the interns were assigned to do research for the “New and Noteworthy” section. We each had to pitch five new/noteworthy things that had recently opened in Delta-flying cities. Two of my five made it into the March issue, and three of the chosen locations were Delta-sponsored (meaning the only non-Delta-sponsored places that are making it into the magazine were ones that I found!). That was a confidence booster, and I have to believe that it was all the research I did for *Vox* pitching that put me ahead of the other interns.

**Project:**

- Interviewed Amy on Friday morning

My interview with Amy was a huge success. I was very nervous and intimidated going into it, but once we got talking, it became a very relaxed and semi-formal conversation. We talked for 30 minutes, and I got a lot of great information that will be very useful when it comes to both interviewing other editors/writers and writing my final report.

My plan for the coming week is to transcribe the interview and to reach out to a few *Women’s Health* editors via email about setting up interviews in the next week or so.

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**Week 4: Jan. 30 – Feb. 3**

Hi everyone,

This week was a crazy week for my internship. The Sky load this week was much more than normal because we had one intern leave, so the work normally dispersed between
four of us was spread between three. In addition, I had to deal with some difficult issues with fact-checking for Sky and unhappy story subjects for Independent Banker. Because the fourth intern left, I had to work a few hours unpaid this week in order to finish all my work, but the other two interns and I had a conversation with the editors, and they are being flexible with deadlines until they can hire someone else. I am now only doing what I can within 29 hours so as to not take anything home. Other than that, things are going well. I unfortunately did not make any progress on my project this week because I was trying to keep afloat with all my work assignments.

Hannah

**Internship:**

- Fact-checked a story for Sky on the migration of sandhill cranes and a related story about a nature photographer
- Fact-checked my first advertorial piece for Sky
- Fact-checked our most in-depth Sky department called “1 City 5 Ways”
  - I sent 30 emails for this and really struggled to get ahold of people for a multitude of reasons (language barriers, ignoring my emails/calls, etc.)
- Fact-checked a Q&A piece for Independent Banker
  - Spent 45 minutes on the phone with the subject who was trying to change every quote because the writer had sent her the story
- Fact-checked another profile story for IB with the subject who was very upset with how the story turned out

**Analysis:**

By the end of this week, I was utterly exhausted and frustrated with my internship. We were bombarded with assignments because one of our fellow interns quit, so we were given her work on top of our already-full workloads. As I said above, I ended up having
to come in on Friday (the day I normally have off) and stay past my 29 hours to finish everything because I didn’t want to put the magazine behind on my account. I felt that being a team player was the most important thing here, even if it meant having to work an hour or two for free.

Two of the stories I fact-checked for Sky went just fine. I also got to fact-check my first advertorial, which was a whole different experience. I learned that when a client is paying us to put something in the magazine, they tend to reply very promptly and are extra kind and accommodating in their emails.

The Sky piece that will haunt me forever is the “1 City 5 Ways” department page about San José del Cabo. I was on top of this piece from the start, so it wasn’t bad time management that gave me issues. I sent the 30+ required emails to all the featured places in this article, but I didn’t hear back from 10 of them. I could get ahold of six of the remaining by phone and online fact-checked two, but the final two I couldn’t reach to save my life. They didn’t have websites or social media, and I couldn’t reach them via phone. One didn’t speak any English, and I don’t speak Spanish so I had to go to my editors for help. They didn’t know what else to do, either, so I think those two places might have ended up getting cut. I had to turn this piece in two days late, which was very frustrating because I managed my time well and did everything I could.

The IB pieces were frustrating for a whole different reason. The first one was the Q&A called “15 minutes with…” The woman I called to fact-check with was trying to editorialize everything because the writer had sent her the article in advance. I took notes and said I would pass her comments on to my editor, but it was a 45-minute conversation for a fairly short piece.
The second one was upsetting because I got an angry phone call from the subject of the article because there were a lot of mistakes in the story. I tried to explain to him that I didn’t write it, and this is why we fact-check, but he was still very angry with me and the “incredibly average article.”

Project:
I wish I could say I got work done on my project, but by the time I got home from work this week, I just had no energy to do anything else. I am going to hit the ground running on it next week.

_______________________________________________________________________

Week 5: February 6-10

Hi everyone,

This was a much calmer week for me than the two previous. I had a lot less work and far fewer assignments due this week. I even got to work ahead on some of next week’s stories to make my life easier. I think the editors realized just how much the three of us were doing last week and eased up a bit this week. As far as my project, I finally got Amy’s interview transcribed and found the contact information for the rest of the editors I want to interview.

Hannah

Internship:

- Fact-checked the “Boarding Pass” department page for Sky on Hong Kong’s Lantau Island
- Fact-checked the Sky “Places to Watch” department page
  - This was fun because it was about the Mayo Clinic Destination Medical Center going up in my hometown
- Fact-checked a piece for IB about interns
  - This was insightful because I found out high school banking interns make a decent amount of money
- Worked ahead on my writing and editing assignments for next week

**Analysis:**

I had no real issues getting ahold of people for these stories. The Hong Kong tourism board took a bit to get back to me, but I still made my deadline. I really enjoyed fact-checking the piece on Rochester/Destination Medical Center because the story is about my hometown, so I knew a lot going into the story, and I was able to catch an error before contacting the PR person for it.

The IB piece was a feature, so it took more effort to fact-check, but I spoke with the five people quoted in the article and found that I had almost introduced an error during my fact-checking by typing the wrong bank name. I am glad the banker I was speaking to actually read my email instead of just saying everything looked good. Since then, it’s made me extra conscious to double-check my emails before I send them.

**Project:**

- Transcribed interview with Amy
- Found contact info for remaining editors
Just as I had thought, this interview was extremely valuable. I gleaned a lot of important information from Amy about how the advisory board works and how she feels the board benefits WH as a women’s health authority.

It wasn’t very difficult, but there were three editors whose names I had but email addresses I didn’t. It just took a few minutes on Google and some educated guessing to find their WH email addresses, since I figured out all Rodale company emails are the same format.

Next week I am going to reach out to the editors about setting up interviews so I can get going on interviewing them, the writers and board members.

_______________________________________________________________________

Week 6: February 13-17

Hi everyone,
This week was much calmer work-wise, so I made sure to make my project a priority. I have two interviews next week with WH editors Tracy Middleton and Jill Waldbieser, which I will be sure to transcribe and analyze right away. Overall a good week, and I am making sure to have a more project-oriented mindset in the coming weeks.
Hannah

Internship:

- Fact-checked a feature for Viking on Norway’s cathedrals
  - Also had to plot the cathedral locations on a map for the art director
-Fact-checked two short department stories for Viking
  • One on a Viking band and the other on a Norwegian cheese

-Fact-checked a feature about credit cards for Independent Banker
  • This had a very tight deadline because it was given to me last minute and it was for the March issue

-Fact-checked a department story about Coachella for Sky

-Fact-checked another advertorial about Utah for Sky

-Researched and wrote a small 150-word piece on a Norwegian museum nominated for Museum of the Year for Viking

**Analysis:**

This week went very smoothly. I didn’t have a great volume of stories to work on, but I had a couple features that took quite a bit of time and a small writing assignment in addition to my normal fact-checking. I was the perfect amount of busy. I liked getting to use my writing skills because it was a bit more challenging and got me out of the monotony of fact-checking stories.

Nothing particularly notable or difficult happened this week. The feature I fact-checked for Independent Banker was the most challenging because there were a several sources I had to contact, and one (the CEO of a bank) did not get back to me. I sent several emails and left voicemails, but there came a point where there was nothing more I could do, so we had to work around it. Luckily, he was not a very big source nor was he quoted more than a few times in the feature so it wasn’t a huge issue.

This week was a great week to be in my office. Part of the April issue of Sky features sweets, so we got TONS of food samples sent in from all over the country. At one point, the deputy editor’s desk was so covered in cookies, brownies and
gourmet ice-cream sandwiches ($15 each if you were to purchase them at the store in NYC!) that she sent an email begging for people to help her eat it all.

**Project:**

- Sent emails to all the editors of WH asking for interviews
- Set up interviews with two (so far)

I contacted all four of the editors I plan to interview this week and have heard back from two. I will be interviewing Tracy Middleton on Tuesday (2/20) and Jill Waldbeiser on Thursday (2/22). I am going to send follow-up emails to the two who haven’t responded yet on Tuesday, and I hope they have time this week or next to speak as well.

This coming week, I plan to send emails to members of the advisory board to make initial contact and set up interviews with them. I will also be reaching out to the writers that the editors suggest I contact during my interviews.

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**Week 7: February 20-24**

Hi everyone,

This week was very productive, and I’m getting a lot done! It’s crazy to think that I have just under two months until my defense deadline (April 27). I am definitely feeling the pressure. I am officially done interviewing WH editors, as I did three this week, but I am needing advice (see below) because only one had a suggested writer for me to talk to.
The consensus was that the writers don’t really communicate with the advisory board; it’s more the editors who do so. This is obviously a very important finding for my project, and I would like to also get the writer’s perspective on it, but Amy asked me not to contact random writers. What do you suggest I do?

Thanks!

Hannah

**Internship:**

- Had an introduction to a new client (Filtrete air filters) and got four new fact-checking assignments for that client
- Wrote our *Viking* “Kalendar” section
- Was assigned the April *Sky* “Boarding Pass” section on Washington, D.C. and completed my pitch
- Fact-checked a Sudoku puzzle for *Renew*
- Worked ahead on sending fact-check emails to sources because I have lots of stories due Monday 2/27

**Analysis:**

We had President’s Day off this week, so I spent that day setting up interviews for my project and enjoying myself. It made the rest of the week more stressful, though, because I had to cram a week’s worth of work into three days. It was also combined with working bizarre hours to accommodate the WH editors.

However, I managed to get a lot done. I didn’t do a whole lot of fact-checking this week, which was refreshing, but I did do a lot of writing. I was assigned “Kalendar” for the May issue of *Viking*. Finding the events is very similar to what we did at *Vox*, except
instead of being confined to the “Scene” department or “Arts & Books” department, my only stipulations were the events had to be Norwegian or Scandinavian events. In some ways this was a lot easier because I wasn’t restricted to Columbia; I had the entire United States, Canada, and Norway to look at, and the events could take place throughout the entire month of May instead of one week. But, the challenge came in because not many events are posted three months in advance, and the ones that are are annual events that we ran last year, and I didn’t want to repeat. Luckily, Norwegian Independence Day is in May, so I could use one or two of those celebrations. But I needed some variety and a few not related to that. It took some real digging, but I found five that I was happy with, and my editor said she thought they looked great. I’m excited to see them in print.

For Sky, it was my month to write “Boarding Pass,” a one-page opener to the back-of-book. This month’s city is Washington, D.C., but before I write it, I had to pitch my ideas because it can be written in two ways — either itinerary-style or with an overall theme. I sat back and thought about D.C. and what immediately came to mind was: politics, museums, history and monuments. Boring and cliché. I looked at back issues and saw that in March we had done an itinerary-style write-up, so I thought maybe a theme would be a cool idea for April. I came up with the idea of Washington, D.C. as a cultural capital and pitched a few places to highlight that are off the beaten path but still showcase the vivid literary, music and food scene of D.C. The editors loved it and now I have to write it up next week.

Project:

- Interviewed Tracy Middleton (features and health), Jill Waldbieser (food and nutrition) and Marissa Gainsburg (fitness)
-Transcribed all interviews and highlighted important/insightful parts that I will use in my article

All three of the interviews went very well. The interview with Jill was a bit of a mess. She “stood me up” at our scheduled time on Thursday because she didn’t recognize the phone number calling her, but we got a chance to talk on Friday. Unfortunately, my computer froze and stopped recording 8 minutes into the 15-minute interview without my realizing, but of course I have notes from it and what I do have recorded is very good. Just a classic example of not being able to rely on technology!

As stated at the top of this email, at the end of each interview I mentioned, “Amy didn’t want me contacting random writers, but I wanted to talk to writers who would have perspective on my project, so did you have any recommendations of writers you work with who I should reach out to?” Tracy Middleton gave me one name, and I have sent her an email, but the other three said no, they didn’t think any of their writers would be able to help me because they didn’t really have any contact with the advisory board. Do you think one writer is enough? What do I do at this point?

This week, I am sending emails to the advisory board members to set up interviews! A couple were mentioned multiple times during my interviews with the editors, so I want to be sure to talk to those women. After the interviews with the advisory board and the writer(s?) are done, I’m going to immediately begin writing a draft.

______________________________________

**Week 8: February 27- March 3**
Hi everyone,

I started writing a draft this week. I wanted to start getting my thoughts on paper while I wait to do my last interviews (hopefully they will all be wrapped up by the end of next week!) It’s more of an outline at this point, with holes left for the advisory board members’ comments and my reflection on their thoughts, but a semblance of a draft exists, and having something tangible written has taken a major load of stress off my shoulders. Work was busy as we wrapped the April issues, but I am still really enjoying everything I am doing. I have started taking on more in-depth stories for fact-checking, which has kept me busy and occupied during the day, and I have been spending my nights and weekends thinking about little else but *Women’s Health*. This week I am going to keep plugging away with writing, and I have two interviews set up. Hopefully that number will keep increasing as I send follow-up emails in the next couple of days.

Thanks!

Hannah

**Internship:**

- Fact-checked 17 stories in total this week
  - Five *Renew* magazine (department stories that focused on health and the elderly)
  - Three *Independent Banker* (Q&A and two other departments)
  - Five *Sky* (Three features- education, environment, business; one food department, one style department)
  - Four Filtrete (online home-cleaning tips with advertorial for the Filtrete brand)

- Wrote 150-word “Boarding Pass” opener on Washington, D.C.
  - My editor really liked what I came up with for this. My first attempt was a little too "formal" at the beginning, but she liked the places I picked out to highlight and my theme. I focused on using more voice and what I learned at *Vox* about tone and jumped into the content
quicker, and she said my second try was exactly what she was looking for.

Analysis:

This week was mostly spent fact-checking. They still haven’t found a fourth intern, so it has been all hands on deck the past few weeks; even the editors have been taking on some fact-checking duties because they noticed how swamped the three of us were. Deadlines had been becoming suggestions and communication lines were getting crossed (none of the other editors knew we were getting the Filtrete assignments and were a bit unhappy when they found out we had those added to our plates). Luckily for me, though, I am a pro at fact-checking thanks to all my time at Vox, and the process we follow here is pretty similar to the way I was taught at Mizzou. The only major difference is that email fact-checking is preferred because we then have documentation of the correspondence, so we can keep ourselves out of trouble if a source comes back later claiming they never said something. In fact, I have used my office phone only a few times since I have been here and find it much harder to fact-check long pieces that way.

When I am first given a story, everything that is considered a “fact” is highlighted by the editors. I go through and number each fact, and then send out emails to check the proper nouns, summarized quotes and other facts that pertain to each source. If I haven’t heard back from them usually in two or three days (depending on the deadline), I’ll email them again or give them a call. If I can’t get ahold of them at all, I will try to find another email address for someone else at the company or business who might be able to help me. At last resort, I try online fact-checking. Just like at Vox, we require verification from three reputable sources before we consider a fact to be confirmed. Once
If I’m being honest, it can be a bit tedious, especially for *IB* or *Viking* where there are rarely human sources, so the fact-checking is done primarily online. Finding three sources for nit-picky facts can be a pain, but I know at the end of the day what I am doing is important, and every time I catch something wrong I remember that a little more.

**Project:**
- Set up interview with Jessica Migala (WH writer) for Thursday 3/9
- Set up interview with Keri Glassman (advisory board member) for Monday 3/13
- Contacted editors Jill Waldbeiser and Tracy Middleton for other advisory board members’ contact info
  - Have heard back from Jill and reached out to everyone she knew (3 members); Tracy has not replied. Going to send a follow-up email tomorrow (still trying to find contact info for Keri Peterson, M.D. and Susan Bowerman) and am waiting to hear back from Rachel Cosgrove and Heidi Powell
- Transcribed all interviews from last week and highlighted important/insightful parts that I will use in my article
- Began writing first draft of final write up

As I mentioned above, I have begun writing while I wait to finish interviewing. I have reached out to everyone I have the contact information for, and I am waiting on Tracy Middleton for the last few members emails (Google hasn’t proven helpful). If I don’t hear by Wednesday, I am going to send a follow-up email asking again, and in the meantime I am continuing to write what I have discovered about Amy and the editors.
Week 9: March 6-10

Hi everyone,

This week was calm on the internship front, so I was able to get a good amount of project writing done outside of work. It's a really good feeling to finally see the piece come together. My goal is to get my initial draft to Jen by the end of the weekend to get her initial feedback to see if I need to do more interviews and/or research while I still have time to do so.

Thanks!

Hannah

Internship:

-Fact-checked three IB departments
  - The Great Recession
  - Snapshot about the housing market
  - Mobile banking

-Fact-checked three department stories for Viking
  - World's first ship tunnel
  - Three rooftop bars in Norway
  - Financing/building a nest egg

-Was assigned “Citylicious” (the calendar section of Sky) for May
  - I have to pitch 15 potential events by Wednesday

-Attended an intern seminar about marketing and event planning at MSP Communications

Analysis:

Fact-checking was very uneventful this week, but the intern seminar proved to be very eye-opening. A few times throughout each intern term, all the MSP Communications interns get together for seminars with higher-ups in different departments. It's a chance
for us to learn about different parts of the company and to get to know the interns from the other magazines we don't work with on a daily basis.

This was our first intern seminar of my session, and we were asked to come with two questions. When I saw we were meeting with the marketing and events department, I was curious just how much the marketing team interacts with the editorial side of things, and if and/or how someone with a journalism degree could get involved with that side of a company without going back to school.

Throughout the seminar, as the speakers described their duties, I couldn't help but think, "I have no idea how to do that." What shocked me most was that several of these people had gone to journalism school — one had even gone to Mizzou.

I pulled the Mizzou woman aside afterward and asked her about her experience because I knew I would be able to identify with her most. It turns out she started in the journalism school but switched to communications to pursue PR and had been involved with the Department of Student Activities all throughout her college career. That path made more sense to me. I later found out that was the case with most of the marketing department: Many of them had switched from journalism to PR or marketing and had minored in communications or journalism.

Although the seminar was interesting and showed me another side of the company I'm working for, I don't think marketing/event planning is something that interests me, nor do I think I have the skill set to pursue it even if I wanted to. The biggest deal breaker for me was hearing that the marketing/events people at MSP only use their writing skills once in a while to write press releases; they spend most of their time planning events. I need to be using my writing and editing skills on a daily basis.
Again, I'm really glad I learned about it, but it shows that I was right in not going into strategic communication when I considered it freshman year.

**Project:**

- Tried to interview Rachel Cosgrove (was "stood up" but we were able to reschedule for Thursday 3/16)
- Set up interview with Keri Glassman on Monday 3/13

I have reached out to three other board members with contact info I have found online, and I have contacted Tracy Middleton (WH features editor) to try to get the contact info she has for them, but so far I have not heard back.

After next Thursday, I will have completed six interviews (Amy, three editors, two board members). What do you all think? Ideally I would want another board member or two, but it has been extremely difficult to get ahold of them. Only two have gotten back to me, and one woman (contact info given to me by editor Jill Waldbeiser) informed me that she was no longer on the board and hadn't had any affiliation with WH in some time.

I am really trying not to pester Tracy because I know she's very busy, but I will email her again to try to get the last few email addresses/phone numbers of the board members.

**Additional Week 9:**

Hi again,

I should also mention the reason I have not interviewed any writers.
I have been in touch with Jen about this, but I haven't mentioned it in my field notes yet. When interviewing the editors, I discovered something different than my original RQ. The editors are really the only ones who have contact with the advisory board; the writers very rarely are put in contact with them. The one writer whose contact information I was given, and whom I did reach out to, said she couldn't help me because she'd only spoken to one person from the board, and the story she used the board for was from a long time ago. I will be using that information in my final write-up, but I did not get to interview her.

However, both the advisory board members I am interviewing this week are board members as well as regular columnists for the magazine, so I have formulated sets of questions for both roles.

Just wanted to keep you up-to-date on that in case you were wondering when you saw my total interview list!

Thanks,

Hannah

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**Week 10: March 13-17**

Hi everyone,

I’m working hard to find a final advisory board member or two to interview so I can be done with that part of the process, but I’m really struggling getting people to respond to me. When I reach out to them, I include my emails with Amy so they know I am legitimate with my intentions, but many are still not interested or are too busy to reply.
But I am still trying. There are a few people on the current advisory board list whom I have not found contact information for yet, and I have a couple follow-up emails to send.

The way things are looking, if I can get one more interview I will be happy.

Hope you are enjoying your nice Missouri weather!

Hannah

**Internship:**

- Fact-checked *Viking* feature
  - History of Norway’s royal palace
- Wrote two short pieces for *Viking*
  - 100-words about a drone video of the Norwegian mountains that was selected for a National Geographic showcase
  - 80-words about a new Scandinavian summer read
- Pitched 15 events for *Sky*’s calendar
- Fact-checked a department story about clams for *Sky*

**Analysis:**

I spent most of this week doing research, writing and pitching. By the end of the week, I was actually missing fact-checking a little bit. The short write-ups were difficult because there was a lot of information to pack into 80 or 100 words. The video was easier to summarize, but I could have easily written a full page on the Scandinavian book.

However, I knew we didn’t have the space for that nor would our readers care to read that much about it. If they were invested enough to read a page of my thoughts about the book, they would just read it themselves.

A challenge was writing a non-plagiarized preview/highlight of a full-length book that has not come out yet and that I have not read. My editor had an advanced copy of the
book, so I was able to read the back and a few other articles online about it, and I also read an online author biography. It took far longer than I’d anticipated, but it came out well considering the resources available to me.

The calendar blurbs were also a challenge. As I spoke about a few weeks ago, I was assigned the May calendar for *Viking*, and this week I was handed the May calendar for *Sky*. In some ways this was easier because these events didn’t have to be Scandinavian-based, but it was more difficult because I had to find 15 instead of five. The feedback I received on my pitches was that I was finding really great events for city magazines in those cities, but I needed to think larger scale — the problem was, I thought I was doing that. I think my issue came from all the time I spent pitching hyper-local events for *Vox*. Now being told to think on the opposite end of the spectrum is just not what I’m used to, and I was trying to revert back to my old ways. This is just a case of constantly needing to think about the audience you write for.

My editor accepted about half of my calendar events, which she said is pretty typical, and filled the rest in with Delta-sponsored events that they’d sent over after my pitches were submitted. I’m not too disappointed with how I did because it was my first time, but now I know to think *really* big the next time I am assigned “Citylicious.”

**Project:**

- Interviewed nutrition advisor/columnist Keri Glassman on Monday 3/13
- Interviewed fitness advisor/columnist Rachel Cosgrove on Thursday 3/16
- Transcribed interviews and highlighted important information
- Continued working on draft
- Started gathering PDFs of my clips and hard copies of my work for my final project
I have six interviews complete, and am trying my hardest to get at least one more. I am working on my project report, and have begun putting all the pieces together, gathering PDFs of my internship work, fact-check sheets, etc., to include in Chapter Four of the final project.

This coming week I will be continuing to write and trying to get an additional advisory board member to agree to an interview.

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**Week 11: March 20-24**

Hi everyone,

I have had no luck so far finding a final advisory board member to interview, which is frustrating because there are 26 of them listed on the masthead. I think my biggest challenge, other than getting them to respond, is finding their personal contact information rather than using the generic contact forms on their websites. I am talking to fitness advisor Heidi Powell's PR representative right now about an interview, but she said she needed more information before she could say yes or no. I am going to keep trying, but as time is running out, I am just writing with what I have.

Hannah

**Internship:**

- Fact-checked two stories for *Sky*
  - Spanish “Despegando” opener- a profile on actress Rosario Dawson
  - Travel piece on Scotland's "Route 66"

- Wrote nine “Citylicious” calendar write-ups for the pitches from last week
- Attended a Sky internal pinup meeting
- Check-in lunch with editors

**Analysis:**

This was a fairly light week, but it took me a while to get the “Citylicious” blurbs to a point I was happy with. I turned them in expecting a possible rewrite, but when I got my feedback, I was told I did a nice job and had minimal revisions. This made me feel good, but next time I would work on getting to that point faster. It took me a full day to write nine blurbs, so next time I want to aim for half a day.

I was invited to attend an internal pinup meeting for Sky this week, and this was a great experience. I went to one back in my third week, but I was still getting used to things and nobody really knew me, so I just sat quietly in the back and observed. This time I felt comfortable enough to take a more active role. I asked a few questions and even gave my opinion on our cover options. This meeting reminded me of Wednesday morning table reads at Vox. Everybody in this meeting went through the galleys section by section and made comments about headlines they felt were confusing or photos they didn’t think weren’t strong enough. They walked around the conference room in a circle while the executive editor took the lead, marking up the galleys and taking notes on a notepad. It was an interesting look at another side of Sky’s editorial process that I’m not usually a part of.

We had a mid-internship check-in this week. It was a great chance to ask the editors how I was doing and what I could be doing better. They said I was doing a great job fact-checking, and I should just keep it up. They then asked how I felt I was doing, and I said I thought I was doing well fact-checking due to all my prior experience, but I was still
struggling to capture the "Sky voice" they always talk about and would appreciate more writing assignments to work on this. It was a good conversation to touch base and make sure expectations were being met on both ends.

**Project:**
- Contacted several more advisory board members to try to set up interviews
- Continued working on draft

I am continuing work on my project report, and I feel that it is really coming together. I am hoping to hear back from Heidi Powell's PR saying it is OK to interview her because I am running out of people to contact. I was very surprised by the response from Helen Fisher, an anthropology advisor who has been on the masthead for years (at least since 2006), saying she couldn't help me because "they never once contacted (her) for any advice. (She has) no idea who they are or even what they do." I'm not really sure what to make of this.

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**Week 12: March 27-31**

Hi everyone,

I am working hard to get another advisory board member to speak with me. I have sent several more emails and follow-ups to no avail. I have gotten ahold of a few members' PR contacts, but it has gone nowhere beyond that once I tell them what I
need. I am going to try calling to see if that helps. As far as my internship, things are going well. We are getting close to wrapping the May issues so the workload is pretty heavy right now. They hired a new intern, and I have been fielding a lot of his questions, so it has been a bit more difficult to get things done in a timely manner, but I'm glad they got a new person to help take on some of the work.

Hannah

**Internship:**

- Fact-checked four pieces for *Sky*
  - Feature on New York breweries
  - “New and Noteworthy” department page on places opening around the country this month
  - “Great Escapes” feature on St. Martin/St. Maarten that will be translated to Spanish for our “Despegando” section
  - “Editor's Pick” box-out on the GLAAD Media Awards

- Fact-checked two features for *Independent Banker*
  - Payment exchange about African currency
  - Feature about the future of mobile banking

- Helped train new intern

**Analysis:**

This week brought a bit of a miscommunication between me and my editor. I have always been very conscientious about deadlines and ensuring I meet them because I know there are many people relying on me here. However, I was feeling overwhelmed after being assigned four full-length features with fairly tight deadlines on top of spending quite a bit of time answering the new intern's questions, so I approached my *Sky* editor about how I was feeling. She said it would be no problem if I pushed the
deadline for the brewery feature until Monday 4/3 (it was originally due Wednesday 3/29), but we should check in on the status of the story on Thursday before I left.

On Thursday around lunchtime, I got an email asking why the brewery feature wasn't turned in and the current status because an upper editor was asking. I was very confused considering our previous conversation. This feature had required me to send more than twenty emails, so naturally there were a few people I had yet to hear from. I told her that, and she responded with an email with time management tips and asked me to have it in by the end of the day. I was really frustrated and confused by this email, but I scrambled to get this humongous feature finished. I stayed 2 hours later than I was supposed to, and I still didn't get it done.

The next day when I came in I quickly finished it and then I sent her an apology email, taking responsibility for not having it in on time but also explaining why I thought I had until Monday. It turns out she completely forgot about the conversation and felt terrible about getting upset with me. It was no big deal, but it was a learning experience in standing up for myself. I'm glad I was brave enough to politely and professionally defend myself because it shows that I went the extra mile to get it in for her out of respect for my editors, but I also wasn't going to be walked on for something I didn't deserve.

Project:

- Contacted several more advisory board members to try to set up interviews
- Worked on on project report

This was a slower week for my project. I sent more emails and went back and forth with a few PR reps, but nothing really came of it. I am going to have to really pull out all the stops to get the final advisor.
Week 13: April 3-7

Hi everyone,

Well, I did it. And I didn't just get one advisor to agree to speak with me; I got three. I spent the weekend in my neighborhood coffeeshop going down the list of advisors, scouring LinkedIn, professional websites, personal websites — anything I could find — and sending emails. I think the biggest difference this time is that I tried a technique that I use at work sometimes. Instead of sending the email to info@xxx.com, I sent it to "advisors'firstname"@xxx.com. The messages didn't always go through, but a few times the messages got delivered to the advisor directly instead of having to go through the PR department first. That is how I got to interview Sharon Chirban, Mandy Ingber and Cassandra Forsythe this week. It is a huge relief to have everyone I need interviewed.

Hannah

Internship:

- Fact-checked two articles for University of Phoenix
  • Article on self care
  • Article on de-cluttering your schedule

- Fact-checked feature for Independent Banker
  • grassroots feature on the role of ICBA lobbyists in Washington, D.C.

- Was responsible for mailing copies of the April issue of Sky to a large list of sources, PR contacts and other recipients

- Worked ahead sending emails for stories due 4/10
Analysis:

The fact-checking I did this week was fairly straightforward, but I ran into an issue with a source being unhappy with how the *Independent Banker* feature turned out. He was unhappy that it focused on lobbying and not the role community bankers play in the legislative process. So once again, I had to pull out my customer service skills and do a bit of damage control.

Luckily he wasn’t too angry with me, more with the writer, but he did kind of expect to be re-interviewed and for the story to be re-written. I had to apologize and tell him that we chose to go a bit of a different direction with the story and focus on the lobbyists, but we appreciated his help. Luckily my editors helped me draft these emails because I was very nervous about further angering him.

I worked atypical hours this week to accommodate my interviewees’ schedules, and it gave me a deeper glimpse into the way this company operates. It was strange; I stayed until 5:30 one night to make up for the hour I missed in the middle of the day for one of my interviews, and I was one of the last people in my office. The lights were off in the lobby and it was eerily quiet when I left. I have always thought of 5:30 as business hours, but apparently most people around here wrap up around 4:30 p.m.

My boss is on vacation in Spain this week and next, so I am having a lot less interaction with management day to day. I don’t mind it because I can stay on task, but I am having to be much more self-directed than usual. I haven’t had much to do on deadline, so in my down time I’ve been doing some research and looking for something to pitch for *Viking* because I know the editor would appreciate a pitch from an intern.
Project:

- Interviewed mental health advisor Sharon Chirban 4/5
- Interviewed yoga advisor Mandy Ingber 4/6
- Interviewed fitness advisor Cassandra Forsythe 4/7

This week was very busy on the project front. I set up and conducted interviews with three advisors. They had great insight for me, but toward the end they were mostly saying the same things I’d been hearing from the start, which I think is a good sign. I am interpreting that to mean I have finally done enough interviews and gathered enough evidence. And it also means everyone was being straightforward with me, which I appreciate. I am still curious about the Helen Fisher response, though.

This weekend I am going to hurry and transcribe them and finish my professional analysis draft to get that to Jen.

Week 14: April 10-14

Hi everyone,

As you all know, this week I decided to switch my graduation date from May to August. Everything was just coming together too late, and I want to create a quality product. That said, I plan to keep pushing forward and be ready to defend by finals week.

Hannah

Internship:
- Fact-checked feature on Stavanger, Norway for Viking
  - I was surprised to discover that many Norwegians take a whole week for Easter break. I reached out to sources the Monday before, and many were already gone for the holiday.

- Completed a research project for Sky about actors from/currently living Seattle (there are surprisingly few)

- Fact-checked the “Kalendar” for Viking

- Attended a pinup for Viking
  - It was very similar to Sky’s, but I quickly learned that Viking is given much more editorial freedom by Sons of Norway than Sky is given by Delta.

- Attended an intern seminar with some of the editorial team at MSP
  - Asked one of the editors I don’t know very well out for coffee afterward (NETWORKING!)

Analysis:

This was a very slow week. I had no Independent Banker assignments nor any fact-checking for Sky, so this week was almost solely dedicated to Viking, which was a first.

I got to know a bit more about the ins and outs of the publication and its publisher, Sons of Norway. I enjoyed this because my internship has been mostly dedicated to Sky, but I have learned that I’m really interested in some of the custom work that MSP Communications does, and I could see myself focusing on that side of the magazine world in my future.

I have attended two Sky pinups during my time at MSP, but this was the first time I got to see the Viking pages before they went to press. Viking’s editor walked through each page with me and the other interns and the working relationship they have on the magazine with Sons of Norway. Anya, the editor, previously worked on Sky so she gave us quite a bit of insight on how the two publications operate very differently.
When it comes to Delta, they cut deadlines a lot closer, and there is much more stress involved around client pinup days. There is a chance that the first time the Delta client will see a story/copy will be on the galley wall just days before going to pre-press. Even if they approved the story or pitch months before, they can cut the entire thing at the drop of a hat, so the Sky team has to be prepared with back-up stories to fill that space.

However, Viking doesn't have to worry about last-minute cuts. Anya sends the story copy in Word documents over to Sons of Norway as soon as she receives and proofreads them, that way there are no surprises to anyone. Then, once they are designed, the Viking team meets with Sons of Norway and they approve images, fonts etc., but the copy has already been sorted out.

This meeting made me like custom work even more because there is something to be said about a smaller client with no surprises. There is a lot of prestige that comes with working on Sky, but the Delta team is always running around frazzled on client pinup days. I know there are many opportunities for custom work in the Minneapolis area, so I think that would be something for me to look into in my upcoming job search.

I also got coffee with one of my editors this week after an intern seminar about the editorial side of MSP. Sara Schlueter is an editor on the custom side; she plays the associate editor and managing editor roles of several publications at MSP. I asked her to get coffee to pick her brain about custom work and finding a job in Minneapolis after finishing school. It was very helpful and a solid networking move. I need to do more of that with other editors before my internship ends.
Project:

- Starting to make edits to my analysis component
- Continuing to compile all the pieces of my final report

I really appreciated Jen's comments on the first draft of my analysis component. I definitely agree that my approach was too surface-level. In making my edits, I have been referring to a few projects from previous years that Jen recommended to me, and that has been helpful. I hope the second version will be a more complete and analytical assessment of my interviews.
CHAPTER THREE: EVALUATION

When I think about where I started four months ago, the intern who ran into a glass door on her first day—hopefully everybody’s forgotten about that by now—to becoming the person other interns come to with questions, I realize these past four months have been an enormous growing period for me. Navigating a metropolitan city, taking on a full-time internship and balancing research all at the same time was no easy feat. I value the experiences I have gained these past few months because they have helped me become a more competent journalist and overall autonomous person.

I discovered early on that MSP Communications employs the Missouri Method in many ways. On my first day at the office, I was shown to my cubicle and handed a fact-checking assignment with very basic instructions before I’d even had my HR meeting. Luckily, Vox had provided me with plenty of previous fact-checking experience, so I figured it out. That has been my mantra this internship term: Figure it out. When my boss asked me to go buy kombucha for a meeting that started in 20 minutes, and I had no idea where to find it within walking distance of my building, I figured it out. When Rosario Dawson’s PR contact was ignoring my emails and phone calls, I figured out who else could confirm the information I needed for her profile.

Doing whatever it takes to complete my assigned tasks has made me successful and driven to improve. I always ask for feedback on my assignments, and every few weeks I ask my editors what I could be doing better. The professional relationships I have developed with my editors have led them to task me with more challenging assignments, as well as a higher volume of work.
When I first started my internship, I was mostly given department pieces to fact-check, such as Sky’s “Boarding Pass” or small Viking write-ups, but as I proved myself as a fact-checker and intern by meeting deadlines, finding errors and using credible sources, the editors started to give me more difficult pieces. My current workload includes seven features and five department stories. If I had been given that when I first started, I would have had a heart attack, but now it’s just another day at the office.

As the months progressed, I started completing assignments faster and feeling more confident in my fact-checks. At first I was nervous that I would be responsible for a mistake seen by 5.4 million people, but I learned to trust myself, and once I stopped quadruple-checking each fact, I flew through my work. I have always felt the deadlines to be fairly long at MSP-C, but lately I have been turning assignments in with days to spare. Turning assignments in early was never a strong suit of mine in college, so overcoming my procrastination tendencies was quite a personal accomplishment.

Speaking up at meetings has also been an area of development for me both personally and professionally. When I first came to MSP-C, I would sit in the back of meetings and feel out of place. They were so different than the staff meetings we had at Vox, and I was constantly intimidated. I didn’t want to make comments for fear of offending someone’s work or voice an opinion that didn’t align with the majority. Over time, I started to nod and pipe in an occasional “Yeah!” when I agreed with someone but continued to stay quiet when I didn’t.

I attended the March issue pinup meeting for Sky in late January. It was the first few weeks of my internship, and the editors were discussing which photo of entrepreneur and businesswoman Stephanie Lampkin to use for her profile. All the options were
pinned up around the room. I personally liked a candid shot of her smiling because I thought it made her seem approachable, but they chose a very posed photo because “Delta would like it.” I was glad I didn’t comment because I knew Delta was the final authority, so my ideas seemed silly. However, fast forward to early April, and an editor in the June Viking pinup asked which cover option we all liked best. The June issue focuses on Nordic designers, so the votes were pretty unanimous for a bright cover featuring one of the designers sitting on a couch. Without hesitation I admitted that I preferred a different option. I felt an Ikea-esque cover of a beautiful living room scene better expressed the Nordic design theme we were trying to portray. I was the only one who favored that particular cover, and I knew it wouldn’t be chosen in the end, but it felt good to voice my opinion regardless.

The thing I struggled with the most — and still sometimes do — was grasping the Sky voice. Every publication has a distinct tone, but for some reason Sky’s didn’t come easily to me. It’s a mixture of being accessible to business travelers but also conversational and snappy. In my mind those two things don’t mix, so it took me several rounds of writing assignments to wrap my head around it. Just in the past month the editors have made comments that I am finally getting it without their help. My proudest internship moment so far was turning in a writing assignment for the June issue and receiving my toughest editor’s praise on the voice I used.

I am not quite done with my time at MSP Communications, and I’m glad. I will be continuing through the end of June, and while I’m very proud of what I have accomplished here so far, I still believe there is room for more personal and professional growth. I have finally reached a place where I don’t second-guess myself or the content I
produce, so I want to use the final month of my internship to push myself and further build my confidence as a journalist and a person. The six years I spent at the Missouri School of Journalism laid the foundation for my future career, and this internship has built on those skills. I know there will be plenty more new experiences thrown my way in the future, but as always, I’ll figure them out.

The professional component came much more naturally to me than the analysis. I have never been a great reporter; I feel vulnerable and nervous asking people questions they might not want to answer. However, during this process I gradually became more comfortable being in control of the interviews. I conducted nearly the same interview nine times, so I eventually got the hang of it. I stopped relying as heavily on my list of questions and let natural conversation flow in place of the awkward pauses that occurred the first few times. Luckily, all the women I interviewed were gracious and understanding, so if I stumbled on a question they didn’t make me feel ashamed.

I didn’t have expectations going into the interviews, but I was surprised to see the results of my research had broadened beyond my original research question. My committee and I had carefully written out my research question, but as I interviewed different people and my questions developed and changed, my original RQ became less relevant to my findings. The emphasis of my research was no longer on the advisory board’s role in translating health research into articles — in fact, interviews revealed that translation was a very small role of the advisory board, if at all. My focus was now on the different roles the advisory board has at Women’s Health and the impact the board has on the magazine’s health coverage. The scope of my research broadened, which I wasn’t
expecting, but the interviews ultimately gave quality insight to my new, closely related topic of study.
CHAPTER FOUR: PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

A. Fact-Checking

The majority of my internship days have been spent fact-checking. I fact-check five to 10 stories in a given week, depending on the length and number of sources. Although some might find fact-checking tedious, I don’t mind it; I see it as a puzzle. Every time I catch an error, I feel a guilty sense of pleasure because I know I shouldn’t be happy that there are errors in an article about to go to print, but it makes my job a bit less monotonous.

This is a fact-checking assignment as it is dropped of at my desk. The editors highlight what they want me to check, and from here I number each fact, send emails and scour the internet for verification.
This was a fact-checking assignment for 3M/Filtrete about dog dander boosting infant immune systems. Filtrete assignments can be challenging because the facts are very scientific and require sifting through research studies to verify.
This is a finished piece I fact-checked for *Independent Banker* about the First Bank of the United States. Even though it is a small piece with basic and straightforward facts, online fact-checking can be very time consuming.

This was a beast of a fact-check. Every blurb was an email to a different location in San José del Cabo. Many of the people didn’t speak English, so communication was very difficult.
I fact-checked this *Independent Banker* Q&A for the April issue. Bob Bauman is the president of a small-town community bank, and he has a passion for scuba diving. I enjoyed fact-checking this piece because it showed that bankers are real men and women with hobbies, not just full-time businesspeople.
B. Writing and Research

I have written 9 short-form pieces so far for MSP Communications, four for Sky and five for Viking. Most have been around 150-200 words for the front-of-book sections. One, shown below, was for the back-of-book.

I wrote this BOB piece on Washington, D.C. for the April issue of Sky. I was still struggling to grasp the publication’s voice at this point, so this write-up was good practice.
This was my pitch for the “New and Noteworthy” section of March’s Sky with feedback from the deputy editor, Jen Buege, in red. “New and Noteworthy” showcases recently opened hot spots around the globe.
This *Viking* write-up was about a Norwegian film that we thought might get nominated for an Oscar. It didn’t, but I tried to make it sound interesting and newsworthy anyway.
I wrote these calendar events for *Viking*’s May issue. It was surprisingly difficult to find Nordic events happening around the United States.
This was the assignment in which I felt the Sky voice finally click in my brain.
C. Putting it all together

It is a great feeling, taking a story from the beginning stages of fact-checking to seeing your hard work pay off in print. I have been a part of the February through May issues so far, and when I leave I will be seeing my work in print until August.

Here is a fact-check assignment after I have numbered it. On the next page, you can see the complementing online form and the finished product, which has been translated into Spanish for our “Despegando” section.
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**SAN MARTÍN Y SINT MAARTEN: UNA ISLA MUY AMIGABLE**

 Valle a San Martín como a Europa para introducirnos a la vida moderna, en una casa llena de historia.

Conoces la historia, se dice que un día el pirata Bucanero descubrió el paraíso de San Martín. Desde entonces, la isla ha sido un refugio para la vida tranquila.

**MAPA DE LA ISLA**

La isla de San Martín es una joya del Caribe. Con sus playas de arena blanca, su clima cálido y su acuático azul, es un paraíso para los amantes del ocio.

**RESERVACIÓN DE HABITACIÓN**

Para reservar una habitación, visita nuestro sitio web: [www.sanmartin.com](http://www.sanmartin.com)

**PASEOS EN BARCO**

Disfruta de un paseo en barco alrededor de la isla, y explora las aguas cristalinas y las playas privilegiadas.

**RESTAURANTES**

Disfruta de la gastronomía local, con platos que combinan sabores exóticos con los clásicos de la cocina local.

**ENTRETENIMIENTO**

Relájate con un buen libro en la playa, o disfruta del espectáculo del atardecer sobre el océano.

**ACTIVIDADES**

Disfruta de actividades como snorkel, buceo, golf, y mucho más.

**INFORMACIÓN ADICIONAL**

Para más información, visita nuestra oficina de turismo en [www.turismosanmartin.com](http://www.turismosanmartin.com)

**CONTACTO**

Si tienes alguna pregunta, no dudes en contactarnos.

**SITIO WEB**

Visita nuestra página web para más información: [www.sanmartin.com](http://www.sanmartin.com)
I fact-checked the “New and Noteworthy” section three times. In May, the featured locations included an alpine-themed restaurant and a kids’ movie theater with beanbag chairs and slides.
CHAPTER FIVE: PROFESSIONAL ANALYSIS

Women’s Health magazine is the world’s fastest-growing women’s lifestyle brand. In addition to the 1.5 million people who buy or subscribe to the U.S. print edition each month, Women’s Health has 24 international editions that reach 50 countries, and a total of 20 million readers, through multiple media. One thing that Women’s Health feels makes it stand out from other magazines is its consistent use of an advisory board.

Throughout my research, several Women’s Health editors and advisory board members reported that it is common for other women’s health and fitness magazines to consult with experts on stories, but they don’t always have a specific panel they rely on. This is not the case for every magazine in the genre, however. Shape, Fit Pregnancy and Prevention all have advisory boards, but Women’s Health feels its board is superior to the others, partly because it was one of the first magazines to adopt the advisory board concept.

But advisory boards go beyond the women’s health and fitness genre. Publications and organizations of all kinds — including the EPA and the University of Missouri’s own Trulaske College of Business — use advisory boards to give credibility and provide expertise, as well as to help prepare for events. In general, advisory boards “can be an essential source of advice, guidance, technical know-how and industry connections from day one,” Christopher Mirabile of Inc.com wrote in a column.4

However, they can also be abused. Women’s Health’s board members and editors noted that some brands simply use experts as a list of names on their mastheads as a tool to add credibility to their publications.
Over the course of three months, I interviewed Women’s Health Editor-in-Chief Amy Keller-Laird, as well as three Women’s Health editors and five of the 26 members of the Women’s Health advisory board to study the impact the advisory board has on the magazine’s health coverage.

The Women’s Health advisory board was introduced to readers in the July/August 2006 issue, just over a year after the magazine had its debut in April 2005. Above the experts’ names and credentials, the brand-new advisory board page read: “We’ve recruited 15 of the smartest people we know, from cancer doctors to exercise scientists, to join our new board of advisors. You’ll see their names — and influence — throughout our pages in the coming months.” (See Appendix C(e) to view the original advisory board). At that time, the magazine was under the direction of founding editor-in-chief Kristina Johnson. Johnson brought Women’s Health to 750,000 readers within the first year of publication, establishing the magazine’s place among trusted health and fitness publications early on.

Throughout my nine interviews, a common theme kept appearing: Women’s Health feels it is an authority on health and believes the advisory board helps the magazine stay a trusted, household name in women’s health media. The magazine aims to have everything it reports backed by science, and this process involves checking with experts before publication — even when competitor magazines might fall victim to the 24-hour news cycle, wanting to be the first to report on a new study.

“A lot of people get a press release or an abstract and just run with it without really getting into the nitty-gritty of the study, and that can sometimes contradict or cause misinterpretations of the data,” says Jill Waldbieser, food and nutrition editor at Women’s
In 2015, journalist John Bohannon created a fake study claiming chocolate promotes weight loss to see how many mainstream media outlets would report on the study without actually researching it. Many outlets, including fitness magazines Shape and Prevention, ran stories assuming the study was true; however, Women’s Health did not. Waldbieser says the advisory board is largely relied on in situations such as that.

“Our fact-checking department is very thorough, but they’re also working under a high volume and lots of deadlines,” she says. “So if we need to, we can go to our advisors because sometimes you really have to do a deeper dive.” In these instances, advisors are usually contacted by Women’s Health editors via email, but sometimes they are consulted on the phone.

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extra mile, such as sending editors studies they feel would make interesting articles for
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Twelve of the 26 current advisors are medical doctors. These include a fertility
expert, a dermatologist and a gynecological oncologist. Among the 10 remaining advisors
are three registered dietitians, a personal trainer and a CEO. By compiling a team of what
Women’s Health considers top-of-the-line experts in a vast array of fields, the magazine
feels it is ensuring a broad scope of accurate coverage. “They’re able to find out what
we’re all doing out there in each of our areas in a way where they’re on the pulse of
what’s going on,” says yoga advisor Mandy Ingber. Ingber has been on the advisory
board for three years and is typically contacted every other month to provide yoga
expertise for stories. “I think it gives credibility to the brand. If people know that I teach
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Cosgrove has been on the advisory board for seven years, and she appreciates that her
expertise is being put to use at Women’s Health in both writing and advisory roles. “I’ve
been on some (advisory boards) where they don’t use you at all; they just have your name
as part of their advisory board just to say that you’re on their advisory board.” Cosgrove
says. “I would say that Women’s Health, they do use me pretty frequently, at least once a month.”

The Women’s Health advisors act as a sounding board for the publication in his or her realm of expertise. In addition to the role of go-to specialist for writers and editors, the medical professionals, fitness gurus and nutrition experts on the advisory board have other roles to fill.

 Consultants

The main responsibility of the advisory board is to provide expert opinions and help resolve conflicting information writers or editors might come across. Advisors aren’t consulted on every story, but sometimes they’re contacted when a story is still in the initial idea stage, Keller-Laird says. In this instance, editors will contact the experts if they’ve heard about a new study or product anecdotally but want to make sure the research backing it is legitimate. “These are people we know we can rely on,” she says. “We know their background, we know how they look at studies, we know they’re impartial.”

Keri Glassman, a New York-based registered dietitian and a Women’s Health weight-loss advisor, has been on the board for eight years and is frequently called to confirm quotes and information from other dietitians. Middleton explains the process this way: “Sometimes, even our fact-checkers will go to them with a question if they want them to verify something that seems a little bit questionable or if we’ve had kind of a random source say. For example, if we’re in a story, and one source says one thing and
during the fact-checking process another source says they disagree with that, we might reach out to someone on the advisory board just to kind of get their opinion and to weigh in.”

Sharon Chirban, a psychologist and instructor at Harvard Medical School, has been a mental health advisor for Women’s Health for nine years. In addition to verifying information, she is occasionally approached as a source to provide expert commentary in the magazine. She says the magazine has been reaching out to her more in recent years than when she was first on the advisory board. This could be due to changes in editorial staff, as well as increased reliance on the advisory board to make clarifications and answer questions.

As a fitness advisor, Cassandra Forsythe says she is most frequently contacted by writers asking for input for their stories. This doesn’t happen in all departments of Women’s Health, though. From my interviews with Middleton and Waldbieser, I learned that in their sections of the magazine — health & features and food & nutrition, respectively — the editors are the ones who typically contact the board members, not the writers. This is because the editors have developed relationships with the board members. When the editors are looking for new trends and story ideas, they will often contact the advisors to ask if they’ve seen anything new in their fields. Keller-Laird says sometimes the advisory board members are included as sources on stories, but most of the traditional behind-the-scenes consulting by them occurs with the editors.

In February, the magazine published a feature on sodium and nutrition can be controversial, Waldbieser turned to the advisory board for help in understand differing studies and to come to a decision on the way the magazine was
going to approach the story. “We rely on our advisory board to be like, ‘OK, help us make sense of this; what is your take and why,’” she says. “Then we’ll get a consensus from a couple of different people who deal with nutrition on the board and say, ‘OK, here is how we’re going to approach sodium going forward.’”

At the other end of the spectrum, there are some advisors whom the editors don’t rely on whatsoever. That appears to be the case with Helen Fisher, anthropology advisor. When I reached out to her asking for an interview, Fisher didn’t seem to know she was on the advisory board. “I really don’t have anything to say about being on the Advisory Board at Women's Health, because they never once contacted me for any advice,” Fisher wrote in an email. “I have no idea who they are or even what they do.” However, when I looked back at the Women's Health archives, I found she has been on the advisory board since its inauguration. (See Appendix C(e)).

Additionally, Middleton also says there are certain experts on the advisory board, especially in the health realm, she has never reached out to simply because the topic or that person’s expertise has never come up. She says she has never reached out to the oncology advisor partly due to her own background in cancer science and working at a cancer research magazine; she has sources she knows from her time there who she can reach out to if need be.

**Industry Relevance**

Another role of the advisory board is simply using the members’ expertise to provide insight from the real world. “There’s a big difference between research and then practicing it,” Waldbieser says. “When we’re giving out advice for people to act on, we want to make sure it’s legit and it’s practical. Academic studies are sometimes not able to
be reproduced in the real world.” Cosgrove agrees with this and feels that journalists don’t always know how to translate the experience that comes from working with clients, and that’s where the advisory board can be helpful.

Because the experts on the board have a wide network of colleagues, the Women’s Health staff sometimes relies on advisors to help provide sources for stories. “If we’re looking for someone who’s kind of in a very obscure field or is researching something very specific and we’re not able to find someone, I might tap (an advisor) and ask them even if they know of anyone and could make an introduction for us.”

Additionally, because advisors are in the field every day, they often learn about new research or hear similar client concerns, so they can relay that information to Women’s Health to help the magazine stay on top of trends.

Writers

The advisory board has a small contributing writer role at Women’s Health. The advisors rotate writing “Ask Anything,” the monthly column where experts — some on the board and some not — take turns answering readers’ questions.

In her editor-in-chief role, Keller-Laird started “Ask Anything” in 2014 as a place to bring all Women’s Health’s experts together to show readers the authoritativeness and trustworthiness of the publication, she says.

Marissa Gainsburg, Women’s Health’s associate fitness editor, speaks to Keller-Laird’s point: “I think that everyone kind of thinks they’re an expert nowadays, especially with social media. There are a lot of people out there who aren’t necessarily
certified but are putting information that isn’t always totally correct or can be a little misleading based on clickbait and stuff, so we really value having certified experts.”

Beyond “Ask Anything,” only Glassman writes a monthly column. It is called “Buy 5 Drop 5” where she creates recipes promising weight loss using five featured foods. A few other advisors such as Cosgrove are contacted occasionally for quotes or one-off articles, but Keller-Laird says they are mostly used in their advisory role. She says board members are welcome to pitch stories, but she reminded me that they don’t necessarily have great writing skills because they are not writers; they are (mostly) doctors.

**Face of the brand**

Some of the advisory board members support and represent the *Women’s Health* brand through platforms other than the magazine. Glassman is a spokesperson for the brand on TV, Cosgrove and Forsythe have written books with *Women’s Health* and sometimes, Waldbieser says, advisors give advice on backing brand-related projects. For example, when the *Women’s Health* brand was partnering with a fish oil supplement, Waldbieser worked closely with an advisor to make sure *Women’s Health* stayed true to its mission statement. (See Appendix C(a) for *Women’s Health*’s mission statement). The advisor gave a second opinion about backing the fish oil project. “We want(ed) to make sure this (was) something we (could) get behind and should stand behind,” she says.

Since Gainsburg came to *Women’s Health* two years ago, she has noticed that the advisory board members have started to come out into the public eye. “I feel like they’re a little bit more of public figures (now) in the sense that we really want our readers to
trust them, so we promote their faces a little bit more so you can easily identify them month to month,” she says.

By bringing the advisory board members to the forefront of the Women’s Health brand, they are giving faces to the names on the masthead each month.

**Translating Research**

My interviews uncovered conflicting opinions about whether the advisory board has a role in translating jargon-filled research into digestible articles for Women’s Health readers. Waldbieser and Middleton see converting academic language into layperson’s terms as their job as editors, not that of a board member. However, yoga advisor Ingber says: “As a teacher of something, you’re really a translator. So I think when they call and ask me for my advice on specific questions, I’m basically giving that type of an answer that translates to the general public.” Advisory board members Glassman and Cosgrove also say that occasionally editors will ask them to help get to the bottom line of what a study is really saying. However, Forsythe and Chirban don’t feel that is something they do as advisors; they are just contacted as experts who provide information.

Marissa Gainsburg, associate fitness editor, doesn’t work with advisors as much as the other editors because most fitness stories are handled in-house, but she feels the Women’s Health advisory board members are better at not using jargon than a lot of other experts the magazine works with. This is likely because many of the advisory board members work with patients and clients, so they are used to putting scientific phenomena into layperson’s terms.
The magazine relies on the advisory board for general background information such as verifying the legitimacy of a new study, but it goes to specialized experts with specific questions. For example, “The gastroenterology (advisor) would probably know something about IBS or Celiac disease, but there are other people who that’s all that they research,” Middleton says. “So I would not tap someone on our advisory board for that if I could find someone else who that was their sole area of expertise.”

**Self Reflection**

When looking back on the interviews and analysis I conducted, it is interesting to see how things did not go as planned. My overall research question changed as I was conducting my interviews, largely because I discovered the advisory board members do not speak to writers on a daily basis, nor do many of the members and editors feel the board has a role in translating jargon-filled research into digestible articles for readers. My research unintentionally became more about the different roles of the advisory board, which changed my RQ in the process.

Also unexpectedly, I was not able to interview any *Women’s Health* writers as I originally intended. None of the editors could recommend writers for me to interview because the writers they work with do not have a significant relationship with the advisory board. This also had a role in changing my research question.

Finally, remaining objective in my analysis proved to be difficult as the *Women’s Health* editors and board members I spoke to were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the advisory board. I have also been a fan of the magazine for many years, so my opinion of the magazine is generally positive, as well. It was important for me to remember my role
as an objective journalist and researcher during this process and not get carried away with being overly promotional.

The magazine feels that the thorough selection process of experts and advisors at Women’s Health ensures the magazine maintains its standard of accuracy in the health realm. To add a new expert to the advisory board, Keller-Laird says there must first be a need to do so. For example, if the editors decided they needed a new doctor, the health editor would make a list of potential candidates and their credentials. The editors would then go through and narrow the list down and reach out to the doctors they would want on the board. “It’s a quite thorough process, and you have to live up to a pretty high standard to end up on the advisory board,” she says.

The accountability to which the advisory board is held is part of the reason Glassman wanted to work with Women’s Health even before the opportunity arose. “I always felt that their content was incredibly smart and always, to me, incredibly backed up by real, hardcore science and fact-checked,” she says. “I think (using an advisory board) makes their content smarter and more accurate and more trustworthy.” Keller-Laird argues that, as a health and fitness magazine, it would be hard to be seen as a trusted source without one. Women’s Health’s advisory board is no longer “15 of the smartest people we know.” It is now 26 of what Women’s Health identifies as the top experts in 18 different categories, and just like current health and fitness trends, it will continue to change over time. One thing has remained consistent since 2006, however: The goal of the advisory board is to provide real-world knowledge and expertise to have a positive impact on Women’s
Health's coverage. The evidence from my research suggests that the current advisory board is successfully filling this role by acting as consultants, writers, brand representatives, real-world experts and sometimes research translators for Women's Health magazine.

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Over the course of three months, I interviewed Women’s Health Editor-in-Chief Amy Keller Laird, as well as three Women’s Health editors and five of the 26 members of the Women’s Health advisory board to study the impact the advisory board has on the magazine’s health coverage.

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Another role of the advisory board is simply using the members’ expertise to provide insight from the real world. "There’s a big difference between research and then practicing it," Waldbieser says. "When we’re giving out advice for people to act on, we want to make sure it’s legit and it’s practical. Academic studies are sometimes not able to be reproduced in the real world." Cosgrove agrees with this and feels that journalists
don’t always know how to translate the experience that comes from working with clients, and that’s where the advisory board can be helpful.

Because the experts on the board have a wide network of colleagues, the Women’s Health staff sometimes relies on advisors to help provide sources for stories. “If we’re looking for someone who’s kind of in a very obscure field or is researching something very specific and we’re not able to find someone, I might tap (an advisor) and ask them even if they know of anyone and could make an introduction for us.”

Additionally, because advisors are in the field every day, they often learn about new research or hear similar client concerns, so they can relay that information to Women’s Health to help the magazine stay on top of trends.

Writers

The advisory board has a small contributing writer role at Women’s Health. The advisors rotate writing “Ask Anything,” the monthly column where experts — some on the board and some not — take turns answering readers’ questions.

In her editor-in-chief role, Keller-Laird started “Ask Anything” in 2014 as a place to bring all Women’s Health’s experts together to show readers the authoritativeness and trustworthiness of the publication, she says.

Marissa Gainsburg, Women’s Health’s associate fitness editor, speaks to Keller-Laird’s point: “I think that everyone kind of thinks they’re an expert nowadays, especially with social media. There are a lot of people out there who aren’t necessarily certified but are putting information that isn’t always totally correct or can be a little misleading based on clickbait and stuff, so we really value having certified experts.”
Beyond “Ask Anything,” only Glassman writes a monthly column. It is called “Buy 5 Drop 5” where she creates recipes promising weight loss using five featured foods. A few other advisors such as Cosgrove are contacted occasionally for quotes or one-off articles, but Keller-Laird says they are mostly used in their advisory role. She says board members are welcome to pitch stories, but she reminded me that they don’t necessarily have great writing skills because they are not writers; they are (mostly) doctors.

Face of the brand

Some of the advisory board members support and represent the Women’s Health brand through platforms other than the magazine. Glassman is a spokesperson for the brand on TV; Cosgrove and Forsythe have written books with Women’s Health and sometimes, Waldbieser says, advisors give advice on backing brand-related projects. For example, when the Women’s Health brand was partnering with a supplement fish oil, Waldbieser worked closely with an advisor to make sure Women’s Health stayed true to its mission statement. (See Appendix C(a) for Women’s Health’s mission statement). The advisor gave a second opinion about backing the fish oil project. “We want(ed) to make sure this (was) something we (could) get behind and should stand behind,” she says.

Since Gainsburg came to Women’s Health two years ago, she has noticed that the advisory board members have started to come out into the public eye. “I feel like they’re a little bit more of public figures (now) in the sense that we really want our readers to trust them, so we promote their faces a little bit more so you can easily identify them month to month,” she says.
By bringing the advisory board members to the forefront of the Women’s Health brand, they are giving faces to the names on the masthead each month.

Translating Research

My interviews uncovered conflicting opinions about whether the advisory board has a role in translating jargon-filled research into digestible articles for Women’s Health readers. Waldbieser and Middleton see converting academic language into layperson’s terms as their job as editors, not that of a board member. However, yoga advisor Ingber says: “As a teacher of something, you’re really a translator. So I think when they call and ask me for my advice on specific questions, I’m basically giving that type of an answer that translates to the general public.” Advisory board members Glassman and Cougrove also say that occasionally editors will ask them to help get to the bottom line of what a study is really saying. However, Forsythe and Chirban don’t feel that is something they do as advisors; they are just contacted as experts who provide information.

Marissa Gainsburg, associate fitness editor, doesn’t work with advisors as much as the other editors because most fitness stories are handled in-house, but she feels the Women’s Health advisory board members are better at not using jargon than a lot of other experts the magazine works with. This is likely because many of the advisory board members work with patients and clients, so they are used to putting scientific phenomena into layperson’s terms.

The magazine relies on the advisory board for general background information such as verifying the legitimacy of a new study, but it goes to specialized experts with specific questions. For example, “The gastroenterology (advisor) would probably know
something about IBS or Celiac disease, but there are other people who that’s all that they research,” Middleton says. “So I would not tap someone on our advisory board for that if I could find someone else who that was their sole area of expertise.”

Self-Reflection

When looking back on the interviews and analysis I conducted, it is interesting to see how things did not go as planned. My overall research question changed as I was conducting my interviews, largely because I discovered the advisory board members do not speak to writers on a daily basis, nor do many of the members and editors feel the board has a role in translating jargon-filled research into digestible articles for readers. My research unintentionally became more about the different roles of the advisory board, which changed my RQ in the process.

Also unexpectedly, I was not able to interview any Women’s Health writers as I originally intended. None of the editors could recommend writers for me to interview because the writers they work with do not have a significant relationship with the advisory board. This also had a role in changing my research question.

Finally, remaining objective in my analysis proved to be difficult as the Women’s Health editors and board members I spoke to were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the advisory board. I have also been a fan of the magazine for many years, so my outlook on the magazine is generally positive, as well. It was important for me to remember my role as an objective journalist and researcher during this process and not get carried away with being overly promotional.
The magazine feels that the thorough selection process of experts and advisors at *Women’s Health* ensures the magazine maintains its standard of accuracy in the health realm. To add a new expert to the advisory board, Keller-Laird says there must first be a need to do so. For example, if the editors decided they needed a new doctor, the health editor would make a list of potential candidates and their credentials. The editors would then go through and narrow the list down and reach out to the doctors they would want on the board. “It’s a quite thorough process, and you have to live up to a pretty high standard to end up on the advisory board,” she says.

The accountability to which the advisory board is held is part of the reason Glassman wanted to work with *Women’s Health* even before the opportunity arose. “I always felt that their content was incredibly smart and always, to me, incredibly backed up by real, hardcore science and fact-checked,” she said. “I think (using an advisory board) makes their content smarter and more accurate and more trustworthy.” Keller-Laird argues that, as a health and fitness magazine, it would be hard to be seen as a trusted source without one.

*Women’s Health*’s advisory board is no longer “15 of the smartest people we know.” It is now 26 of what *Women’s Health* identifies as the top experts in 18 different categories, and just like current health and fitness trends, it will continue to change over time. One thing has remained consistent since 2006, however: The goal of the advisory board is to provide real-world knowledge and expertise to have a positive impact on *Women’s Health*’s coverage. The evidence from my research suggests that the current advisory board is successfully filling this role by acting as consultants, writers, brand
representatives, real-world experts and sometimes research translators for Women’s Health magazine.

Sources

iii. https://books.google.com/books?id=asYDAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA16&dq=advisory+board&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjxvJmHi8HTAhXj8YMKHUSaD7oQ6AEINzAE#v=onepage&q&f=false
APPENDIX A: ORIGINAL PROPOSAL

Introduction

I have always been interested in eating healthful foods and taking care of myself, but I grew to love the particular niche of health journalism while studying abroad in London and interning at an online women’s health magazine called Healthista.com. During my internship, I had the opportunity to interview nutritionists, personal trainers and physicians who piqued my interests about women’s health topics, and for three months I was immersed in writing and learning about little else. I was also fortunate to work under an award-winning health journalist who gave me advice for being a better journalist but also taught me tips for living a healthier life. After interning at Healthista, I came back to America knowing health journalism was a subject I was interested in pursuing, and I started reading more health magazines and articles.

One of my favorite women’s health magazines is *Women’s Health* because I feel it includes accurate and important health information, and it approaches the topic of health with an unabashed and informative attitude. Part of the reason I believe the health coverage in *Women’s Health* is so strong is the magazine’s use of an advisory board. This panel of experts including doctors, registered dieticians and certified personal trainers acts as sources as well as contributing writers for stories.

For my professional project, I want to study how the advisory board at *Women’s Health* has an impact on the magazine’s overall content. A large reason I feel prepared to
take on this project is due to the invaluable classroom and professional experience I have
gained while attending the Missouri School of Journalism. I arrived to campus in 2011, a
timid 18-year-old knowing little more about journalism than that I was in the best place
in the country to learn it. I knew from the beginning I wanted to focus on magazines, so I
took classes in that emphasis area to help hone my skills. Toward the end of my
undergraduate career, I took two classes in particular that I feel will help me with this
project: Magazine Editing and Magazine Staff. What I learned in these courses will be
especially advantageous with the skills component.

Magazine Editing was my first glimpse at the micro-editing side of the magazine
world. Through this course, I learned to pay close attention to detail and edit for
grammar, punctuation and style. This, I discovered, is something I have a real eye for.
While some might find copy editing a tedious chore, I find combing through a near-
perfect article for any leftover grammar and style errors to be exhilarating. This will be
beneficial for the professional part of my project. Editors like copy to be as clean as
possible when it is turned in, and my micro-editing skills will help ensure that my
writing, and anyone else’s that I might read, is as precise as possible.

Magazine Staff was my first experience working with other like-minded magazine
journalists on the staff of a real publication. In fall 2015, I worked as an arts and books
department editor at Vox Magazine, an award-winning weekly city magazine with a
circulation of 10,000. My weekly duties included pitching stories, working with writers,
writing content and putting the magazine through production. This class was extremely
valuable because it prepared me for other newsroom situations. Many of the
responsibilities I had at Vox will likely be similar to those that I will have at my
internship, and I feel that I will be able to accomplish them successfully because of what I learned in Magazine Staff.

Since my semester abroad, my career goals have expanded. Originally, I was determined to edit city magazines, but now I would like to find a way to encompass women’s health into my career as well, whether that means freelancing, writing online content for the publication I work for or taking on an editing role if the magazine has a health section. This project will push me in the direction of that goal by increasing my knowledge of women’s health coverage and giving me further professional experience.

**Professional Skills Component**

My professional component will consist of an editorial internship in Minneapolis at MSP Communications’ custom publications division. There, I will be working predominantly on Delta Sky magazine, but I will also get a chance to work on Viking, a publication for The Sons of Norway, and Renew, an internal magazine for those with United Healthcare. The internship will begin Jan. 4, 2017, and will run through June 2017. I will be working 29 hours per week, the maximum MSP Communications allows its interns to work, for roughly six months, which will well exceed the minimum 420-hour requirement.

During my internship, my primary responsibilities will be fact-checking and researching stories, writing for the front-of-book sections, calendar and online, attending staff meetings, and assisting editors with other tasks related to the magazine. I will be supervised by Delta Sky’s assistant editor Sydney Berry. My final project report will
include a sampling of my published clips and scanned copies of my day-to-day work such as research and fact-checking.

Additionally, I will write field notes every week during my professional component that I will email to my committee members detailing what I have done that week at my internship, including links to stories and explanations of any issues that might arise. The field notes will also provide updates on the progress of my professional analysis. I will send the notes on the same day each week, which I will determine once I receive my internship schedule.

I feel my previous editorial internship at Healthista.com in London, my work at Vox and my coursework at the Missouri School of Journalism have prepared me for this upcoming professional experience. While at Healthista.com, I successfully performed tasks that are often expected of editorial interns, such as fact-checking and research. This gives me confidence that I will be able to complete them even better now that I have another year and a half of educational and professional experience under my belt.

**Professional Analysis Component**

For my professional analysis, I will be looking at how *Women’s Health* uses its advisory board and what impact it has on the magazine’s health coverage. The research question I plan to answer is:

**RQ:** How does the advisory board at *Women’s Health* affect the translation of health research into its magazine articles?

This topic is important to journalists because through my experience with women’s health magazines, I have observed that many seem to trivialize health through
poorly sourced articles with no scientific research to back them. However, I feel that
*Women’s Health* consistently does its readers justice in its comprehensive and well-
sourced health coverage. Health is a very important topic relevant to all readers, and I
would like my research to contribute to a larger body of scholarship meant to improve the
health messages present in U.S. women’s health magazines.

This topic is relevant to my skills component because *Renew* is a health insurance
magazine, so it includes many health articles, and *Sky* covers health topics periodically.
Overall, women’s health is an issue that receives a lot of coverage in the media. The
framing of women’s health articles is critical to how they are interpreted, so journalists
have to be cognizant of how they present information.

**Theoretical Framework**

When analyzing how a magazine presents women’s health messages, it is logical
to use framing theory. Framing theory is a subset of media effects that is considered an
extension of agenda setting theory (Scheufele, 1999). Media framing involves the way
information is presented to an audience, where a journalist takes certain aspects of an
issue that the he or she deems most important and creates the story from that angle
(Entman, 1993).

Framing occurs when the media craft a message in a particular way to shape the
opinions and attitudes of their audience (Entman, 1993). Framing can be textual or visual,
intentional or unintentional, and the media partake in all forms. When it comes to
women’s health magazines, framing usually has to do with the ideal way a woman should
look, commonly referred to as the thin ideal, and the steps she can take to get there.
“Women’s magazines, therefore, have the power to shape how women think about weight loss and body image” (Conlin & Bissell, 2014, p. 2).

Every individual is susceptible to the effects of frames, and journalists must take that into account when they approach stories. As they write, journalists “use frames to give meaning to and simplify reality, in some way, and to maintain the interest of the public” (Ardèvol-Abreu, 2015, p. 429). They must decide the angle they are going to take, and that involves simplifying and omitting certain aspects of their reporting so the readers don’t get overwhelmed. “Frames have a selective function, as they stress particular aspects of a topic and push others into the background” (Reynolds and LoRsso, 2016, p. 5). These inclusions and omissions can be made deliberately or inadvertently; however, frames are what guide the conscious or unconscious decisions regarding what goes into a story (Entman, 1993).

As stated above, the media has the power to shape people’s — especially young women’s — body image. A 2008 thesis by Nielsen examined women’s reception of Danish fashion magazine *Costume*. The study looked at body image and how the visual framing of women in the magazine affected the way readers felt about themselves after reading it. Nielsen conducted six semi-structured interviews with two types of *Costume* readers: three avid readers and three reluctant readers. All the interviewees were ages 22 to 28. The author chose this age group “to gather various perspectives on the matter of body image and to see what part *Costume* plays in the shaping and reception of bodily ideals” (Nielsen, 2008, p. 20). The results showed that the avid readers had a positive attitude toward *Costume* while the reluctant readers were very critical of the magazine. One avid reader pointed out that though thin models are used throughout the magazine,
she recognized that she and other readers should not feel pressured to look that way nor influenced by this ideal portrayed in the magazine. The interviewee also said she didn’t feel that *Costume* pressured its readers to look a certain way, either. Two of the reluctant readers disagreed and said they felt pressured by the magazine’s images and messages to work toward an ideal body. The biggest conclusion to be drawn from this study is that *Costume*’s framing affects all readers differently, including their body image. “Many of the messages are positive although the emphasis on looking beautiful, too, is inescapable” (Nielsen, 2008, p. 45).

It is the responsibility of the journalist to decide what is most important and put that information into his or her article. When it comes to women’s health journalism, articles providing the same tips and information can be approached in different ways. My research will look at the advisory board at *Women’s Health* and how the advisory board, editors and writers work to create quality health coverage with solid sourcing and health research to back their articles.

**Literature Review**

A women’s health magazine can be defined as a comprehensive magazine that covers style- and beauty-related topics as well as health and wellness ones. It touches on everything a woman needs to know to be healthy and happy inside and out; it’s not just about fitness. These magazines usually include sections such as diet, exercise, general health, lifestyle, sex, love and beauty (Rodale Inc., n.d.). The three top-circulating women’s health magazines in America are *Shape, Women’s Health* and *Self*, in that order (“Women’s Health Media Kit 2016,” 2016). Women’s health and fitness magazines are a
niche medium whose mission statements claim to encourage women to live happy and healthy lives (Aubrey, 2010). However, though one might expect the content of a health and fitness magazine to be primarily health-framed, much of the literature I examined found that these magazines instead tend to frame health-related content for appearance. This trend has a significant impact on the readers of these magazines because the printed media—women’s magazines in particular—are a primary source of nutritional and health information for women (Willis & Knobloch-Westerwick, 2014). Although readers rely heavily on magazines for their health information, there is “enormous diversity in the quality of nutrition information that exists” (Ashwell, 1991, p. 480). The following literature review examines the framing of women’s health messages and the diversity in the quality of health coverage in U.S. women’s health magazines.

A key player in the study of the framing of women’s health advice is Jennifer Stevens Aubrey. In 2010, Aubrey completed a content analysis of 426 cover lines from the top five women’s health magazines in the United States from 2003–2008: Health, Fitness, Women’s Health, Self and Shape. These magazines were separated into the five frames of appearance, body competence, health, weight loss and other. She also compared the frames of cover lines between strictly women’s health magazines (Health, Fitness and Women’s Health) and hybrid beauty/health magazines (Shape and Self), which “some scholars have critiqued … as having an athletic veneer, but falling short of empowering women” (Aubrey, 2010, p. 53). She found that appearance-based frames were just as prevalent as health-related frames in women’s health magazines (Aubrey, 2010). She argues that this over-emphasis on appearance could be the result of the tension between the magazines’ missions and a need to make money. Advertisers expect
magazines to match editorial content to what is being advertised, and what is being advertised is usually aimed to enhance appearances (Aubrey, 2010). However, when a magazine’s content isn’t consistent with its topical focus, women are apt to receive contradictory messages from what is likely one of their main sources of health and fitness information. When these contradictions occur, readers don’t know what advice to follow. “If a goal of health magazines is to encourage women to be happy and healthy … then privileging women’s physical appearance over their physical and emotional health is antithetical to this goal” (Aubrey, 2010, pp. 61–62).

In 2014, Willis and Knobloch-Westerwick performed a content analysis in which they examined the headlines and body texts of 28 issues of *Fitness, Health, Prevention, Self* and *Shape* published during May–October 2010 and analyzed them for their body shaping and weight loss messages. The messages were then tested for the frames of appearance, health or other, and exercise versus dieting behaviors. Nearly one-fifth of all editorial content in these magazines contained body shaping or weight loss related messages. Additionally, appearance frames were more frequent than health frames, and exercise was recommended more than reducing calories. Consistent with Aubrey’s view, this trend might come down to magazines’ dependence on advertising in order to make a profit. “Exercising probably means greater consumption, including fitness apparel, while reducing calorie intake is ultimately likely to lower advertisers’ revenues” (Willis and Knobloch-Westerwick, 2014, p. 329). It is likely that the focus on restricting calories would result in less emphasis on purchases and products, which would have a negative effect on advertising profits.
In a similar study conducted in 2015 by Bazzini et al., the cover lines of 54 covers of *Men’s Health* and *Women’s Health* published between 2006 and 2011 were content analyzed. All prominent cover lines were coded for the frame used: appearance, body competence, health, weight loss, or other. The most common frames for the dominant cover lines of *Women’s Health* were appearance, followed by weight loss and finally body competence. *Men’s Health’s* most common frames were weight loss, appearance and body competence. Surprisingly, none of the main cover lines of these popular *health* magazines fit into a *health* frame; rather, they mostly focused on weight loss or fitness for purposes of improving one’s appearance (Bazzini et al., 2015). According to the authors:

> Unfortunately, rather than overt health themes that emphasize well-being and fitness, *Women’s Health*’s common displays of weight loss, dieting, and appearance-based themes seem to encourage women to engage in goal-oriented behaviors that will achieve beauty and thinness. Thus, they may be similar to fashion magazines like *Cosmo* and *Glamour* and echo the traditional message that beauty is a woman’s greatest asset (Bazzini et al., 2015, p. 207).

Some of this framing might be because the magazine industry is becoming largely consumer driven (Moore et al., 1992). But “in the case of *Men’s Health* and *Women’s Health*, it seems suspect that no prominent captions literally discussed health, begging the question, ‘Just how healthy are health magazines for men or women?’” (Bazzini et al., 2015, p. 208).

Conlin and Bissell conducted a content analysis in 2014 that examined the framing of health messages from three fashion/beauty magazines and three health/fitness magazines using issues from January–June 2013. The researchers wanted to see how the content was framed differently based on the genre of magazine. They coded for health- and appearance-related messages. The results of this study were consistent with the
others: Health and fitness content in these magazines was framed more frequently for appearance than health. This suggests that women’s health/fitness magazines are not properly framing health; rather, they are framing fitness as being thin and losing weight for the purpose of looking good rather than overall health. For example, the smallest number of cover lines of health/fitness magazines teased to stories about weight loss for the sake of general health; however, many made weight loss promises without making any references to health (Conlin and Bissell, 2014). Appearance was the main focus because “fitness in women’s magazines is being framed as thinness” (Conlin and Bissell, 2014, p. 14).

Aubrey and Hahn (2016) examined the health advice in women’s health magazines for appearance, health, body competence and weight loss frames. They performed a content analysis of 28 issues of Shape, Fitness, Self, Health, Women’s Health, and Natural Health, one issue from each publication per year from 2003–2008. The researchers analyzed the editorial content and the advertisements of the magazines. This study had results that differed from others discussed here. Health frames were the most common of these magazines, followed by appearance, weight loss and body competence. The authors also looked to see if the topic of an article matched with the frame it took. The content and frame corresponded in fitness/exercise articles, as 59 percent had a body competence frame, but the most frequent frame for food- or nutrition-related articles was weight loss. Although health frames were the largest representation in this study, appearance frames were still present, and there were fewer body competence frames than one would expect to find in women’s health magazines. These findings
further demonstrate how “health and appearance are often conflated in women’s health magazines” (Aubrey & Hahn, 2016).

In 2001, Thomsen et al. explored the link between women’s beauty and fashion magazines and anorexic tendencies in young women. These magazines portray a thin ideal that many young women feel they need to strive for. This is especially true in those who already have eating disorders or eating-disordered tendencies. The researchers conducted 28 semi-structured interviews with outpatients at an eating disorder facility to discover how magazines have influenced their lives and led to disordered-eating behavior. The results showed that though none of the participants directly blamed the media for their eating disorders, many recognized the strong influence the media had over their lives. The women tended to compare themselves to what they saw in the magazines and wish they had model-like bodies. Because of this, “these magazines counter the messages anorexic women receive from family and friends who have begun to recognize the emotional and physical changes occurring in the patients’ lives” (Thomsen et al., 2001, p. 60). The way fashion magazines frame beauty is not healthy for women struggling with anorexia.

**Methodology**

For my research, I will be conducting a series of semi-structured interviews with several editors, writers and advisory board members of *Women’s Health*. I plan for the interviews to take place from January to March 2017. Because the editors are located in New York and Pennsylvania, and the board members and writers are scattered across the country, these interviews will take place via phone or Skype. I expect them to take no
longer than 30 minutes each; however, as they are semi-structured, it will depend how the conversation goes.

Semi-structured interviews are those that the interviewer comes to with a list of open-ended questions that prompt discussion but isn’t afraid to stray from the list if the conversation takes an unexpected turn. “A good semi-structured interview is like a conversation rather than a series of questions and answers” (Fylan, 2005, p. 70). I believe that a semi-structured interview is the best way to build professional rapport with an interviewee because it is provides a conversational environment yet remains organized and to-the-point. However, since the conversation is allowed to stray from the prescribed list of questions, the interview results are likely to vary among participants. The amount of structure given to the questions and the interview is guided by the research question, and the aim is to find out “why” (Fylan, 2005).

In 2011, Kim et al. conducted semi-structured interviews with 11 undergraduate students (mostly women) to see how they get their health information. Young adults age 18 to 24 are among the most active Internet users, and searching for health-related information is one of their most common activities (Kim et al., 2011). However, not everyone knows the difference between reputable, quality health information and sources that shouldn’t be trusted. Each participant was brought into a computer lab and asked to find the best website for prenatal nutrition information. After the participant selected the website he or she thought best, the interviewer asked the participant about the search process and how website quality was judged. In the second part of the study, two maternal health experts were interviewed and asked to critique the websites the participants chose in the first part of the study. Overall, the results showed that young
adults are confident about their Internet skills, but they don’t know where to go for health information and therefore end up relying on search engines to select websites. In addition, the health experts deemed the websites the participants chose as untrustworthy.

Semi-structured interviews will allow me to discover why Women’s Health uses an advisory board and how, if at all, the advisory board affects the quality of health coverage at the magazine. I am using semi-structured interviews because I want to go into the interviews with an outline of key points to address, but I don’t want to be confined to specific questions if the interview organically goes somewhere I wasn’t expecting. Additionally, interviews are the best way for me to gain insight about how the editors, writers and board members work together at Women’s Health.

Publication Possibilities

I believe my professional analysis will be significant to future researchers because it will provide insight into the role of the advisory board at Women’s Health and how the board members, editors and writers work together to create comprehensive health coverage. My research will also be useful to women’s health journalists because it will encourage them to think about the way they present health research in order to make health articles more accessible to readers, as well as how quality health journalism should be sourced. My analysis could possibly be published in industry publications such as Folio: or minOnline.
References


Proposal Appendix: Sample Interview Questions

1. What do you see as the responsibilities of the advisory board members at WH?

2. Have you seen the role of the WH advisory board change since you became involved? How?

3. How do advisory board members interact with writers and editors on stories?

4. In what situations do you contact members of the advisory board or are the board members contacted?

5. How do you think the use of an advisory board affects the quality of your health coverage?

6. What role does the advisory board have in taking research that might be dense or filled with jargon and translating that into a digestible article for a WH reader?

7. What are the sourcing requirements for WH articles?

8. How do you think using an advisory board helps WH compared to competing women’s health magazines?

9. What do you think the advisory board brings to WH that other magazines without advisory boards don’t get the advantage of?

**Note: I will start each interview by getting background information: Name, title, number of years associated with Women’s Health, number of years in journalism/given industry.**
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

a. Amy Keller-Laird
Editor-in-Chief, Women's Health
Jan. 27, 2017; 23 minutes

Hannah: Just to make sure I have this: You came to Women’s Health in 2011, and you were the executive editor, and then you became the Editor-in-Chief in 2014, correct?

Amy: Yep, like fall of 2014.

HP: Ok, and then before WH you worked at Redbook, Good Housekeeping, and Allure. Did any of those publications you worked at before WH have an advisory board or consult a panel of experts for their articles?

AKL: At Allure we didn’t have an official advisory board. I would say there were unofficial people on staff that we would regularly turn to, like cosmetic chemists and dermatologists that we would rely on when we just had another little question. Or like we’ve talked to one source about this but we want to verify it with a person that we sort of know and trust and know their whole background and how they look at studies. Allure also had a story called “Beauty Breakthroughs” every year, which was probably our most intensive scientific story. I mean we did a lot of scientific looking at beauty, but that story in particular we were getting the actual clinical studies from companies and sending them out to our experts, and so there were a group of maybe three cosmetic chemists and five dermatologists that we’d turn to on regular times. And also for the annual “Best of Beauty” awards, most of that was chosen by the editors, but then when we would get to skin products and sunscreen when I was the beauty director, we would narrow it down to our top favorites and then we would send it to a panel of like 10 dermatologists. We would do the same with hair tools and makeup brushes with hair stylists and makeup artists. So they weren’t on a list that was published in the magazine, but internally we had those go-to people.

At Good Housekeeping, I can’t say 100% if there was an advisory board listed on the masthead, but we had — and they still have, obviously — the Good Housekeeping Institute, so on staff we had a chemist, a beauty lab, we had a humidity chamber where we tested frizz products. Obviously for GH they test across multiple categories. They have nutrition people; they have people testing appliances and laundry detergent… I guess in a sense, that was sort of a built-in, on-staff advisory board. I guess you could look at it that way.

HP: And was there anything at Redbook, or not really?

AKL: Uhh, I don’t think so. I mean, I feel like anywhere you work you’re always going to have your sort of go-tos, but I don’t think there was. I think Redbook now has something called “Team Red” but at the time, like in 1998, I don’t really think so.
**HP:** Why does WH use an advisory board?

**AKL:** Most of our content is based on studies and crosses some serious health and fitness issues, so we obviously want to be making sure that we are reporting things correctly, that we are checking in with multiple sources—it’s not just one person’s opinion—and we’ve got that trusted resource. These are people we know we can rely on. We know their background, we know how they look at studies, we know they’re impartial. Not that we consult them on every single story, but I would say we regularly go to these people for our stories. Or, if it’s just a last-minute, kind of a background. We use them kind of for background checks. Before we even decide to undergo a story, “OK let’s call Dr. So-and-so and make sure.” We saw this study or we heard this anecdotally, but let’s make sure it’s even a legit story or what have they been seeing or what have they heard from their latest industry conferences. So we use them that way.

If you don’t have an advisory board and you call someone for a story, they expect to be quoted. Now, we can’t quote everyone all the time. We have bajillions of little questions along the way, and so that’s also sort of the perk of an advisory board. These people have an established relationship with us. So it’s fine; they don’t expect to be quoted every single time we call them because they know it’s part of their role on the advisory board to just vet our little questions so we can shoot off a quick email to them and be like, “OK, before we go any further, we don’t have room to actually print this, but we need to know that x does y.” And so then we can proceed with how we’re actually editing the story. Because even for a 100-150 word item, there’s a lot of background that goes into it in order to cut it down for that very concise thing. Just to make sure everything is very legit.

But I think it’s super important for us with healthcare and fitness to be authoritative and to not just rely on some passing trend or one random small study. We don’t suggest that people look at our magazine and don’t go to the doctor, but we do know that we’re imparting health and nutrition advice and we have a responsibility to make sure it’s accurate and up-to-date.

**HP:** Do you have any idea when you guys started using that?

**AKL:** I really don’t. It’s been here since I’ve been here in 2011, and I would assume it was here far before then.

**HP:** Is there anyone who has been at WH for a very long time who I could talk to about more of the background, or is there nobody who would be able to do that?

**AKL:** On our staff, I would say our longest standing editor is our photo director, and I don’t think she would know the answers to that. We have someone who is on our international edition who doesn’t work on the WH U.S. staff but has been in the company for a long time. I can ask her if she knows.

**HP:** Yeah, that’d be great.
AKL: The other thing we do is we update the list, and we do add categories as time goes on and topics become important. We’ve added entrepreneurial experts, we’ve added finance experts, we added an osteopath. We want to keep it up to date, and as we find someone isn’t really being all that helpful, which doesn’t happen that often, but if someone isn’t being super helpful, then let’s get someone on here who will be responsive. The people who are on this thing are very responsive, will give us their insight, and some of them we use a lot.

Keri Glassman, who is an R.D., she has been with us as long as I’ve been here. She also writes a page regularly in the magazine; she’s in our “Ask Anything” section. I know we just consult her on a lot of things.

HP: How are these people selected, and how long do they usually serve on the board?

AKL: I mean, we’re happy to keep them on, like again, Keri has been there for many, many years and so have some of our other doctors. We did a couple years ago go back through and just look at the list. Our editors, we all got together and discussed, “Is there someone who we’re not really relying on?” “Is there a category we need to do?”, so it’s just sort of a regular check-in, and then we vet them by whoever is the editor of that sort of “bucket.” So if we need a new doctor — a gynecologist or internal medicine person — our health editor will go through and create a big list of potential people, listing out who they are, what their credentials are, where they went to school, what they do now, how available they are, etc. Also can they go on TV; a lot of these people become kind of spokespeople for us.

And then we do that as an editor would edit something. We go through it, we narrow it down, we reach out to the people, we don’t want them to be an advisor on another magazine because we want them to be available to us, devoted to us. Not that they can’t be used elsewhere, but we gotta look out for ourselves, as well.

So it’s a quite thorough process, and you have to live up to a pretty high standard to end up on the advisory board.

HP: Are they compensated at all?

AKL: Just to be on the advisory board, no. Some of them write for us. If they write a story or have a regular column they get paid as a writer would, but to be on the board, no.

HP: How many of the advisory board members are also contributing writers?

AKL: In “Ask Anything” we have some of them. There’s a few that regularly come in and out of “Ask Anything,” and honestly some of them are paid and some of them aren’t, and that’s kind of a proprietary thing that I don’t know how much I want to get into that, really.
Most of the new ones we add are not paid because they get a lot out of it to because it’s basically like free press for them. But the ones who have a regular page in the magazine outside of “Ask Anything” with us, again Keri Glassman, she does the “Buy 5 Drop 5” page. So it’s a nutrition page where she creates recipes for us. Occasionally she’ll come to us and be like “I want to write about this or that.”

It doesn’t happen a ton; mostly they’re used as sources. But we’re very open to them telling us about what’s going on and if they wanted to. Most of them aren’t writers; they’re doctors. But some of them, like Keri, have a great voice too and a very playful voice and has a following of her own. We’re happy to put them front and center, too, if there’s a particular story that’s sort of personal with them. Or we have them in our upcoming March issue. Heidi Powell, who is a trainer and is on our advisory board, I think we added her a year or two ago, we have her in a story about hair loss for March. So even though that’s not what we use her as an advisor for, knowing her and knowing her story, we had someone who was in the public eye who talked about hair loss, so we could bring her in there. So sometimes we cross-pollinate that way.

HP: That’s a good point, though, that they’re not necessarily writers. They’re doctors.

AKL: Yeah, and some are better than others. Some can be very personal. And the people on the advisory board are chosen because they can translate doctor-speak to layman’s terms. Again, that doesn’t mean they’re writers, but they have a skill at being able to explain complicated topics and sift through a bunch of science and kind of boil it down to what it means. Because in the end that’s what Women’s Health wants to do. There’s all this information out there, especially now with fake news going on, so we need to boil it down and sift through it.

HP: Have you seen the role of the advisory board change at all since you became involved at Women’s Health or since you switched positions?

AKL: I would say just the adding of different topics. We added the entrepreneur/finance and the osteopath since I became the editor-in-chief. We changed our yoga contributor—not because we didn’t love our previous one — it was just sort of the relationship had run its course, and she was ready to do other things, and we were ready to do other things.

HP: So more just the change in people and not the change in the role of the actual board?

AKL: Not really. I would say it just goes by story. Like the fact that Heidi ended up in that hair loss story, we hadn’t really done that before, but it’s not like it was something we sought out to change. It’s just I saw Heidi talking about hair loss on Instagram, and I asked her if she would write about it for the magazine.

We try to establish personal relationships with these people, too, because sometimes the best story ideas come out of just chatting with someone. Like, you’re sitting there talking about whatever, and then they mention this, and then that leads to something very interesting and authentic that you might not get just by a list of, “Oh here’s a new study.”
HP: So just to reiterate, the responsibilities of the advisory board members are mostly just to be sources, right? They can choose to write if they are particularly good at it or they have a good story idea, but mostly they just act as sources.

AKL: Yeah.

HP: In what situations in particular do you contact people, or is it mostly just the other editors who contact the board members?

AKL: On a day-to-day basis it’s mostly the editors in their categories talking to them. If it’s like a bigger-picture idea or if someone pitches me something that happens, too, but on a regular basis it’s the food editors talking to the nutrition people, the health editors talking to the health people.

HP: Do the writers ever work with the board members or is it just mostly the editors?

AKL: If we have a writer working on a story, we may say, “Yes, contact so-and-so.” We include those people as sources that we want the writers to reach out to, but more of the behind-the-scenes and the advisory role happens with editors.

HP: What do you think the advisory board brings to Women’s Health that other magazines that don’t have this specific board on their masthead, that they don’t get the advantage of?

AKL: I would say it brings an authority to the magazine, and it’s one of the reasons we also created the “Ask Anything” section, which did happen in my time as editor-in-chief, where we could kind of corral all our experts — some of them on the advisory board, some of them being other advisors — but that our readers would see the authoritative and the trustworthiness and that we have a robust group of topics all in one place. I think particularly also as there are a bajillion online sources and stories to go to and this and that and who do you believe.

Having that group of people who have been vetted is so important. Our goal is to be a trusted source. Without an advisory board, as a health and fitness magazine it would be harder to kind of show that.

HP: Do you think using the advisory board affects the quality of your health coverage at all?

AKL: Yes, I do. We have great health editors, too, but I think having people who are in the thick of their particular industry and coming to us when they have a new study or a new idea or they see a trend first means that we can stay on the cusp of ideas, not just wait for things to come out at the same time they come out to everyone.
And we’re also regularly contacting them and saying, “What have you seen?” “What’s happening in skin?” Yeah, we’ve been to the events, we saw this study, but what’s next? Are they researching something new? Is something going to happen? It helps us to catch the information before it happens. And to be able to really thoroughly look into it beyond, you know, you have a source on the phone and they want to get off in 15 minutes, well these advisory people are invested in us, so we might need to be on the phone with you for 30-45 minutes. They’re willing to do that with us so we can get to the bottom of something.

**HP:** What are the sourcing requirements of *Women’s Health* articles?

**AKL:** It depends on what kind of a story it is. Obviously if we’re talking about a product, we do not use a source paid for by that company. We would get an independent source. We love to have people who have university affiliations because those people tend to constantly be involved in new research and are held accountable also by entity, but I wouldn’t say that’s required of every person because not every great source, depending on area, does that. It’s really particular.

I guess we want to use the best person for that particular topic. If we’re talking about an acne story, I don’t want to go to the dermatologist who mostly looks at hair conditions. That doesn’t make any sense; that person doesn’t know the level, the depth that the person who has received twenty acne patients a day. So it’s very individualized in that way, and we’re very thoughtful about it to be like, “Oh, well she just published a story on this” or “She’s written a book about that particular topic and she continues to study it.” We really assess what sources are going into each particular story.

**HP:** My last question is, is there any sort of review process that all the articles go through as far as — you had mentioned earlier that the advisory board members don’t have to look at all of the articles, but do they look at most of them, or anything like that?

**AKL:** Our fact-checking department checks with multiple sources on our stories, particularly our health stories, so they want to verify a fact even if it’s only quoted to one doctor. They verify it with at least one or two other doctors to make sure it’s not just someone’s opinion or something. It’s a very rigorous fact-checking process. A lot of times the advisors come into that role, again, because we know we’re quoting someone else, but we have that person in the background who’s willing to give us the background and sort of verify that information.
Hannah: How long have you been at WH?

Tracy: I have been on staff for just over 4 years.

HP: And you’ve been the health and features editor for how long of that?

TM: Two of that.

HP: What do you see as the responsibilities of the advisory board members at Women’s Health?

TM: I think sometimes it varies by who the advisor is. Some of it certainly is just having their names there and available to the reader to see in the magazine helps to legitimize us. It helps them know that we are certainly on the forefront of research and that what they’re reading in the magazine is based on science and fact. I say that because, at least from my personal experience (I can’t speak for all the editors), but there are definitely advisors I tap more than others. There are ones that I speak to quite frequently, and there are others — even those who are within kind of some of the health realms — that I’ve never spoken to. For the ones I have spoken to, I use them kind of in various different ways. It really depends on who the person is. There are some who I’ve had actually be sources for articles, especially if a writer is struggling to find someone to ask a specific question. And certainly if it’s a timeliness matter. Just the other day we were doing a sexual health story, so I sent the writer the contact details for our fertility advisor and for one of our sexual health advisors because I know they’re very responsive and I knew they’d get back to her really quickly. I just used Keri Peterson, who is our internal medicine doctor. Her page in the magazine… we do kind of these two “fessions.” We call them “Skin-fessions” and “Health-fessions.” We wanted to do one that was health focused, so Keri and I went back and forth quite a few times for a good page that was just on her and how she avoids getting sick with colds and the flu in the wintertime.

Other times, there’s ones that I’ll speak to kind of infrequently, but if I read a study or if I read some conflicting research and I kind of want to get someone to weigh in who’s really entrenched in that world, I’ll occasionally email or call up one of them to kind of get their take on something.

HP: And then you said there were some you just haven’t talked to at all. Why is that?

TM: It just hasn’t really come up. Particularly, say, our oncology advisor. And part of the reason that hasn’t come up is that I have a background in cancer science. I worked at a
cancer research magazine for quite a few years, so I have a ton of sources who I know really well that I can tap if a story like that comes up.

**HP:** Have you seen the role of the advisory board change at all since you’ve become involved at the magazine?

**TM:** That is a good question. We’ve kind of revamped it and brought on new people. I probably rely on them more now than I did when I first arrived, and I was a senior editor at that point. Although I think some of that might just be due to the different role that I’m playing now.

**HP:** How do advisory board members interact with writers and editors on stories?

**TM:** It’s mostly emailing back and forth, or if a writer wants to interview a source for a story, I’ll hook her up, and she can arrange with them and set up a time for a call for an interview. Other times, sometimes if it’s just a quick question, I’ll just shoot off an email. But that’s the bulk of it. Keri Glassman, who is our weight loss advisor, she’ll go on morning shows and things like that as a representative of WH when they need someone to talk about a specific story sometimes as well.

**HP:** Is it mostly the writers who contact the board members or do the editors contact them more?

**TM:** For me personally, I probably contact them more.

**HP:** Is that to check facts or..?

**TM:** Not so much to check facts, but if I need someone to weigh in on something, especially if there’s a lot of conflicting research on a topic, and I really need someone who’s entrenched in that world and kind of in it day-to-day to break all that down and say, “This is what the real thinking is” among those in her field.

**HP:** What role does the advisory board have in taking dense research that has a lot of jargon in it and translating it into a digestible article that a WH reader would understand?

**TM:** Not a huge amount. That’s primarily my job and the job of the other editors here. I think where that comes in to play is if a writer does call to interview them for a story and asks them a question about specific research or a specific illness or something like that where they might through the course of that interview help explain what’s going on in research.

**HP:** Ok, so for the situations the advisory board members are contacted, that’s mostly if you have questions or if there’s conflicting research out there. Or if the writer has a question.
TM: Right. One other way that just came to me that I will sometimes use them is if we’re looking for someone who’s kind of in a very obscure field or is researching something very specific, and we’re not able to find someone, I might tap them and ask them even if they know of anyone and could make an introduction for us.

HP: Oh yeah, that’s a great contact to have because a lot of these people are doctors.

TM: Yeah, most of them are. Certainly the health-related ones are.

HP: How do you think using the advisory board affects the quality of your health coverage?

TM: I think it definitely comes into play and helps elevate it because we do have those people on the forefront of their field who we can call on and make sure that what we’re reporting is the actual best and most up-to-date information for our readers.

HP: How do you think using an advisory board contributes to how you compare to competing women’s health magazines who maybe don’t use an advisory board?

TM: (The ones who don’t) just lack that extra level of kind of knowledge or resource. I know sometimes even our fact-checkers will go to them with a question if they want them to verify something that seems a little bit questionable, or if we’ve had kind of a random source say. For example, if we’re in a story and one source says one thing and during the fact-checking process another source says they disagree with that, we might reach out to someone on the advisory board just to kind of get their opinion and to weigh in to kind of give us a consensus.

HP: Is there anything else about the advisory board that I’ve missed that you think is worth mentioning?

TM: One thing we try to do and to be aware of that all magazines really should do is to revisit it from time to time. We did this about a year and a half ago. And really just make sure that the people who are on it aren’t just looking for something to add to their resume, that they’re people who really want to be involved in the magazine, experts who are willing to kind of go to bat for us. People who are willing to send us if they hear something interesting that they feel would make a good article for our readers — I wish they would do more of that to be honest — and to really be involved. We’ve had some people in the past who I would email, call, and I would never really hear back from them. So what we’ve really done is we’ve tried to keep it to the people we really need to have on there who are actually going to be really responsive and involved.

HP: You said there is a section of the magazine at the front where the advisory board are sources, but is that something that you wish that they were more of?

TM: No, I think we use them when we need to. We certainly wouldn’t want them to be the only experts that we have just because they might not be researching something as
specific. The gastroenterology (advisor) would probably know something about IBS or Celiac disease, but there are other people who are, that’s all that they research. So I would not tap someone on our advisory board for that if I could find someone else who that was their sole area of expertise.
Hannah: How long have you been at WH?

Jill: It will be 10 years in May.

HP: And how long have you been the food and nutrition editor of that time?

JW: Probably about 8 of those. I started off just doing weight loss and then ended up taking on nutrition and food, as well.

HP: What do you see as the responsibilities of the advisory board at *Women’s Health*?

JW: We have a heavy focus on science and research-based articles, so we use an advisory board of experts to kind of weigh in on those and make sure that the reporting we’re doing is accurate and also timely. So sometimes they will suggest subjects, that they’re seeing a lot of clients who are concerned about x or y or they just noticed this new thing. So sometimes we use them for just kind of general research, researching ideas to cover and trends. And other times we’ll use them for factual confirmation.

HP: Have you seen the role of the advisory board change at all since you’ve been involved for the past 10 years at WH?

JW: I’ve seen the members change, but the actual role? I don’t think so, no.

HP: How do the advisory board members interact with writers and editors on stories?

JW: Usually it’s us reaching out to them. Usually we’re planning a story and if we want to say, like, “Hey, is this really something you’ve been seeing?” Let’s go out and ask a professional who’s actually working in the field how accurate is this. Or if we have a specific fact in a story and we’ll say, like, “We need an advisor to weigh in on this specific fact and to let us know if they’ve come across other research related to it” since they’re more familiar with it.

HP: And is it usually the writers or the editors that talk to the advisory board?

JW: I would say the editors. We don’t usually have writers reach out to them. We’ll also have them weigh in on bigger issue things like when we’re refining a mission statement. We have a mission statement overall for the magazine, but we also have one just for food in the magazine, or our approach to food. So at one point we reached out and said let’s take a look at the different nutritionals we include for every recipe. How important do you think it is? I can recall most recently we did a big piece on sodium, and that’s very controversial. Like nutrition specifically is super controversial. You’ll find one study one day that says one thing and then one that says another, so we rely on our advisory board...
to be like, “OK, help us make sense of this. What is your take and why,” and then we’ll get a consensus from a couple of different people who deal with nutrition on the board and say, “OK, here is how we’re going to approach sodium going forward.” And I know *Men’s Health* has done similar things.

**HP:** In what other situations do you contact members of the board?

**JW:** That would be one, if we’re looking for an overall mission statement, or I’ve contacted them in the past for, besides articles in the magazine and for the website, we do sometimes brand-related projects. So we partnered with Planters the peanuts people, we’ve done supplements. The WH brand did supplement fish oil, and so that was one I wanted our advisor to work closely with us on to make sure we’re on brand and say, “Here’s are concerns, there’s been a lot of research about fish oil supplements and what’s good and what’s not good.” We really want to make sure we’re not diluting the brand; we want to make sure this is something we can get behind and should stand behind. Can you help us make sense of this research and give us kind of a second opinion on why or why not to back this project. So that’s another role that they have.

**HP:** And anything during articles or anything like that?

**JW:** I mean for articles we use a variety of sources, I feel like we rely on our advisory board more so when its like the sodium feature. If it’s a really controversial topic, we’ll go to them, or if there’s a lot of conflicting research out there we might go to our advisory board rather than just a random source because we know and trust them. And we can say, look, “Obviously we have our research library, we can do research, but we’re finding conflicting information. Can you help us come down on one side or the other.”

**HP:** Then what role does the advisory board have, if any, in taking research that is filled with jargon and such… Do they have any role in making that digestible for a WH reader?

**JW:** I mean they’re not editing copy, that’s generally our job as editors. For them I’m relying more on their expertise. That’s why we have advisors is their expertise. I’ve worked with nutrition for 10 years, but I’ve still barely scratched the surface. You know, I haven’t gone to school to become a registered dietitian; I don’t deal with clients. There’s a big difference between research and then practicing it, like putting it into practice. Academic research is one thing, but then making it practical for people and applying it is another. And that’s where they come in; their area of expertise is doing just that. When we’re giving out advice for people to act on, we want to make sure it’s legit and it’s practical. Academic studies are sometimes not able to be reproduced in the real world.

**HP:** How do you think using an advisory board at WH affects the quality of your health coverage overall?

**JW:** There’s been a lot recently. There was a big study on chocolate; this group put out a fake study just to test how many mainstream magazines would pick it up and report on it
without thoroughly researching it. We always have done a very thorough job, and we do not fall for that, but it’s important that we use our advisory board as a safeguard for that. Our fact-checking department is very thorough, but they’re also working under a high volume and lots of deadlines, so if we need to we can go to our advisors and say, “Have you heard of this? Can you let us know?” because sometimes you really have to do a deeper dive. A lot of people get a press release or an abstract and just run with it without really getting into the nitty gritty of the study, and that can sometimes contradict or cause misinterpretations of the data. I think they’re an important safeguard in that regard.

**HP:** How do you think using an advisory board contributes to how you compare to competing WH magazines?

**JW:** I think most of them now have an advisory board. It’s tough to say because I haven’t been to other publications; I’ve been here for so long. But I do think WH has always had a very strong — we were one of the first people and people have emulated ours since then. But we were one of the first people to say, “We’re not just writing articles about whatever; we’re actually going to the breaking news and the breaking studies and the experts in the field and then telling you how to use that in your life, how does that apply to your life.” We were one of the first to do that, and I feel like we still do a really good job of that. We’re always looking to refresh our advisors and make sure that they’re among the best out there.

I guess I should have mentioned, I think advisors also represent the brand on platforms like television sometimes or events, so that’s another thing that they do. That’s another role that they have.
**Hannah:** How long have you been at WH?

**Marissa:** A little over two years.

**HP:** And have you been the associate fitness editor that entire time?

**MG:** I was assistant fitness editor, and it’s been a little under a year as associate.

**HP:** What do you see as the responsibilities of the advisory board members at WH?

**MG:** Well, first I’ll tell you that I actually don’t work a ton with our advisory board. I work a lot with experts, but there are certain sections of the magazine that we always use the advisory board for, and they’re not necessarily my sections. That would be like our “Ask Anything” section, for example. But for our advisory board and our go-to experts in general, we hope and expect that they are well-versed in the research on both sides of whatever we’re talking about. Not just having the background to support something but also know the other side of the argument. So, for example, with fitness, if the research is about strength training 3x times a week, then we would hope that our expert knows the research on if you’re strength training 6x/week or 1x/week. So hopefully having a little more well-rounded circle so we don’t have to use multiple experts for one item. Obviously, though, that would be a short item because our longer stories we use many experts.

**HP:** I know you haven’t been there super long, but have you seen the role of the advisory board change at all since you came to WH?

**MG:** Yeah, I feel like they’re a little bit more of public figures in the sense that we really want our readers to trust them, so we promote their faces a little bit more so you can easily identify month to month. I’m not sure the board has changed much, but in terms of their role I think they’re equally incorporated into our stories and maybe a little bit more like a real person and less of just an expert.

**HP:** How do the advisory board members interact with writers and editors on stories?

**MG:** I guess it really depends on the story. I know like for our nutrition section, our advisory board on that side, they give recipes month to month. For fitness it’s a little different, we use them for our “Ask Anything” section, so that involves emailing them with whatever question we’re planning on running that month and then they’ll give us an answer. We kind of edit it to make it a little bit more “common speak” because experts tend to use a lot of jargon and stuff that people don’t necessarily really understand. So we’ll try to interpret it and then we generally go back and forth once or twice just to make

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sure that they agree with how we’re wording things and then our fact-checker goes back to them and makes sure everything is on par with what they said. And then in terms of bigger stories, it can be a phone interview. It kind of runs the gamut by section and month to month.

**HP:** Ok, and is it mostly the editors who speak to the advisory board members or is it writers who talk to them, too?

**MG:** Well, for example, I’m an editor, but I write most of our fitness section. So it can overlap a lot. Our freelance writers do sometimes talk to our advisory board, especially for like nutrition if we’re doing a story and we kind of go to the same people for recipes pretty often. Same with fitness. If we have an expert that we really like and is very well-versed on a certain topic, and we have a freelancer writing a story on that topic, then we’ll give them the contact information, but a lot of the fitness stories are handled in-house. We only freelance one every month.

**HP:** In what situations do you contact members of the advisory board?

**MG:** For “Ask Anything,” we always go to them and then for fitness it’s kind of if they’re the right expert. Fitness can be a little different than the other sections because there’s so many parts to it. There’s sports psychology, which covers motivation and body image and kind of all of the mental factors. And then there’s exercise physiology, which is more about what’s actually happening on a cellular level to your body. And then there’s the training part of it, so the actual how you program a workout and what that’ll do for you. So there’s so many different components to it. I really only use the advisory board if that advisor is very knowledgeable of that particular topic. We do a lot of really specific fitness stories. For example, we might do a whole feature on squats. So I would want someone who has a training background and also an exercise physiology background who can talk a lot about how your anatomy can affect your squat and how some squats are better than other squats. Someone who can really deep-dive into that topic, whereas our advisors aren’t always so well-versed with specific topics. So they’re really great for the more general exercise advice and questions and keeping on top of research in general rather than being the person who’s doing the research.

**HP:** I know you are the editors, so obviously they’re not editing copy. But do you ever go to them to help take the jargon out of things to make it into a digestible article? I know you mentioned they use a lot of jargon, but do you ever ask them for help with that?

**MG:** Yeah, totally. I would say our advisory board are definitely better than a lot of other experts who aren’t as well-versed in magazines and media in general. So I would say overall, they’re better at not using jargon and stuff, but sometimes we need them to get more specific, so we can go back and forth with them a little bit. It’s a very fine line between being too specific and being unnecessarily science-y. So we try to get the right balance. There have been times where I’ve talked to a trainer who uses extremely jargony speak straight from a textbook, and it can be frustrating sometimes because they know our reader doesn’t understand what they’re saying, but they expect us to. And we do, but
sometimes it’s helpful to have an expert look at it and be like, “Yes, this is what they’re saying. I would word it like this or round out what they’re saying by qualifying it with xyz.” They’re definitely helpful in that way. I don’t use them a ton for fitness, but I know some of our other subjects do.

**HP:** How do you think using an advisory board affects the quality of your overall health coverage?

**MG:** I think that everyone kind of thinks they’re an expert nowadays, especially with social media. We see this a lot for fitness and nutrition and health in general. There are a lot of people out there who aren’t necessarily certified but are putting information that isn’t always totally correct or can be a little misleading based on clickbait and stuff, so we really value having certified experts who can really vouch for new research or new myths, old myths, whatever it may be. It’s always good to have someone who is first and foremost unbiased. So we always go to people who don’t have a stake in a certain company or even in our magazine. We always make sure they’re completely impartial. And two, someone who, what they’re recommending to our readers is what they would recommend to their clients, whether it’s a medical patient or someone who they’re putting on a lifestyle/diet change or someone they’re training in the gym. It’s really important to us that we’re putting out the same information. I think they’re probably one of the best resources we have to make sure that we also are objective and holding up to our rigorous standards in terms of putting out the best and most accurate information out there.

**HP:** Do you think using an advisory board contributes to how you compare to competing women’s health magazines?

**MG:** Well, I think a lot of them use advisory boards, so I can’t say that it makes us any different. Because I know that *Self* had a board, I know *Shape* has a board, even *Cosmo.* I don’t think it was nearly as large and structured, but I know that they had go-to advisors or contributing experts, however they want to call it. I’m not sure it’s something that distinguishes us from others, but I do think that we are constantly making sure that our advisors are relevant, on top of trends and science and also completely impartial because that’s a huge part of it.

**HP:** Is there anything else that I’ve missed that you think is important to note about the board?

**MG:** Sometimes our advisory board does pitch ideas to us, so, for example one of our fitness advisors is Heidi Powell. She’s relatively famous. She was on *Extreme Weight Loss* for a while as a trainer, her and her husband Chris. She and Chris sometimes will pitch us ideas of things that they’re hearing clients asking about or they’re seeing at the gym. You know, trend stuff. Same with Rachel Cosgrove who is a CSCS. She’s a really awesome trainer. They often will be like, “Hey, I’m noticing this, have we done something on whatever it may be in a while?” So, they’re also helpful as a resource in that way because I would say finding fresh ideas, especially for fitness, can be one of the
hardest parts of the job. And also something that we really try to do for our readers. We don’t want them to feel like they’re reading the same issue month to month. So it’s great to have them as a source that way.
Hannah: How long have you been an advisory board member at WH?

Keri: I believe 8 years?

HP: What are your responsibilities as an advisory board member?

KG: I’m on the advisory board, but I also write for them, so I contribute articles but part of what I do specifically just as an advisory board member… When they are working on an article and either they’ve gotten quotes from other health professionals/dietitians and/or they’re just doing some of their own research, if they want confirmation, triple checking, another opinion, I’ll jump in there.

H: Do you represent the WH brand on TV at all?

KG: I do, but that’s sort of separate from being an advisory board member, too. That’s really just part of my other deal with them. I wouldn’t say that has to do with being an advisory board member. That has to do more with being a contributing editor.

H: Have you seen the role of the advisory board change at all since you’ve become involved? Or your role?

KG: Umm as an advisory board member, specifically, probably that role has not changed, no.

H: How do advisory board members interact with writers/editors on stories?

KG: Sort of what I answered to the first question it’s really the same.

H: Which editors do you work with most often?

KG: Everybody from the editor in chief to probably the food and nutrition editor the most. And then sometimes also the health and features editor, as well as the beauty and lifestyle director. But mostly Jill Waldbieser.

H: In what situations are you contacted as a member of the board? Sort of the same as the first question again?

KG: Exactly. But being quoted in an article is sort of different. I also do that, but I don’t know if that’s as much advisory board or that’s just them calling me as an expert. Sometimes even aside from the articles that I write for them, they’ll just call me as an expert just to give information, to give quotes just like they would call any expert. So I’ll
do that, as well. I guess that’s part of being an advisory board member. But more than anything it’s probably just being an expert.

H: Do you have a role as a board member in taking research that is dense or filled with jargon and translating that into a digestible article for a WH reader?

KG: I think sort of, again, the answer to the first question. Like if they’re working on research or they need a confirmation of a quote or they need another opinion on it, that sort of all falls into that same bucket. Like, if they’re saying something about fiber might do xyz, I might say, “Well you might want to put it into this language” or “This will make more sense” or “This will be accurate and consumer-friendly.” So I think it’s all part of that same first answer.

H: How do you think Women’s Health’s using an advisory board affects their quality of their health coverage?

KG: Well, I have to say before I even worked for them, one of the reasons I wanted to work with them is because I always felt that their content was always incredibly smart and always, to me, incredibly backed up by real, hardcore science and fact-checked. I think (using an advisory board) makes their content smarter and more accurate and more trustworthy.

H: How does their advisory board compare to other advisory boards that you’ve served on or are serving on currently?

KG: I think they all kind of want to serve that same role, but I feel like (WH) probably actually utilize their advisory board more than others and more than other people who maybe just use it for names. Some people just have an advisory board so they have names. (WH) I think really utilize their advisory board.

H: Ok, and this is where I go to your writing. I know you also write for WH. How long have you been a contributing writer/editor for WH?

KG: The same time.

H: OK, so you started doing them at the same time.

KG: Yep!

H: Which articles do you write monthly?

KG: So I do a Q&A with them (“Ask Anything”), and then I also do a page called “Buy 5 Drop 5.”

H: Do you ever write just occasional articles or do you just mostly get quoted?
KG: Every once in a while I do write just a regular article, but most often I just do these two columns.

H: How do you use your expertise differently as an advisor versus a writer?

KG: Well I think as a writer it’s more specific. I’m writing a specific article. I’m writing, so that’s an expertise. But then also, I’m actually doing the translating of the content into consumer language and content that I think consumers will be interested in rather than just giving the opinion or backing something up. Plus, also, one of my articles, “Buy 5 Drop 5,” is really food-heavy, so that’s using me differently in the sense that I’m creating recipes, and I’m the one that’s coming up with the research. Meaning like I’m actually getting it versus, again, just giving an opinion or backing something up or giving a quote. I’m actually saying, “We should cover this, and we should put this in.” It’s a little more active role; it’s just different.
Hannah: How long have you been an advisory board member at WH?

Rachel: I think 2010, so six or seven years.

HP: What are your responsibilities as an advisory board member?

RC: So they’ll run things by me; they’ll ask me questions. If they’re going to print something that they want to know my opinion on or what I think of something, then they’ll basically bounce it off me. I’m basically a sounding board, I guess you could say. And then also a contributor, I have a column. They’ll ask me different things as far as questions they put in the editor’s column; they’ll have a question in there from different contributors. So I’ll contribute to each issue in some way, but then just as a sounding board for anything that they want to run by me.

HP: But the writing is separate from the advisory board, correct?

RC: Yes.

HP: Do you do any representing of the WH brand on TV?

RC: I have. Like with my book. I have a book with them, *Drop Two Sizes*, which is a WH branded book, and so when that book came out I did some TV appearances and representing the WH brand. I don’t know if that’s considered part of the advisory board. I kind of have multiple roles with WH, so I kind of don’t know what falls under which category. So no, I have not appeared on TV specifically because I’m on the advisory board. It’s been more because I had a book come out.

HP: In the past six or seven years have you seen the role of the advisory board change? Or your role in particular?

RC: I’ve definitely seen the magazine change because there’s been different editors, so there’s like a different voice. So for me as the advisory board, just depending on what the voice is, I just have to stay up-to-date on what they’re going after and who their target market is, and who they’re speaking to to make sure that I know what kind of information they’re looking for.

In the last year or two, they’ve done a lot of changing of their language, how they communicate to women. And so they’ve stopped using words like “skinny” or even “losing weight,” and they’ve shifted to using terminology like “being strong” and “gaining muscle” and “being fit.” So even just the language through the years has changed because the voice of the magazine has changed.
**HP:** So how do you interact with writers/editors on stories?

**RC:** Usually by email. And then every once in a while we jump on a phone call, but a lot of it is by email.

**HP:** And I know you’re a fitness expert, so which editors do you usually work with? Is it usually Jen?

**RC:** Yeah, Jen Ator’s been my girl for a long time. I actually met her the first day she started at WH because I was out doing my photo shoot for my book, so she and I ended up connecting. So yeah we’ve definitely been close, but I’ve also worked with other editors who work under her because she’s worked her way up with WH. So then there’s a few others.

**HP:** So obviously you work on the fitness stories. Do you ever do anything with features or anything like that?

**RC:** I haven’t for a while, but I have in the past. I’ve also done quite a bit with *Men’s Health*, too. I used to do quite a few features with them.

**HP:** Do you ever work with other advisors, or is it mostly just editors?

**RC:** As colleagues, but not on the magazine.

**HP:** Do you ever work with writers directly, or is it just editors that you work with?

**RC:** I work with writers. Quite often, there will be a writer who was assigned an article, maybe even a feature article, and so they usually use me for a quote or as an expert in their article, and that happens a lot.

**HP:** What is your role in taking research that might be dense or filled with jargon and translating that into a digestible article for a WH reader?

**RC:** I would say if there’s something that comes out that the editors are trying to interpret or get to the bottom line of, “Is there something here that would be helpful to our audience?” they would bounce it off me as a sounding board and whether or not I end up answering a question on it… A lot of times my columns are Q&A columns, so a lot of times it might be a question of something that’s maybe come up recently in research, so that might be something they get my opinion on.

**HP:** Have I covered it all? Are there any other situations where you’re contacted as an advisor?

**RC:** I don’t think so. You know, being an advisor, you’re really more of a sounding board as far as your role. You’re there for them to use as an expert when they need it.
**HP:** How do you think WH’s using an advisory board affects the quality of their health coverage?

**RC:** Because they’re using people who are qualified, who have experience, have the knowledge in the industry, and the thing that I like is they use people who are actually working with clients, that are familiar with what a real person standing in front of them would need. Because (the WH staff members) are in an office and a lot of them are writers, they may not be familiar with the in-person connection and how it really translates to the real world.

**HP:** What do you think the advisory board brings to WH that other magazines that maybe don’t have advisory boards don’t get the advantage of?

**RC:** I think it’s just that extra piece so when people are reading the magazine they know that it’s solid information.

**HP:** How does WH’s advisory board experience compare to other advisory boards that you’ve served on?

**RC:** I’ve been on some where they don’t use you at all, they just have your name as part of their advisory board just to say that you’re on their advisory board, and I would say that WH, they do use me pretty frequently, at least once a month. On each issue I’m involved in some way, so that’s good. It’s weird when people ask you to be on their advisory board and then never ask you anything and you don’t ever advise, so they do a good job.

**HP:** How long have you been a contributing writer for WH?

**RC:** Same thing I think, around the same time. Six or seven years.

**HP:** And you said you’re in every issue; do you write any regular columns or does it change every month?

**RC:** I have a regular column; it’s like every other month or every quarter. It rotates with the yoga person and a nutritionist, and I think they also worked in a sex girl now, too. So I think the four of us rotate. It’s called “Ask Anything.”

**HP:** Do you ever just write occasional articles? I know you said you’re quoted frequently, but is it just that regular column that you write?

**RC:** Mostly the regular column. Once in a while I do get an article assignment, but the majority of what I do is more as an expert advisor.

**HP:** How do you use your expertise differently as an advisor versus as a writer?
RC: So as an advisor, you’re more giving an opinion on something that someone else is bouncing off of you, whether it’s current research or an idea they have for an article or it’s a workout they’re planning to print, and they want to make sure it makes sense. So it’s usually giving my opinion or advising on someone else’s content. Whereas a writer, it’s my own content, so I’m more sharing something that I want to share with the audience.
Hannah: How long have you been an advisory board member at WH?

Sharon: Since 2008 or 2009.

HP: How many times have you been contacted to consult on stories for WH?

SC: At least twice a year, so maybe 15 times, if not more.

HP: What are your responsibilities as an advisory board member at WH?

SC: Sometimes they call me up and ask me for some expert commentary, like how to beat the winter blues with exercise or something, and then I’ll give them some talking points and then they’ll incorporate it into a sidebar. There’s also a column called (“Ask Anything”), and I’ve been asked to do that a couple times. One hasn’t made it into print, and then there’s something I was asked about recently in terms of like how do you de-stress and recover, and I’m not sure if and when that’s going to get into print. But those three types of requests. And then I believe maybe they had a special exercise and health issue a number of years ago. I think I was asked to do something for that, as well.

HP: Have you seen the role of the WH advisory board change at all since you’ve been involved in it? Or your role in particular?

SC: Yeah, I think they use me more. They reach out a lot more than they used to.

HP: And then has your role changed at all?

SC: No, though I don’t know that (“Ask Anything”) was there several years ago. I don’t know if that’s a role change or not, but I think it’s a format change for how they use their advisory board.

HP: How do you as an advisory board member interact with writers/editors on stories?

SC: Either by email or phone call.

HP: Which editors do you usually work with most frequently?

SC: I have no idea. I don’t really pay attention to who’s calling. They just reach out. They say, “I’m from WH,” and I don’t really pay attention.

HP: Do you ever work with other advisors, or is it mostly just writers and editors that call you?
SC: I have never worked with another advisor.

HP: Do you have any role in taking research that’s dense or filled with jargon and translating that into a digestible article for a WH reader?

SC: No. I just really act as an expert.

HP: How do you think WH’s use of an advisory board affects the quality of their health coverage?

SC: My opinion is they basically want to be able to fact-check statements that are in WH so that they are reliable sources of information, which should basically improve their product. I see myself often as like a fact-checker. Like, “Does this sound right to you” or that kind of thing.

HP: How do you think their use of an advisory board compares to competing women’s health magazines?

SC: I have no idea. I don’t even know if other magazines use an advisory board.

HP: I know you do a little bit of writing for (“Ask Anything”), but do you ever do any other writing for WH?

SC: I only respond to questions, so sometimes my responses are in writing. But I don’t generate any new material or articles for them.

HP: Is there anything about the advisory board that I’ve missed that you think is worth mentioning?

SC: It’s just this nice thing to have like from a credibility standpoint. Sometimes people in my practice or in my professional life will say, “Oh I saw you on the advisory board of Women’s Health,” and it seems to grant me some kind of status, sort of as an expert out there in the world. I guess there’s some reverse benefit to the advisor.

HP: Yeah, it’s sort of a mutually beneficial thing.

SC: Yeah absolutely. Even if you don’t get mentioned openly, I’m not sure why someone would do it otherwise. There has to be some sort of reciprocity back to the advisor.
Hannah: How long have you been an advisory board member at WH?

Mandy: I think it’s been 3 years now.

HP: How frequently have you been contacted to consult on stories?

MI: I feel like it’s kind of like every other month. Sometimes a little bit more, you know it really depends. Sometimes they just call me with like a question for a column and then sometimes some freelancers that are writing an article might contact me just to verify something.

HP: What are your responsibilities as an advisory board member?

MI: I don’t have a ton of responsibilities. But basically I’m their go-to person for the yoga section of their magazine. So if they have a question that they want to verify, or if they have somebody writing an article, they’ll direct them over to me. Or there’s also an “Ask Anything” column that they have that their advisors are in. I think there’s like a roster of advisors, and they sort of switch around who they feature, so that’s pretty much it. One time they did an event at the House. I don’t know if they do that every summer anymore, but they would do an event, so I would teach a class for the event. So I guess sometimes events are things they’ll ask somebody to do.

HP: Have you done any representing of the WH brand on TV?

MI: I have not done it with WH.

HP: Have you seen the role of the advisory board change at all since you’ve been involved at WH? Or your role in particular?

MI: No, I haven’t. Again, I’ve only been an advisor for 3 years with their magazine. I think that one change is that the person that brought me in doesn’t work there anymore. So I have not done as many events with them, but nothing has really changed for me. I’m just kind of getting to know the brand, as well.

HP: In what situations are you contacted as a member of the advisory board?

MI: If a freelancer is doing an article, they might contact me to verify a couple of the facts or questions they have or to get my perspective on it. And to do the rotating specific questions they have for each of their advisors. Those are really the main situations.
**HP**: Do you have a role as a board member in taking research about yoga that might be dense or jargon filled and then taking that and making it into an article that a WH reader will understand?

**MI**: I think that definitely as a teacher, that’s sort of the role that I play. I think as a teacher of something, you’re really a translator. So I think when they call and ask me for my advice on specific questions, I’m basically giving that type of an answer that translates to the general public. It’s not like send me all this research and ask me to dumb it down. It’s really pretty much they’ll just ask me a question, and I’ll try to deliver it in the most basic way possible because that’s what a teacher does essentially.

**HP**: How do you think WH’s use of an advisory board affects the quality of their health coverage?

**MI**: I think that when you have people who are experts in their fields that you’re getting what’s happening out there currently. I think it gives them a wider scope. They’re able to find out like what we’re all doing out there in each of our areas. I think it affects it in a way where they’re on the pulse of what’s going on. They probably have the innovators in the fields that they cover, so I think it gives them credibility, authority, all of that.

**HP**: How do you think using an advisory board contributes to how they compare to competing women’s health magazines?

**MI**: I think it gives credibility to the brand. Like if people know that I teach the top people, so they know that they can trust me. So I think it makes the magazine trustworthy. But also, I can’t compare it to other health brands because I think that probably some of those brands also use advisors. I just don’t know; I’m not familiar with the other brands. So I don’t know what the comparison is.

**HP**: Have you ever served on any other advisory boards?

**MI**: Yeah, I actually serve on the advisory board for a beauty magazine, as well, right now. But it’s pretty similar in terms of, like they’ll reach out to me and ask me questions. They’ll reach out and ask me when they have specific questions regarding — in my field its wellness or meditation or relaxation and how that affects the body and aging and all that kind of stuff.

**HP**: So a pretty similar experience to the WH one?

**MI**: Yeah, pretty similar.

**HP**: Have you ever done any writing for the magazine, or just for the “Ask Anything” column?

**MI**: I have not done any writing for the magazine.
HP: Is there anything else about the advisory board that I’ve missed that you think is worth mentioning?

MI: I feel like there’s a camaraderie amongst the advisors. I know a couple of the other advisors, and you feel like you’re part of a family in a way when you’re part of the advisory board. That’s part of it.

HP: Do you ever work with other advisors on stories or do you just work with them in other capacities?

MI: I’ve worked with Keri Glassman before, actually. I contributed to a couple of her books, and we’ve done some events together, and we did a retreat together, so I’ve worked with Keri Glassman before.

HP: And this was for Women’s Health?

MI: It wasn’t for Women’s Health.
i. Cassandra Forsythe  
Fitness Advisor, Women’s Health  
April 7, 2017; 9 minutes

Hannah: How long have you been an advisory board member at WH?

Cassandra: I think it’s been 5 years. I’m pretty sure it’s been at least five years.

HP: How frequently have you been contacted to consult on stories for WH?

CF: It’s like at least once every other month, so like six times a year minimum.

HP: What are your responsibilities as an advisory board member, and in what situations are you contacted?

CF: It’s usually by writers to help assist them in writing their stories basically. I just wrapped up a book with WH, as well, a weight loss book, last summer. So, they consulted with me on a book project as well.

HP: Have you seen the role of the WH advisory board change since your involvement or your role in particular?

CF: No, it’s been about the same. Usually the main reason I’m contacted by them is to help writers out with their articles. And then they do something where twice a year I have to contribute to a column as part of being on the advisory board — I don’t remember what the column is called — whatever they get me to do like twice a year, and I just do it. (It’s “Ask Anything”)

HP: What role, if any, do you have as a board member and doctor in taking research that might be dense or filled with jargon and translating that into a digestible article for a WH reader?

CF: Not as much as you would think. Again, usually when I’m contacted by a writer who has a topic for a story, they will ask me my input on say, what are the primary nutritional factors in muscle growth for women, for example, and I’ll have my info, but it’s not like they ever say, “Here’s an article, can you proofread it for this content.” I’ve never been asked that.

HP: How do you think WH’s use of an advisory board affects the quality of their health coverage?

CF: They are able to give my information out to the writers for their magazine as someone that would provide credible information. I think that’s how they use their advisory board right now.
HP: How do you think WH’s using an advisory board contributes to how the magazine compares to competing WH magazines?

CF: I almost say it would be the same because I get contacted by other magazines as well to provide expert content. Like Shape has contacted me and Oxygen, as well. So it’s very similar in terms of what the role I provide is.

HP: Do you serve on any other advisory boards?

CF: Yep. I was an advisory board member for three years for Girls Gone Strong. I just stepped down; I’m just too busy for what they wanted me to do as an advisory board member. And then I’m on the advisory board of Precision Nutrition and Livestrong.

HP: How does the advisory board experience at WH compare to those advisory board experiences?

CF: In terms of Girls Gone Strong, totally different. Girls Gone Strong, as an advisory board member, I was required to write an article once a month. And that was my role as an advisory board member for them basically. And then not anything for Precision Nutrition or Livestrong other than that they just use my name. I don’t do anything with them really. For Precision Nutrition, I wrote a couple articles for them, but it’s sort of like they just have my name in a sense on their website for whatever reason. I don’t really do much with them.

HP: Other than the two times per year that you contribute to the article for WH, do you ever do any other writing for the magazine?

CF: No, they have writers. Even when I wrote a book for them, they even had a writer write the article about my book. They have their dedicated writers.

HP: Yeah, I just wasn’t sure because some of the other advisory board members sometimes contribute.

CF: Not that I have. Other than just the little pieces that they get me to write, but not a full article at all. Mostly it’s their writers contacting me to help write their articles. Which is OK because I’m like too busy. Because I was writing for someone else recently, and I teach full time, I’m a full time faculty member, so it’s a lot.
APPENDIX C: WOMEN’S HEALTH CONTEXT

a. Mission Statement

Women’s Health is the must-have action plan for today’s modern woman. From beauty to style to fitness, Women’s Health gives consumers the tools they need to make instant, positive changes in their lives. Women’s Health propels consumers into action.

Providing the motivation and the inspiration, our immerse brand drives nearly 33+ MILLION consumers to buy. It’s this approach that makes us different from any other brand.

Source: Women’s Health Media Kit 2017
b. Demographics

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<td>ANY COLLEGE</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAD COLLEGE+</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYED FULL TIME</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWN HOME</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHI $50,000+</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHI $60,000+</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHI $75,000+</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Women's Health Media Kit 2016
d. Current Advisory Board

- Maria Rodale
  - Chief Executive Officer

- Fredric Meyers
  - EVP, Chief Financial Officer

- Beth Nieter
  - EVP, Chief Operating Officer

- Adam Campbell
  - Chief Content Officer

- Roni Gardiner
  - Chief Advertising Officer

- Miranda Settles
  - CS, Human Resources

- Bill Shirkland
  - General Manager

- Deidre Shier
  - Digital Marketing Manager

- Holly Chea
  - Corporate Social Responsibility

- Anne Zink
  - VP, Publisher, Associate Publisher

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**STORY OF THE MONTH**

**“The Odds and Ends of Zen”**

On page 12, we help clear your junk drawers. Below, psychologist and WH advisor Rhana Chinam shares what declutters her mind.

“Clearing a storm. I like to try a couple of new cheeses and make a platter with fun textures and complementary taste experiences. Cheese pairing, my great love. Mindful eating and mindful movement. Getting totally absorbed by the activity is a break from thinking about and processing my daily life.”

Source: Women’s Health May 2017
e. Original Advisory Board

Source: Women’s Health July/August 2006