

Meet the Media: Positive News, The Golden Hour + Coffee with Leah Williams and Kelly Woodman

Speakers

Lexie Smith, Leah Williams and Kelly Woodman

Lexie Smith

Hey guys, Lexie here, travel enthusiast, lover of puns, pizza and wine connoisseur and the founder of the PR bar, Inc, and you're tuning in to the pitchin' and sippin' podcast, from behind the scenes interviews with the media, to honest conversations with other PR pros to look at inspiring brands and entrepreneurs that are rocking the world of PR. In this podcast, we talk tips while taking sips and talking about all the things that make those in the world of PR tick. Let's get started. Today we're speaking to the dynamic duo of Kelly Woodman and Leah Williams co anchors of the all new show the golden hour. majoring in media writing and television news Kelly comes from a nonprofit background where most recently she worked with lapaz, an organization focused on reviving the Latino population of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and teaching English to immigrants in Detroit. She's excited to be combining her love of doing good with her love of journalism as she teamed up with Leah for her first ever journalistic venture we had comes from a 14 year background that involved working in PR and for award winning media companies and running her very own presentation consultant business servicing clients such as NASA in Taylor loft gap in the UN just to name a few. Leah also launched a social organization for young professional that now has 700 members. Since the 2020 COVID lockdown, Leo realized that her real dream is to be a journalist and own her own media company. Thus, she teamed up with Kelly and the to officially launched the golden hour show in September of this year. In this episode, we discuss why they were prompted to start an entirely new media company where and what they envision it becoming in the future, as well as outlining the literal preferences they have for being pitched. If you are a company doing good in the world, then tune in and listen up because it might finally be your time to shine on the golden hour. Leah and Kelly, welcome to the show, you officially get to hold the title of the first guest duet. But before we get into the topic of what has brought you two together career wise, take me back for a moment, catch me up to speed a little bit about who you both are outside of work. And let's do this by one of you starting Introduce yourself by name so we can begin to do quote unquote year associate your sound?

Leah Williams

Well, I'm Leah and I moved to Chattanooga, where we're filming our show from New York City about a year ago. And yeah.

Lexie Smith

What are the things that make you you outside of your career?

Leah Williams

Well, my career now doing the show, it's my dream job. So it's kind of funny that you asked that question because I would probably say I love writing and media outside of what I was doing before. But now I'm doing what I love in my in this job. So I guess probably outside of that I like wine and coffee and chocolate, Golden Retrievers and travel so

Lexie Smith

that's a wonderful answer. There's no there's no right or wrong at all on it. I love all of those things. That's a wonderful, wonderful answer. Kelly, how about you?

Kelly Woodman

So I am actually have been I graduated college about five years ago. And right now my I'm just a stay at home mom with two little boys and loving it. And Leah came to me this summer with this idea and we've just been working on it ever since and it's fun to get to jump back into my college degree. And outside of that I have always had an obsession with chips. They are my favorite snack. Okay, so I when I was little I really loved Doritos.

Lexie Smith

This is a podcast I just like for myself. I interrupting you to tell you that when my husband's in trouble he doesn't bring me flowers. He brings me a bag of Doritos as soon as I'm sorry.

Kelly Woodman

That's so funny. Yeah, my one of my favorite chips also is baked chips. Oh here mm hmm yeah, I just but I eat the whole thing in one sitting if I ever have right sopurpose. But yes, that's my husband brings me chips on Valentine's Day.

Lexie Smith

Yeah, smart, smart men. Take notes any any guys are listening out there. I love that and you teed me kind of a perfectly I would love to know what brought you guys together and really led up to the launch of the Golden Hour News.

Leah Williams

Well, we actually met in Bible study of all places. But that was just like a little launching off point really what started this whole thing was because of COVID, we had to go to Deuce we to do zoom Bible study, it's all women, all very, very driven women who are just really just very in tune with themselves. And it, it's just a, it's just like a group of women who just think about the deeper things in life. So it's just, it's attracted just these amazing women. And so we went to zoom calls. And as we were all sharing different things going on our lives, I just noticed that Kelly had this presence on camera. And when I, when she would talk and share, I was like, that girl needs to be in news. And I'd already been on that bandwagon and thinking I wanted to do news as well. But I've never wanted to run my own company by myself, because that's just no fun. So coincidentally, the lady who runs our group, she just kind of paired everybody up every week, just to kind of check on each other. Because you know, especially in the beginning of COVID, being alone for long periods of time, it's just not healthy. And so she just paired us up one time, and we just started texting, and we just like clicked immediately. And so when it

was safe enough to meet in person we met outside in the park. And just, we just talked for hours. And I presented her this idea. I don't know maybe what was it like April? Kelly, when we just started talking about media together? Yeah, it was probably April that we really connected and just started talking and texting a lot just about media and our hearts desires to change it and to be a light instead of negative. Mm hmm. And it just kept going. And then I think it was beginning of June that we actually met in that park. And then that's when it really just got the ball rolling and never stopped. Yeah.

Lexie Smith

So it's been fast. And so you guys have pulled this together pretty fast, right? Because are you? So I've so many questions. First off, Please catch my audience up to speed on what is the golden hour.

Leah Williams

Kelly, you want to take that.

Kelly Woodman

So the golden hour is a place for relevant news. That leaves you with hope, our hope and our goal is to highlight nonprofits and businesses that are doing good. So when you see all these hard problems in the world, there's people who have started organizations that are doing things about it. And they're already doing really good. Except that's not something the news usually really focuses on or highlights. So we really want to give them press time. And then there's also just people who are inventing cool things, coming up with new ideas how to do stuff, that's fun and exciting, and probably can usually not end up in mainstream news either. So it's highlighting things we feel like people would be excited about and could even partner with if they knew that there was people fighting against huge problems, and they didn't know. Mm hmm.

Lexie Smith

I love that so much. Any Anything to add? LEAH before I move on to my next question? because i have so many.

Leah Williams

Yeah, so I would say like in sound to summarize that, it's like, the mainstream news just focuses on the problem by itself. But we focus on the solution who's solving these problems. So it's not like we're avoiding heavy topics, we just want to focus on the solution. Because I think sometimes when you hear these statistics, it's terrible. All these you know, every day like fires are happening and job loss and all these horrible things. But what we that doesn't get talked about are the people that go in there the nonprofit's of businesses that are solving these problems, and they don't really get the highlight in that. And so, you know, and so that's, that's really how we wanted to do it. We didn't want to just, you know, and it's more than just, we're poor and what's going on, you know, and be truthful is because that we don't, we also don't want to just report every single thing that's going on the world we don't in this day and age, like is it really needed that we need to know that 10,000 people got murdered yesterday? Like, is that really helpful? You know what I mean? Like, obviously, we don't want to downplay any horrible things happening to someone and just say, you shouldn't be dealing with that. But we don't want to put our focus on the evil things, you know, so but, um, but if out of that, like, something amazing happened, you know, because we just really believe like, out of bad things. Good comes out of the bad, you know

what I mean? And so, that's where the golden hour we want to focus on the gold in that situation. And that's Where the hope comes again, we don't want to just say, oh, because you're struggling with something that's, that's not significant or important. But But does the world need to know all the horrible things that are happening in that person's life? No, because nobody wants that, you know, nobody wants their life all the bad things broadcast out there. Like some of those things. It could be private, you know?

Lexie Smith

I think it's, I think it's about balance, right? Is the news is so overwhelmingly tragic and depressing. It's, I remember, quite literally, as a young girl, my parents would not allow me to watch the news because it was too depressing. Which that's kind of wild. You don't want your kids to know what's going on in the world, or they just focusing on only the bad stuff. Isn't there so much good out there, which is when I heard, Leo and I'll get into when we met a little later, when I first heard about this, it's a breath of fresh air. And I really do feel like it's it's needed. What is the format in which you guys are choosing to produce this show?

Leah Williams

We're going to be doing it on YouTube and Instagram TV is or we're going to start. But we eventually like to be put on a network or, you know, cable television and bought out and maybe we're doing it weekly. But we eventually like it to be a daily thing like Sokak every day. So like almost an alternative to the six o'clock news.

Lexie Smith

I love it. And so by the time this podcast episode airs, you will be live. But when right now in our current state, you are are you live? Are you launched? What's your timeline?

Leah Williams

It comes out on Thursday. Our first episode? Oh, yeah. So yeah.

Lexie Smith

And it's Tuesday for anyone road. So today is Tuesday. Geez, what day is it? It's hard. The 15th of September, so right. Right. Yeah. So it's coming down to 17.

Leah Williams

It's already halfway through.

Lexie Smith

Oh, my gosh, that's Oh, although 2020 not surprised. Okay, so you're launching on the 17th. And you kind of already sent me into my next question is where do you see it five years from now. And it sounds like to be really a major major networker show in some capacity, right?

Leah Williams

Mm hmm. Yeah, that was my hope. Mm hmm.

Lexie Smith

I love this so much. Now, I'm going to, I'm not going to split you up. But I'm going to do some individual questions for a minute so we can get to know you. And, Kelly, I want to start with you. So I went to the golden hour news, I read the bio that you have on there. And I learned that your degree in training was in media writing and television news. So take me back to that moment of your life and what really initially caused you to want to pursue journalism.

Kelly Woodman

So funny, because that was actually my fourth degree change. And I was going into my junior year of college, and one of my friends still very good friend suggested it felt like my voice and just the way that I am would be really good and enjoy the communications degree. So I just did it because I didn't know what else to do. And then end up falling in love with it started with media writing. And then that led to a TV news classes, and just really loved it really encouraged by my professors that I was good at it. I did a mini internship at a local news place. And I just wasn't very encouraged the atmosphere of it. I mean, it is just a lot of negative news. It is real news. But you know, like we said, there's not really a balance of highlighting a lot of good that's being done. And it's just not something I really wanted to be a part of, and I just recently gotten married, that was towards the end of my degree. And I thought, you know, I think I'm just going to start a family first, even though I really did find a passion in this degree. Yeah, it's kind of crazy the way that it's five years later, and it's coming back around.

Lexie Smith

So is this really your first professional kind of endeavor or leap into the world world of journalism and news?

Kelly Woodman

It is, it definitely is. I've done little side projects here and there. I've done like, voicemail recordings for companies like if you call you'll hear my voice listening options of what you can do, and just different things like that. I know. That is a real job. I've actually had to hire those people before. And I've done it. Yeah. So but this is my first long term goal and hope to be a part of something serious. And yeah,

Lexie Smith

I love that so much. Leah, you're up. Okay, so, we didn't talk about yet. Now I'm going to how you and I first became acquainted, so I'm going to catch up with up to speed real quick. I was at a six degree society event with Emily Merrell who has been on this podcast. And you were the headlining teacher and you are teaching everyone how to make epic presentations and pitch decks. So first, tell everyone some of your clients permission to name drop just so that you really you know, your stuff.

Leah Williams

Haha. Yeah, um, coincidentally that you've mentioned it Emily, she's actually going to be on our women and entrepreneur episode and her sister too. On our first episode, so anyway, just name dropping those sisters. But, um, yeah, so, I, I've been, I'm 36 now. So I've been doing all kinds of things. But for the last six years, I've been designing presentations in New York City. And I even to back track that. I have a PR background. And so I said that I did pitch decks in the PR world. And so that segwayed into presentation design, when I say presentation design, I mean, designing PowerPoints, which is kind of

funny, because, you know, it sounds like a random job. But I mean, what's fun about it, nobody really wants to do it. But I happen to love it, because it combines my love of design and writing into one thing and so anyway, yeah, so as far as like clients, it's just it's so weird naming dropping these clients, because I'm like, you know, I didn't go to an Ivy League school, you know, but I ended up teaching a class, you know, for NASA. I've been actually helping the University of Chicago with their pitch decks for their an entrepreneur, Innovation Center. I taught a class of the UN. And then I worked heavily with Equinox for years. Ogilvy McCann and Taylor loft gap, like, I mean,

Lexie Smith

Own that, because that is that is really, really impressive. And I don't, I don't want to derail the topic away too much from the golden hour. But the reason I bring that up is if you even go to your personal website, the homepage quote says if you have a story, you can do whatever you want to do. So clearly, your love of storytelling precedes the golden hour. So maybe Can you give us some secrets to successful storytelling that you've collected over your career thus far?

Leah Williams

Oh, that's a good question. Well, first of all, I want to credit Hans Zimmer for that, quote, I, one of my favorite pump up videos to watch is his trailer for his masterclass. And he talks about, if you have story you can do whatever you want to do, and just how even in everything, you know, when you are in control the narrative and when that's a good narrative, you can do whatever you want to do. So, you know, with doing pitch decks, a lot of times I'm working with, you know, especially lately entrepreneurs, and being an entrepreneur myself, I love helping them communicate their story, because a lot of the time, these pitch decks are going to be seen by investors. And it's just such a joy to be a part of that process to help them be successful. And that's really what drove doing the golden hour as well. It's just this strong need to just tell people story and how awesome they are. I've just, you know, it's interesting, because being in New York for so long, I worked with some of the most amazing people, because doing a presentation, presentation design. I work with the CEOs of these companies, like one on one, you know, or the senior vice presidents and these are incredible people. And, you know, when I was leaving New York last fall, I'm like, What am I gonna do with all these relationships? These people have incredible stories to tell. They have incredible advice. You know, I mean, these are I probably have like hundreds of people who you see their bio, and you're, they're like, wow, these are incredible, but a lot of the time these are, they're not, they're not the CEOs. Usually sometimes they're they're not going to be in front of the press, but people need to know that they exist and that they're awesome. And you know, you shouldn't have to wait till you're Megan Markel to get interviewed. You know, it's just been a natural publicist. I just love telling the world like, Oh my gosh, this person so awesome. And I really love helping people with like their resumes and their LinkedIn. People, my friends will send me their resumes and usually they don't really paint themselves that impressive. I'm like, Well, well, well, you need to pump up that you've done this. And this, you know, I think the hardest thing is a name drop , you know, because and you need permission. I think, I don't know maybe women struggle with that much More than men, but users you need permission to name drop. You know, it's not like you're doing it all the time. But there's certain situations like trying to find a job or, you know, investing in meeting with an investor, you got a name job. So they go, Okay, this person's legit, I can trust what they have to say. So I think also with the PR thing, I, I love that part of it, but I don't I didn't like the sales part of it,

where I had to hound journalists, you know, all the time. It just made me really uncomfortable. And I, I've always been such a gifted writer. So I'm like, Well, I would rather write the article.

Lexie Smith

Yeah, well, there's two things here. First off, I want to clarify to anyone listening. When I say name drop, I say name drop in a tasteful sense, where it just means own, own what you've done on your own, that you are a badass. So that's what when I heard people to name drop, it's in that capacity. But what I'm hearing and tell me if I'm correct, what you've learned from all of this is everyone has a story. It's not just the Megan Merkel's of the world, everyone has a story that is deserving, and should be told that is that a pretty good summary? Is that accurate?

Leah Williams

Yeah. I mean, and, and also being on the journalist side. Now, it's interesting, because you also need to find the gold in their story, you know, like, so what I've been doing is interviews, you know, finding the gold in what they're doing, it's really the same thing as helping people with their resumes, it's like, okay, and the challenging part is like, not everyone has like this flashy story, you know, and so But does that mean, they're less important? You know, and so it's, it's a challenge, because I'm, you know, editing these interviews, and I'm just kind of like, you know, that's what we're trying to go against to, we don't want to put out boring stories, but also, we don't want to be the media. It's just, like pumping up something more than it is. So it's, you know, I really want to operate with integrity in these things. But yeah, and so I think also, I'm also learning when you interview someone, what also does the audience want to hear? So I think, mixing that with, like, can they offer tips, and then share their story? Or do they have you know what I mean? So like, finding that angle is interesting, too. And I'm just wondering as it goes.

Lexie Smith

Yeah, no, I, I'm right there with you. And, you know, when I when I do bring members of the media onto the show, which you both are, I like to ask some rapid fire style questions to earn their specific preferences, no wrong answers. This is all preference. So and this is all specific to how you prefer to be pitched for the golden hour. So I know this is new. First off, are there any specific topics that are off limits?

Kelly Woodman

We discussed beforehand, we're not going to do like gossip, or dirty things about people, even if it may be true, we're going to do our best to whoever we're highlighting, we're just going to highlight what it is that they're doing, and the good that we're trying to focus on.

Lexie Smith

Okay, anything to add, Leah?

Leah Williams

So no politics, and no divisive issues as well. So we try to stick with you stick with people and their stories without all the junk. And even if somebody in the interview, you know, says something negative as somebody else as well, we want to make sure we edit that part out as well. Because we also want

people to feel confident in what they're saying, as well and help them protect themselves to so that way, like, they don't have to regret anything that comes out when they said something accidentally, you know, addresses communications needed. Yeah. And we don't, we don't really want to operate in the role, like, off the record, you know, I think like, if we have to say those words, and these we're not, you know, we're not loving them. We're not honoring them, you know. And so and we, we also try to, we want to send the article to them before we publish it so they can see, so there's no surprises. Yes.

Lexie Smith

Everyone's hope one dream. So thank you for doing that. So flip side, are there any topics or types of companies that you are actively looking for and would like to be pitched?

Kelly Woodman

So we just been kind of diving into a variety of things like people who are helping people who have been trafficked and are now recovering a variety of options like that. There's even a guy that Leah interviewed that has physically rescued he was a police officer. And now that he has a company, we're also doing just a variety of things like fashion, education, Art. You know, we just started this in June. So we're definitely kind of drinking out of a firehose and hunting and searching for people. And Leah already has a lot of connections, which is really exciting.

Lexie Smith

So, okay, Leah, anything to add?

Leah Williams

Yeah, so every episode has a theme. Because otherwise it would just be this like kitchen sink of different things. And so we every episode will have like, like, our first episode is hope and employment. So we've interviewed a career consultant, and a friend of mine who has developed a software that helps employers find the right person. So we kind of look for either nonprofits, entrepreneurs, or businesses that are under those categories doing, you know, making the change also in the interview in the taping as well, Kelly is our investigative reporter. So she also looks up statistics and positive things we can add in as part of our dialogue on the show. Our second episode is on human trafficking. And so that's where we interview that guy, and, but we, it's a little bit kind of like Morning News versus eating news. So we might have some heavier topics per show, we want to have some lighter topics like wine, coffee, dance, you know, but there's so many companies out there so many nonprofits that are doing all kinds of things. That that's the beauty is we were doing an episode on dance, I know there's a dance nonprofit out there, you know, that we can find to put on our show, and really just talk about the importance of dance, you know, and so and, and it's a good way to start our process, because it's easy to search for on our website. So a lot of people aren't going to be watching it right when it comes out. But they go to our site, and they're like, interested in different topics. Oh, I like to watch this episode and this. And then you know, as we roll into doing something daily, hopefully, it will look a little bit different. But that's just we just feel like it's a good way to start out and keep things fresh and interesting.

Lexie Smith

Okay, awesome. Next question, phone, email, Twitter, sliding into your DMS, where should people pitch you?

Kelly Woodman

Well, since we're starting out, I'm kind of down with wherever, but emails probably the best, most professional way I would think.

Lexie Smith

Okay, Leah, what's your preference?

Leah Williams

secondary Instagram, we're really going to be pumping up our Instagram because Instagram TV is going to be part of our platform. And I mean, truthfully, there's only three posts on there right now. So don't judge just by that. But I would say, you know, both either or, is good for us. So but don't be offended if we don't put your people on our show. But we have a lot of topics, but we are looking for, you know, for definitely for nonprofits, especially. It's higher in our list.

Lexie Smith

Okay, you kind of teed me up to my next question. How do you feel about follow up? So if someone is listening to this show, they slide into your igd, or email you they don't hear back from you? Should they follow up or let it be?

Kelly Woodman

I'm down with a follow up. Sometimes you can just totally miss things, especially if you opened it. And then we're like, oh, I'm gonna look at that later and then completely forgot, because you already got rid of the notification for it. I'm down if people follow up for sure.

Lexie Smith

Okay, Leah, do you feel the same way or I saw your face go?

Leah Williams

Yeah, so one thing that's really important to us is researching anybody that we interview, because we really want to operate with integrity, like we're gonna look into everybody. So we don't want to be promoting somebody that's secretly giving their money to the Russians or giving their money to human traffickers. You know what I mean? So we want these to be companies that operate with integrity to and that follow our mission and vision. So just know, like that goes into it. So just like, do your research to if you're going to be pitching to somebody, make sure it's somebody that fits with our mission and vision too. Because, yeah, because we really just, you know, also just the world is under such a microscope right now. You know, and we don't want to be you have something come out later. Like, we can't believe you promoted this company. And now they're, you know, we can't all you can't know the future, but we just want to have a piece before we we do that. So just like keep that in mind. For your own self. If you're going to pitch somebody that you haven't you know, they're good people. You know what I mean?

Lexie Smith

Yeah, 100%. One more rapid fire and then we're gonna move into some more fun wrap up questions. So if someone is pitching you what assets are important for them to include? Do you need them to have photos? Is this going to be a video interview? What is? What should they be expecting? And what should they provide you?

Kelly Woodman

So right now we're doing video interviews, mostly with zoom. So definitely expect that we also probably just want to be able to use, yeah, photos and anything from their website to be able to put on our resource article, we're going to do a resource article, every time we do an episode, so people can go back and do further, you know, research on their own into what they just heard. So they can use it for themselves and their own lives. So definitely, you know, things about them their face, be ready to be on a video. Yeah.

Leah Williams

And adding to that, like, Is there a powerful story that goes along with how they started this thing? Like, you know, were they a victim of something in this area, and they started this nonprofit, like stories like, Oh, this they had, their mom had cancer, and then they started a Cancer Research Foundation, you know, like, those are the things that, you know, share that part too. So we can kind of see a context of of that, just, yeah, or they were homeless, and they started a company, like, just like, include that the gold part too. And so it kind of catches our eye as like, Okay, how could the you know, like, what's the story in this? is their story just so to tee up? Like, how we could start going? Oh, that would be interesting, you know? Yeah. So that kind of helps us just making it easy. Yes. And then just also like a bio and yeah, so anyway, but I do emphasize, like, make sure they have a clean record. They don't have a criminal record.

Lexie Smith

Right. Do your research before reaching to someone's inbox.

Leah Williams

Yeah, the exceptions are like, you know, if they were in prison, and then they got out and they got healed and have all their stuff. Sorry, right. That's Yeah, right. I'm not saying like criminals aren't amazing, you know, but I'm, you know what I'm talking about?

Lexie Smith

Yes, yes. No, I, I completely understand. And so we've talked a lot about the work stuff. I have one final kind of wrap up question to you that I like to ask everyone so as a reminder, this is called the pichin and sippin podcast, so what can we find you guys sipping it can be non alcoholic or alcoholic? Kelly Do you want to go first?

Kelly Woodman

So every day I will be drinking coffee with honey and oat milk. That's my favorite.

Lexie Smith

Okay, that's that's it? I haven't heard that one. That sounds really good though.

Kelly Woodman

It is delicious.

Lexie Smith

Awesome. And then Leah?

Leah Williams

well I love to drink everything so like not I'm not like a fish you know but I I drink my calories the spirit that way but I love I love if you look at my Instagram I said like coffee wine and you know travel junkie. So I'd say I love coffee strong strong coffee. And my favorite coffee is co bricks. It's out of New York the best coffee I've ever had. And I love I love wine. I love it. I lived in France for a while so I got in this habit of having wine with dinner. I love negronis and I love Aperol spritzes anyway, go on

Lexie Smith

I lived in Italy so I got used to wine at lunch that was yes. But I have to come back to the best way Yeah, you guys you've been such a joy I just I want to end with where my listeners can connect with you both and tune into the show

Leah Williams

Instagram! what is our Instagram by the way? it's was it at Golden Hour News are the golden hour look it up it's at Golden Hour News so I think just Instagram number one if you want to follow our our if you want to sign up for a newsletter on our website, subscribe to our YouTube channel. Again. These are all like there's not a whole lot on them yet, but there will be so yeah, Kelly anything?

Kelly Woodman

Yeah, the website is just the golden hour dot news.

Lexie Smith

All right.

Thank you guys so much. And I can't wait to be a watcher listener and a fan.

Kelly Woodman

Yeah, thanks for having us. We're pretty excited too.

Lexie Smith

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