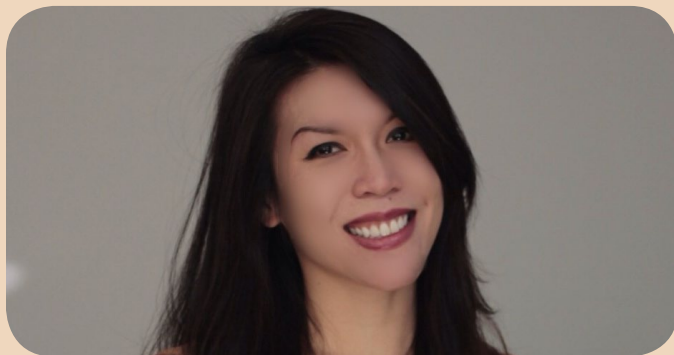


My career

Reporter

Vivian Giang



New York, New York

BLS fast facts: Reporters and correspondents

- May 2013 employment: 43,630 (excludes self-employed)
- 2012–22 projection: -14 percent
- May 2013 median annual wage: \$35,600 (excludes self-employed)
- Typical education and training: Bachelor's degree
- May 2013 top-employing industries: Newspaper, periodical, book, and directory publishers; radio and television broadcasting; other information services (includes Internet publishing and broadcasting and Web Search Portals).

What do you do?

I write and edit articles on entrepreneurship and related topics. As a freelance reporter, I'm basically doing the same things I would be doing if I worked for an organization, but I have more control over my work and have to manage my time more efficiently.

To get freelance work, you really have to focus on your networks and build your own brand. Get out there and communicate with others about your work and see how you can help them. It's more of a collaboration, because you're depending on other people to make the opportunities better.

What helped prepare you for this career?

I have a bachelor's degree in public relations and a master's degree in business and economic reporting. You don't really need to study a specific subject to be a journalist.

Experience is helpful. I worked on my high school newspaper. And when I was in college, I interned at several news stations and worked on my college newspaper, so I was introduced to news media then. I've been pretty much working in the news media environment since shortly after I graduated from college.

In my last job, I launched a regular series of articles on entrepreneurship for an online news site. In the job

before that, I did the same for career- and business strategy-related articles. The audiences were different, but the work was similar. With my current freelance work, I'm still writing and editing. However, I have to really make an effort to get out there and meet people.

Explain more about taking on projects.

It's a lot of networking and staying on top of things. It helps if there's an interesting company that stands out to you, or someone you admire and want to work with.

Much of the networking process is reaching out to people. You can find and talk to people you wouldn't





normally meet by going to networking events or joining an online business network. Social media is a great way to have conversations with people you haven't met face to face.

When you're self-employed, you have to know how much time you need for projects and really manage that time well because there isn't anyone else who's checking in on you. And you need to know your worth.

Did you always know this is what you want to do?

I've always known I wanted to be a writer in some capacity. I was a writer before I became an editor but, especially when you work online, you need to balance both writing and editing. In today's job market, you need to learn as much as you can and wear multiple hats.

Any surprises along the way?

Yes. I feel like I'm always surprised! The industry is always changing, and online news media is always

changing. What worked yesterday might not work today. You're always reinventing yourself—just like the industry is.

What's your best advice for becoming a reporter?

If you want to work in news media, you should know that it's a tough industry. Read as much as you possibly can about the industry and where it's heading.

Network as much as you can. Reach out to people and help them. Being there for others is part of networking, too.

Take lots of risks and don't be so worried about the right career path or comparing yourself to others, which is sometimes difficult when you're younger. Everyone's career path is different.

And whatever you do, try to get as much feedback as you can about your work. You always have to grow and learn to keep up to date.



Vivian Giang was interviewed by Elka Torpey, an economist in the Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections, BLS. Elka can be reached at torpey.elka@bls.gov.