

# **Copywriting:** **The Greatest Little Retirement Career You've Never Even Heard Of**

**AWAI**

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# Copywriting: The Greatest Little Retirement Career You've Never Even Heard Of

Welcome to the world of copywriting – one of the best careers on the planet.

Copywriting, as you have heard, can be one of the most lucrative freelance careers there is. Many, many copywriters break the \$100,000-a-year mark; many earn \$400,000 or \$500,000; and some superstars can make \$1 million a year or more.

Try finding that somewhere else. Pretty much only writing hit screenplays or novels.

Simply stated, there are very few careers where you can make so much money with such a great lifestyle...

## No Bosses, No Commute

Most freelance copywriters completely set their own schedule – working as much or as little as they like, and from wherever in the world they want to live. And the people who hire them don't care if you're old or young, underweight or overweight, white, black, or anything. All they care about is how well you produce for them.

For example, take Paul Hollingshead, co-founder of AWAI. He “works” a few hours a day and writes one, maybe two sales pieces a month. A few years ago, he moved to a little historic town in the Vermont countryside. He has no bosses, no commute, and works a few steps away from his house – in a little cottage, where he's surrounded by peace and quiet.

But he's not the only one living such a life...

Co-founder Don Mahoney was a cabinetmaker barely eking out a living in upstate New York, getting sicker and sicker from the lacquer fumes and other chemicals he'd breathe in every day. A year after learning the secrets of copywriting, he moved to Florida and started writing copy from there. Today, he earns over \$300,000 writing letters from his Miami Beach home.

Some writers have escaped the cold north and now write from oceanfront homes in Florida, California, and Bermuda. Some moved overseas to Paris, London, even Germany. Others (the single ones mostly) prefer the hustle, bustle, and nightlife that cities like New York have to offer.

It doesn't matter... thanks to email and the Internet, you can write these letters from anywhere in the world! Like these copywriters:

- Jason Ford was just coming out of personal bankruptcy when he learned the secrets of copywriting. He used those skills to build three successful businesses – and still makes over \$100,000 a year writing copy part-time for his favorite clients.
- John Forde and Will Pratt were kids out of college when they learned the secrets. Young and full of adventure, they took their laptops and their six-figure copywriters' incomes to Europe a few years ago... and never came back!
- Karen Tyler went to work for one of our associates as a copy editor right after she graduated from college. Thanks to the skills she learned, today she's a partner in a direct marketing company that generates over \$4 million in sales annually.

Now, let us tell you about the nuts and bolts of this fabulous career.

## **The Fundamentals of Copywriting**

Simply stated, copywriting is any writing that offers a product or service for sale.

Whether writing for a store, a consultant, a website, or a nonprofit organization, copywriting is selling. A good copywriter is a good salesperson – but you don't have to do it face to face. You can write a project at your own pace, work on it until it's ready, and then let the company send it out. You get to sit back, relax, and wait for the results of your efforts.

You will probably be persuading your audience to take some action: send for information, buy now, make a donation, call for a free consultation, or try a free

sample product. It's all about catching their interest and getting them to respond.

Selling by writing promotional and educational material for local and national businesses and organizations can be extremely lucrative. Clients hire freelancers to produce a wide range of materials: annual reports, direct-mail letters (such as lead generating, sales, fundraising, and magalogs), brochures, space ads, postcards, catalog copy, radio and TV commercials, newsletters (print and email), and websites, to name a few.

There are two very broad markets – **Business-to-Business (B2B)** and **Business-to-Consumer (B2C)**. And within each of those markets, copywriting can be further divided into two very broad categories – “advertising agency” and “direct-response” copywriting.

Most ads you see in newspapers and magazines, as well as most TV commercials, employ “agency” copywriting. The copy is short and often clever. Plus, there is no immediate call to action. In contrast, letters you receive in the mail typically employ “direct-response” copywriting – the kind of advertising that makes people open their checkbooks and buy. Not next week, but right now. Our focus will be on direct-response copywriting.

## Copywriting Mindset and Style

As we cover the basics of copywriting, we'll use a sales letter as our example. Following is a condensed list of the basic elements of a sales letter (this is the secret structure behind sales messages you read or hear)...

**Headline** – grabs your prospect's attention and draws him into the copy

**Lead** – immediately follows the headline; hooks your prospect with a core emotion and leads him into the big promise and idea; shows what's in it for him

**Body** – draws out the benefits of your product or service; and includes the proof

**Unique Selling Proposition (USP)** – shows how and why your product is better than the competition

**Subheads** – break up the letter and make it easier to read

**Close** – makes the call for action

**P.S.** – offers additional benefits at the last minute

**Order device** – the form your buyer fills out; reinforces the buying decision

**Envelope** – all your hard work is tucked into this envelope; but its real purpose is to entice the recipient to open the envelope and read the contents

But before moving on, there are secret concepts to successful copywriting that you need to know before you start writing any part of your winning sales letter.

### **Three Fundamental Rules of Selling**

***Rule #1. People don't like to be sold.*** People do want to buy, but they don't want to be sold. Buying implies control; being sold, the opposite.

A copywriter's job is to help the prospect solve a problem or achieve a goal. Whether you're writing a sales letter or trying to convince your friend to go to a concert, you won't apply pressure. You'll offer to give something of benefit. Don't force. Tempt.

Here's how you can start to understand how to tempt someone: Picture the absolute best piece of chocolate cake you ever enjoyed. Imagine it again as it melts in your mouth and sets your taste buds on overload. Now, out loud, tell a friend about that cake and why he should have a piece. Draw him in with a verbal picture that teases his desires and craving for chocolate.

***Rule #2. People buy things for emotional – not rational – reasons.*** Let's revisit the chocolate cake. If people only acted rationally, you couldn't sell chocolate cake. There's no logical reason to buy it. It's not nutritious. It makes you fat. It screws up your metabolism. And it's expensive.

So why do people buy several million dollars of chocolate cake every year? Because it makes you *feel* good! Successful copywriters appeal to their prospects' feelings and desires. Here are seven very important ones:

**Fear!**  
**Greed!**  
**Vanity!**  
**Lust!**  
**Pride!**  
**Envy!**  
**Laziness!**

These are all very powerful emotions. Remember this basic concept: **Sell to the heart, not the head.**

*Rule #3. Once sold, people need to satisfy their emotional decisions with logic.* Once the customer knows they want to buy, they then need to rationalize that emotional decision.

Take a TV commercial for cars, for example. It begins with some incredible drive through the countryside – the great open road or exciting twists and turns on a mountain road. That mountain imagery is stirring emotions and beliefs in the man who wants to see himself as rugged and in control.

Next, you see an interior shot to show how luxurious life will be with this car. You'll listen to the state-of-the-art sound system, for instance. And here and there, the commercial is inserting bits and pieces of information, such as the size of the engine, fuel economy statistics, speed, weight, safety ratings, and so on.

The only real purpose for that “data” is to allow the prospect to feel good about the decision he's already made. This information is extremely important because, although it doesn't sell the car, it does justify the sale.

### **Write Like You Talk**

**The most powerful style of persuasive sales writing is to have a conversation with your prospect.** Imagine sitting next to him and having a conversation. Try recording a fictitious conversation with your prospect – and then transcribe it! You just may end up with a great foundation for your sales letter with this simple technique.

Because once you can “see” him sitting next to you, you immediately know how to talk with him... what tone to use, what phrases to employ, and what promises to make. And all this is done in an informal, “conversational” way.

**Important point:** “Conversational” means you don’t have to utilize formal or “proper” English. Never make your copy sound stuffy or academic. Try to get as close to spoken English as you possibly can, even if it’s not grammatically correct.

And as you’re “talking,” if there is a point you want to emphasize, you could put it in *italics*, underline it, CAPITALIZE it... or you could also pause for a moment.

## **The Secret Structure That Guides Your Prospect to the End**

As we cover the basic elements of a sales letter, it may help to think of this as putting together an outline or framework. One in which every single element will accomplish a specific purpose. So make them as strong and compelling as you can.

### **Headline**

How many times have you heard how important “first impressions” are? If you’re like me, it’s been far too many times to count. Guess what? Your headline is the first impression of your letter (okay, they saw the envelope first, but we’ll cover that later). Regardless of how much else they read, everyone will read the headline if they open the envelope.

The headline is where you grab your prospect’s attention and usher him into the copy. And you do this by saying something meaningful to him... something that appeals to his core beliefs, feelings, and desires.

The headline determines how many prospective customers give your promotion that critical second glance. It creates a mood that makes the sale easier. And it establishes a promise on which you can build not only an immediate sale, but also a long-term business relationship.

Every direct-mail pro who has ever written on the subject has emphasized the importance of headlines. Some legendary copywriters, such as David Ogilvy and



Gene Schwartz, claim that headlines are so important, they merit half your time and attention!

It doesn't matter whether you advertise in newspapers and magazines, on television and radio, or via direct mail – when it comes to starting the selling process, headlines are critical.

## **Lead**

You've just captured your prospect's attention with your masterful headline. Your next step is to deliver the big promise with the lead. The headline puts the hook in your reader's mouth, while a good lead buries it deep – deep into his thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires.

You show the prospect how your product or service will make him richer, smarter, sexier, or more powerful. In other words, you show him what he'll get if he uses your product.

There are many ways to “lead” into your promise. To select and write the correct and best lead requires INTUITION. You cannot figure it out logically!

Following are different types of leads:

**Story** – A well-told story can be extremely effective in captivating your prospect and pulling him deeper into your letter. This is considered an indirect lead.

**Piquing Curiosity** – Present the reader with a provocative question. It signals the reader that he's going to have an intellectually enjoyable read.

**Flattery** – Say something that strokes the prospect's ego. But be careful, this lead works only when it is sincere. Contrived flattery causes the prospect to feel patronized.

**Prediction** – This is another indirect lead. It can be either a single, big prediction or a series of small and medium ones. You create an immediate interest in a subject that you know relates to the sale, but your prospect does not. Thinking about the prediction must fill the prospect with thoughts and feelings appropriate to your intended sale.

**Problem/Solution** – Present a problem and then offer a solution. This is a very direct type of lead. It works when the prospect's desires are obvious. The classic problem/solution lead appears first in the headline, with support in the lead.

**Invitation Letter** – This time-tested format has proven effective for subscriptions, publications, advisory services, and memberships in organizations or clubs. It is critical that your prospect's emotions are stirred in some way as he begins to read. He must be convinced this invitation is for him and that he will receive benefits he cares about.

**Benefit** – Simply open with a promise... a big, fat, whopping promise... a promise that showcases a strong benefit... a promise the prospect thinks is very valuable.

**Straight Offer** – Make a clean, simple, and attractive offer. This works well for products that are more like commodities. There's no difference between the product and the benefit. If a person truly likes to read cookbooks, they'll be interested if you make them an attractive offer regarding a cookbook. Other examples would be diet or language products.

Whichever type of lead you choose, make sure you offer your prospect a promise he can't refuse.

## **The Body**

Here's where you're going to make your case for your product or service.

You'll draw out its many benefits. Prove it can do everything you say it will. And introduce fresh, new ideas.

But to make the "body" really work, you have to do your homework. If you want to uncover the benefits, you have to really know what you're selling. If it's a food product, eat it. If it's an information product, read it over and over and over again – and heed its advice. If it's a service, try it yourself. Think of all the ways it can improve your prospect's life... then load up your letter with benefits.

## **Constructing the Argument**

Now you're ready for the "proof" part of your letter. Here's where you can take off your creative cap for just a bit and start constructing your argument.

What kind of evidence would you need to persuade your prospect? A specific study? Facts and figures? A testimonial from a doctor, a lawyer, or a government official? You need to remember your prospect and dig deep.

How else do you prove what you say? You establish credibility. You use articles, studies, testimonials, or any other "independent" data that supports your argument. You can also cite any degrees, published works, or credentials for someone you are quoting extensively.

## **Subheads**

Subheads draw the reader's eye to your most important copy. The subhead should include a benefit. This benefit will draw the reader into your copy – and that's exactly what you want.

One other comment on subheads: Sprinkle them throughout your letter. Use them in the lead, body, and close.

We've given you a lot of the secrets behind the correct structure of a winning sales letter... but we're not quite done yet.

## **The Close and the P.S.**

You've just proven your case and moved your prospect one giant leap closer to the sale. What's next?

Your next job is to make the call for action.

You're at that point in your letter where there's no turning back. You *must* solidify the buying decision in your prospect's mind. There are four important parts of this process and they are:

Before you reveal the price, you have to remind him of all the wonderful benefits he'll get from your product or service. Or – even better – you could throw in some additional benefits to get him excited.

Then you make the call to action. In crystal-clear terms, tell him what you're offering him in return for a modest payment. Don't try to be cute or clever here.

After you've revealed the price, you've got to prove to your prospect that he's really got nothing to lose by trying your product or service... that all his money will be refunded if he's not happy. That's where your guarantee comes in.

Finally, include a strong P.S. to throw your prospect over the top. The P.S. should introduce a surprise benefit, convey urgency, or offer a special bonus related to what you're selling – often something the prospect keeps even if he cancels, so he stands to gain in the long run.

Important: The P.S. shouldn't be treated as an afterthought. Many readers start with the P.S., so be sure to make it strong.

## **Order Device**

Once the prospect moves to the order device, he has decided to buy. You don't want to impede this process, so your order form should be as clear as possible. You must restimulate his initial desires and eliminate any possible buyer's remorse.

Effective order devices...

- restate benefits
- restate the money-back guarantee
- restate the special bonus (if applicable)

Your copy is designed – or should be designed – to provoke a specific reaction by the reader. Be sure that your response device makes it perfectly clear what steps he needs to take.

Take your time. Study every promotion you receive in your own mail. Then ask these questions: Does the order device accomplish all three of the tasks mentioned

above? How easy is it to read? When you try to “fill it out,” do you move effortlessly through the form or are you confused anywhere? A confused mind says “no.” And you want the prospect saying “yes.”

## **Envelope**

As we said before, there is a rule in the marketing world that the copywriter should spend as much time on the headline as he spends on the rest of the copy put together. This actually makes a lot of sense, because coming up with a great headline is really figuring out the fundamental selling proposition of the ad.

Well, the same thing can be said about the envelope teaser (i.e., “the envelope copy”) for a direct-mail package. You’ll also want to spend time figuring out the right words for this all-important copy. Because... it’s sometimes been said that the sole purpose of an envelope teaser is to get the prospect to open the envelope. (Of course, while this is certainly an objective, it’s not the only one.)

Warning: Don’t make a big promise with the envelope teaser and then forget about it. To keep your prospect moving forward, make sure that the teaser ties into the headline or lead of the package.

## **Double-Check Your Sales Letter**

Chances are you’ll be able to strengthen your sales letter significantly simply by measuring it against this 11-point checklist. It won’t take long, yet the results could be significant.

1. Is your headline great? Eight out of 10 people read headline copy. Fewer than two in 10 read the letter itself. Good headlines can easily double response.

2. Every sales letter succeeds or fails on the basis of its primary promise – the one big benefit it offers. If you get that right, you are more than halfway home. To come up with a killer benefit as your primary promise, you need to spend a lot of time thinking about your prospect’s wants, thoughts, and feelings in relation to the product/service you are selling. What is the core emotion/idea that will get him really interested?

3. Make sure your letter looks like a letter – a single column in reasonably large typewriter-type, with a salutation and a signature.

4. Write in the first and second person (“I” and “you”).

5. Your tone of voice should be sincere; your conversational style, personal and polite.

6. Most of your letter should be about your reader. Stress user benefits over product benefits.

7. Make your first paragraph very strong and very short.

8. Show, don’t tell. If you want to drive your point home – and home means “to the heart” – tell a story that illustrates it. Rather than making the rational case – listing 22 reasons your prospect should do as you say – tell him one or two really compelling stories. Create a little mental movie for him that dramatizes the most important point... and you’ll have him hooked deep in the emotional tissue of his decision-making mind.

9. Use a “false close.” When you’ve finished selling, begin to close the letter and then begin again by presenting another benefit. It reassures your prospect to think that he’s getting more than what he was prepared to pay for.

10. Keep it current. References to recent (relevant) events remind your prospect that your letter is current.

11. Use a strong P.S. Studies show that next to headlines, postscripts are most often read. Put plenty of time and thought into composing a very good one.

You now have a foundation of copywriting skills... and the start down a path to a new lifestyle of potentially unlimited income and tremendous personal freedom.

But like anything new, it does take time and practice to master it. And if you have decided that copywriting is for you and you want to boost your chances of success tremendously, you can send for our complete program:

## The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting

This comprehensive program is 457 pages exploring every detail of the craft in great depth, along with practice assignments and more details on how to find and land clients.

### “The Best Program on Copywriting... Ever”

Robert Bly, author of over 60 books on writing and marketing, including the best-selling *Copywriter's Handbook*, said: “This is the best program on copywriting I have ever seen anywhere in any form. Anyone who wants to get into direct-response copywriting would benefit enormously from taking it...”

Over the years the program has been updated, revised, and retooled. Now it's easier than ever to learn the art of copywriting, thanks to some new, exciting, and innovative teaching techniques that ensure the most crucial lessons of the program stick like glue in your mind.

- Right off the bat, you'll be eased into the life of a copywriter. You'll learn what the copywriting business is all about... what you need to get started... what the industry expects from you (and what you can expect from it)... how you get paid... and more.
- You'll learn a fast and sure-fire system for having all your research and letter-writing ammunition organized and at your fingertips... as well as one master's technique for getting to know the product you're selling even better than the people who created it.
- You'll learn how to write masterful headlines that grab your readers' attention and force them to keep on reading.
- You'll learn the secret to a super-powered lead – an opening so irresistible that your reader will want to buy what you're selling after reading the first two pages.
- You'll learn the secret of “The Four-Legged Stool.” Use it faithfully and you'll never write a bad letter in your career.

- You'll learn in even greater detail "The Architecture of Persuasion" – the innovative technique for knowing how every successful letter needs to be structured... and the surest way to lead your reader to the sale.
- You'll learn how to "speak" directly to your reader... and show that you truly care about his or her worries, needs, and wants. It's amazing how many letters don't do this – and that's why most of them fail.
- You'll learn how to critique your own work... along with a "power-editing" technique that will guarantee your letter is the strongest it can be, time after time.
- You'll learn the secret to creating powerful "bullet" copy... purposeful subheads... eye-catching envelope copy... and an order form that's virtually assured to clinch the sale.
- Although professional artists design your letters, you'll learn the key elements of winning graphics – and the biggest design mistakes that can sabotage even the best copy.
- You'll learn the one thing you can do to guarantee your first assignment with a major company. (This little trick for getting your foot in the door never, ever fails!)
- You'll learn how to get yourself "seeded" – so you can see everything that's mailing... and know what's working and what's not.
- You'll learn how to get on all the best industry mailing lists... so you'll always know what's "hot" in the mail... who's hiring... and who the up-and-coming players are. (Will you be one of them?)
- You'll even learn how to set up your very own direct-mail operation, if that's what you'd like to do!

You'll learn all these and many, many more powerful writing secrets, selling techniques, and masterful insights into the art of persuasion... from some of the best copywriting minds in the business.



And just listen to some of the people who have hired our clients – like Jenny Thompson, COO of Agora Health Publishing:

*“I’m always looking for strong copywriters to recruit new subscribers and sell products. I can never have too many good writers in my Rolodex. I’ve seen this program and I can tell you that anyone who successfully completes it is someone I want to talk to about writing for me.”*

Brian Sodi, whose company specializes in financial products, wrote:

*“Top copywriters are critical to my success – and most of the freelance copywriters I use are AWAI members. I am much more comfortable hiring new writers if they have taken the AWAI program.”*

James DiGeorgia of DiGeorgia & Associates, publisher of *21st Century Investor*, writes:

*“As publisher of 5 newsletters with tens of thousands of customers worldwide, I’m constantly looking for writers. It’s not unusual for me to pay \$2,000, \$3,000, even \$8,000 for a single letter if I know it will bring in money for my company. As a copywriter myself, I know AWAI’s program is good. Anyone who completes the program and can write a strong sales letter can always work with me.”*

And Bill Bonner, president of Agora Publishing, says:

*“I’m always looking for more copywriters – lots more. There just aren’t enough to write the hundreds of letters my company needs written every year. And I’m not alone. The whole industry needs copywriters. That’s why I’m thrilled my friends and colleagues put together this copywriting program. It is by far the most comprehensive program I’ve seen on the subject. In fact, I’ve made a special arrangement with AWAI. I’ve asked them to send the most promising students my way first. So far, my publishers are working with more than a dozen students who have come from this program.”*

These are just a few of the letters we receive from clients and those who use our clients. More arrive every week.

Also, as a member of **The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting**, you'll immediately start receiving your FREE subscription to *The Golden Thread* – our weekly e-letter featuring writing tips, advice, student profiles... and, yes, JOB OPPORTUNITIES. *The Golden Thread* will educate and motivate you. And it will be just one of many sources for finding paying assignments when the time comes for you to start writing for money.

You'll also be given a password to access AWAI's Members-Only Website – where you can pick up even more tips and strategies... check out the latest job list... or find past issues of *The Golden Thread*. This is also where you'll find the AWAI "Member Forum," where members meet and talk about their new copywriting careers, build friendships, and form copy circles and buddy programs. It's a great place for like-minded people to meet and share ideas.

Plus, there's our new and expanded online Job Board. As mentioned, AWAI is more and more becoming the place the industry turns to for copywriters to write the volume of letters that need to be written. At first, we could handle it by sending you the information through our website and *The Golden Thread*. But as the industry's demand for letters grew – and the reputation of our program and the clients who finish it got stronger – we knew it was high time for there to be one place where our growing list of marketers could place their job ads one day... and have a writer in place the next. As an AWAI member, you'll have full exclusive access to this service – and it's FREE!

So if you're at a point in your life right now where you're just not happy with the job you're in... with the money you make... or the strains and stress that come with the typical work-a-day life...

Then we'd love to see you give **The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting** a try.

## Just \$39 Can Get You Started...

You can enroll in the program for just \$39. We'll send you everything you need to get started – including the first 14 sections of the program... your first writing assignment... your email subscriptions to *The Golden Thread* and *Early to Rise*... and, of course, your invaluable “Hall of Fame” book packed with some of the most successful sales letters of all time.

## ...And There's No Risk to You!

Take 30 days to look it all over. Start working on the program if you like.

If it's not everything you imagined – or if you happen to decide copywriting just isn't for you – return the materials within those 30 days and we'll send you your \$39 back... no questions asked.

But if you like what you see – and you're ready to begin your new copywriting career – you'll receive the rest of the program in 12 monthly installments at \$39 each, billed to your credit card.

This is a very real opportunity to earn a marketable skill that can earn you a nice six-figure income for the rest of your life. And now you can get started for less than the cost of a meal in a restaurant!

So if you're ready to “retire” to a lifestyle that's richer, freer, and infinitely more rewarding... get **The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting** today.

Remember, there's no risk – and if you stick with it, your very first letter could be the next one we send out... along with a \$10,000 check in your name.

To enroll, simply call Barb, Pat or Debbie toll-free at 866-879-2924, or visit us online at <http://www.thewriterslife.com/copywritingcareer>.

We hope you join us on this exciting and lucrative journey!

And if you have any doubt as to how much our members love this program – and the service we provide – look no further than the impeccable record we have with the

Better Business Bureau. You can obtain a report on **American Writers & Artists Inc.** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by visiting [www.bbbsoutheastflorida.org](http://www.bbbsoutheastflorida.org). Or you can call the Better Business Bureau directly at 561-842-1918.