



A quick Q & A.

Q: *Why do I need a professional copywriter?*

A: You don't...

...if you know how to create a message that stands out;
...if you know how to use words to grab attention and sell;
...if you can communicate clearly the benefits of your product;
...if you have the time to ignore the jobs you're paid to do.

A professional copywriter makes his living using words in the most effective way. He or she is a sales person with a computer keyboard.

A professional copywriter knows how to make the message relevant to the audience and how to emphasise the benefits that matter most.

Quite simply, a professional copywriter will write it better than you can.

Q: *Why should I choose you?*

A: You want someone with a proven track record in successful copy.

A facility with words is only one tool in the copywriter's workbench. I said in my first answer that a copywriter is a sales person and that is true. All the finest writing in the world is useless to you if it fails in its primary task. Do you want copy that wins awards or copy that increases your sales? (Of course I like to think that my copy could do both but the emphasis must remain on sales every time.) My experience, allied with my ability to understand how and why copy succeeds and fails, guarantees that my copy will make a positive difference.

The bulk of my new business comes through word of mouth, with clients either seeing examples of my work and asking an agency for



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the name of the copywriter or asking for a recommendation from a business partner whose communications material they admire.

In the majority of cases, the relationship I establish with a new client lasts beyond the initial project.

Q: *What's your background?*

A: My professional life has been as varied as the copy I now write. I've been a civil servant, a farm hand, a teacher, a book seller, and a TV script writer. The bulk of my time since leaving university, however, was spent at Reuters, for whom I worked in the UK, Europe, the US, and Asia.

On the technical side I have worked at all levels within IT, from programming, through systems design, to managing development, support, and implementation teams.

In terms of writing accreditation, I'm a member of both the NUJ (National Union of Journalists) and the WGGB (Writers' Guild of Great Britain).

Q: *What types of copy do you write?*

A: The quick answer to that is, "Whatever you need."

If it needs writing, then I can write it. That said, the bulk of my assignments tend to be for sales brochures, usually for industrial or high-tech clients. I also receive an increasing number of requests to create web site copy for a range of clients across the full spectrum of market sectors.

Since turning freelance in 1997, there are few writing assignments that I have not tackled. So, whether you need:

- copy for a magazine or radio ad
- a feature article
- a speech
- a script for a slide presentation or a CD/DVD



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- a press release
- a newsletter
- a case history
- an annual report
- a technical manual

– you can be sure I'll handle it.

The copy you receive from me will be clear, genuine, and persuasive, no matter the subject matter and regardless of a product's complexity.

Q: *Have you ever written copy for my sort of product?*

A: It's certainly possible that I have never written about the product you sell or even about the industry sector in which you work. Then again, before I wrote my first piece for Vodafone I had never written about mobile phones.

The point is, of course, that I have a wide experience on which to draw, if and when I encounter new products or markets. On top of that, my first task whenever I receive a new brief is research: I will find out as much as I can about your product or service, its benefits and features, and its intended target audience or market. (I'm a quick study and I have a technical background that serves me well when I have to grasp complex or sophisticated products and markets in a short time.)

Then, depending on the format of the materials you need – be it a sales brochure, a direct mail piece, or a press release, for instance – I will convey the necessary message in the manner best suited to its purpose.

When it comes down to it, you want a piece of copy that will lead to greater sales.

Q: *Do you have terms and conditions?*

A: Not many.



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When we first discuss the project I'll give you an estimate of the time I think it will take me and the cost, based on that estimate. For smaller projects, costs include the initial briefing – whether by phone or in a face-to-face meeting – an initial draft of the copy and two complete rewrites, if required. Minor revisions are always free of charge, provided they are requested within a reasonable time of the draft being submitted and do not reflect a change from the original brief.

For larger projects, I tend to quote a price that should include all meetings and work on the copy. When the project costs are estimated at over £2,500 and this is the first time we've worked together, I usually ask that half the money is paid up front.

I prefer to receive a purchase order before commencing work and I will submit my invoice on confirmation that the work done is acceptable or within thirty days of the delivery of a draft and no request for changes is forthcoming. As with all small businesses, I stipulate terms of thirty days for payment but resign myself to being thrilled when payment is received within ninety.

Q: *What should I do now?*

A: Call me or mail me.

If you want to ask some more questions or discuss some copywriting needs, just get in touch using the details below. We can talk on the phone or arrange a meeting: it's your choice.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks for taking the time to download and read this article. I hope you've found it useful. If you have any comments or questions about the article feel free to email me at the address below.

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