

Let's Schmooze

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The Various Aspects of Copywriting

There's a lot of copywriting going on today. Plenty of people need to produce written materials, but don't want to ~ or can't ~ do it themselves. That's where the copywriter comes in ~ a professional writer who crafts "copy" for someone else, usually for a negotiated fee. The act of "crafting" is thought of as creating written copy with both professional skills and consummate attention to detail.

Some everyday examples ~

A **merchandiser** needs to advertise a product line, but is not good at crafting winning advertisements, or commercials ~ marketing that will persuade consumers to buy the products. A professional copywriter will craft advertisements designed to increase sales.

A **personnel manager** needs to generate an employee manual, but has no idea how to organize the material and draft the document. A professional copywriter will draft that employee manual for clarity and ease-of-use.

An **elected official** needs to come up with a speech that will convince the audience to go along with some proposals, but has no idea of what wording to use, or how to organize the arguments. A professional copywriter will organize the arguments and craft a speech designed to sway the audience.

A **web master** needs to refresh a standing web site. The web master will handle the redesign and updated graphics, but needs new text written to complement and enhance the rejuvenation effort. A professional copywriter will rewrite the web text to decisively engage the web audience.

An **entrepreneur** wants to develop a business plan for a new venture. The plan has to garner the approval of potential investors, creditors, and vendors. A professional copywriter will write a business plan that will prompt new stakeholders to invest and participate in the new venture.

A **retiree** desires to write a book of memoirs, but doesn't have the slightest idea of how to present the life experiences in a compelling manner. A professional copywriter will "ghost" a publishable book that has a chance at The New York Times Best Seller List.

In the copywriting exercise, it is important that the professional copywriter (1) take the time to make sure that everything that really needs to be thought about is actually addressed and considered, (2) provide results that are purposeful and comprehensive, rather than fast and off-the-cuff, and (3) craft focused copy that hits the nail on the head and gets the job done.

Copy writing can be thought of as having four distinct aspects ~ services, styles, tasking, and venues:

Services can include:

- ▶ situation analysis ~ of the immediate need
- ▶ background research ~ to explore any and all possibilities
- ▶ issue framing ~ to establish task guidelines
- ▶ market research ~ to determine an optimum fit
- ▶ audience targeting ~ to maximize efficiency of the message

Styles can vary:

- ▶ journalistic ~ inverted pyramid prioritization
- ▶ scholarly ~ objective, thesis driven, impersonal
- ▶ descriptive ~ a picture in words
- ▶ rambling ~ informal, extremely relaxed
- ▶ persuasive ~ convincing, funneling, actionable
- ▶ conversational ~ present-oriented, first|second tensing
- ▶ expository ~ informational, explanatory
- ▶ narrative ~ story-telling, time-oriented

Tasking can involve:

- ▶ proofreading ~ spelling, grammar, syntax
- ▶ editing ~ proofreading + reorganize, tighten
- ▶ revising ~ editing + restyle, update, refresh, evergreen
- ▶ creating ~ generate new, original content
- ▶ researching ~ locate source data

Venues can be wide-ranging:

- ▶ personal communications ~ e-mails, memos, letters
- ▶ persuasive messaging ~ advertising, branding
- ▶ blogs, articles, newsletters, books ~ mainly informative
- ▶ grant solicitations ~ for both private & public funding
- ▶ resumes ~ often with reticulated cover letters
- ▶ papers & reports ~ generally internal to a select audience
- ▶ web sites ~ designing, constructing, maintaining, retooling
- ▶ social media ~ curating, optimizing, updating

Copy-writing ~ or old-fashioned "word smithing" ~ can be very rewarding, both personally and financially. For a wide range of reasons, there are hordes of people that need and want a professional writer to organize their thoughts, and reduce those thoughts to useful written words, or copy.

Professional copywriting is "old-fashioned craftsmanship" at its very best ~ and one of the few arenas left in modern-day life that hasn't been taken over by rote machine production.

~ 'til we meet again ~