Thank You for downloading *The Business Of Content*!

You're probably a busy person, so I will keep this short and to the point. I want to give you a good head start before you dive any deeper into content management freelancing. So, without further ado, I'd like to get you started.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Writing For Marketing

Writing an ebook and making a sales page for it is only half the struggle. If you want to make money in the information product industry – primarily: ebooks, PDF reports, case studies, and more – marketing will be your biggest hurdle. How do you push your product, especially in a competitive niche? A lot of popular niches have already been exploited; it's "somebody else's" territory. Finding a unique approach to pushing for more sales can be very difficult and stressful.

The truth is, it's the packaging that sells your goodies. You may have compiled the most comprehensive report in the history of whatever your topic is. Indeed, it could be a groundbreaking product. But without a "bright package," no one will even bother looking at it. Think: even if you invented the most delicious candy bar in the world, a neighborhood wouldn't know about it unless it had a flashy wrapper. The same applies in e-commerce. Even subtle things like the way you word your sales pitch page can make or break your killer ad.

One must-have item for any ebook product is a cover. With a network of Clickbank products overloaded with cliché pictures of successful businessmen, money flying around and big cars, they're supposed to symbolize the riches that you'll gain from whatever business ebook is being offered to you. If, for example, you're buying an informational product on selling real estate, the cover is likely to have some fancy mansion on the cover. These are SO cliché. Every ebook product cover needs to be fresh and original. You want to offer your buyers something that no other website offers their clients. This is tailored individually to whatever ebook you're selling, and guess what… the words written over top is what will steer your message one way or another.

Speaking of steering, another must-have items for any information product are action verbs. There's a reason why all ebook sales page websites use them: they work. Action verbs psychologically steer you to take a certain action. In your case, you want to part your client with his money in exchange for a copy of your digital product. How do you do that? Offer a solution to their problem. Then tell them how the solution works, and why it will work; add a valuable promise of the future, and you have success. That's why they're there to buy your book. The trick is to let your web viewers know that you have this answer without giving it to them until they pay for your digital information product. And it's NOT so difficult.

Yet another important point to consider when writing your sales pitch page: your competition. Do this. Take a piece of paper, a pen, and look up your competitor's websites. Make a list of 3 to 10 competitors, depending on how much competition there is. Write down what action verbs they use, as well as what approach they take to luring in customers. Scribble any notes that you may find helpful. This will take you an hour or two at the most, but you'll get the best understanding of your opponents in the industry. You'll learn what they're selling, and how they're doing it. Knowing your competition is vital in any marketing campaign.

Since July of 2007, I've made over $15,000 online. My primary source of income is a telecommuting job that requires little away-from-computer involvement, but hey - it's still online income. Over the last few months, I've come to a revelation about content creation. It's my version of the so-called "divine truth to writing," so to speak.

Writing has to make sense.

What I mean by that is, your business plan has to have no guess work. Either you have writing that works, or you don't. In short, what that stands for is, a plan like "If A happens, then you better hope that B and C bring X amount of dollars, THEN your endeavor will be a success" is a fail. Your business plan, or your sales pitch, or your advertising, HAS to work on paper in order to succeed in life.

Your plan has to make sense. All guesswork has to be eliminated. Either it makes sense, or it doesn't. Lose one part of good writing (sentence fluency, spelling, punctuation…) and suddenly there's someone out there better than you. There are so many pieces that belong in a good article that it's no wonder most get lost! Either way you look at it, writing and management skills are all a part of business success.

The BIG Idea In Article Writing

Perhaps I'm confused, but it seems like a lot of creative people chase projects no matter how much their client is willing to pay them. If you're of legal working age – especially if you're a content creator – read on. To enlighten fellow writers, here is the big any other industry or business:

FIGURE OUT HOW MUCH YOU'RE WORTH PER HOUR.

An hour is a commonly accepted unit of time for which you can get paid. It's all math, no sleigh of hand or trickery. To figure this out - as with my previous thread in the Copywriting forum - there's a formula:

[Your Fixed Financial Need] + [Your Desired Profit] / [Hours] = Your Hourly Net Worth

Net worth = money after any applicable taxes. There's not much theory behind this, it's just commonly overlooked; there's money that you NEED to earn, then what you WANT to earn for fun/savings/other expenditures, and bam - that's your worth.

For instance: mortgage/rent ($1000), food ($400), transportation payments ($300), miscellaneous expenses ($300) - this adds up to a hypothetical need of $2k [let's assume that's monthly]. Now, on top of that, you want to earn $500 because you like traveling and want to save up for a vacation. Do the math, and your worth is a total of $2,500.

Now, figure out how much time you work a month. Most people work 40-hour weeks, so a month is about 160 hours. Therefore, your hourly net worth is $2,500 / 160 hours = $15.63 per hour. If you live in the US and get approximately 30% of your paycheck's total subtracted for taxes, then that means your official pay must be right around $20-$21/hr.

As an article writer, your job is to figure out how to make that, but that's not what this thread is about. However, taking 5 minutes to do this will HELP you figure that out. Going back to our total-need-is-$2,500-a-month model: If you know that a 500-word article takes you a half an hour to write, and your hourly net worth is $15.63, then you better ask for $8 for that content today, or else you won't be able to feed and clothe yourself tomorrow. If a 10-page web site takes you a week, then that's 40 hours of work, which is worth at least $625.

It's all math, folks.

3 Reasons Why The World Demands Unfiltered Content
(And Why They Will Never See It)

The world wants filter-free Internet, and it wants it NOW!

With controversial, yet legal sites like WikiLeaks and even YouTube being blocked by various governments (specifically in Asia), it's no wonder that civil liberties groups are protesting this content filtering. Internet Service Providers and even government agencies around the world don't want certain eyes to see certain things, and they use their position of authority to their full advantage. On the other hand, democratically-minded people stand behind the free flow of information, and seldom accept any type of data monitoring as acceptable – in fact, they're doing the right thing by supporting filter-free Internet.

As a result, a number of massive protests that demand filter-free Internet have occurred. Why? Because by forcing people to be exposed to a certain bias by pulling the Internet strings, the "puppeteer" can steer a whole continent's opinion any way he wants. This article will look at top 3 reasons why the world demands filter-free access to the web, and why this same world will never see it.

1) Ability To Protest

Let's face it: political relations don't always go well in China, Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries. When something major happens that the public doesn't like, the government tries to hide it. They also try to hide the fact that they hid it in the first place! Those who are smart enough to figure out what's going on want to keep digging for the truth, and once they find out that it's not so pleasant (see the 2009 Ürümqi riots or the Green Dam Youth Escort) they want to protest.

Well, the problem is, they will never be able to protest what they don't know is happening. And people who are liberal enough to consider Internet to be a free-for-all type of thing (you know... kind of how it was intended to be) deserve it. However, their government doesn't think so.

2) E-Commerce & General Business Benefits

When the flow of information isn't routed a certain way just because it suits a dictator's wishes, innovation can happen. By allowing e-commerce sites to sell goods and services freely, everyone benefits (if you have a laissez-faire mindset, that is). Asian vendors aren't idiots: they know how to analyze demographics, too, so they also know of the population boom in their region. Everyone who's ever dealt with business management knows that more people = more potential leads, so why would businesses favor content filtering? They don't. Even American giants like Google and GoDaddy.com have publically declared their stance for freedom of information. Perhaps there's financial gains to be made by doing this... or perhaps not: consider Microsoft and Yahoo who have caved in to the demands of the Chinese. Only time will tell who's playing their cards right in terms of getting Asian business.

Unfortunately, these countries that don't think that general business welfar is good for their country. This is one way Communism remains strong – as a country, the government must oppose what doesn't fit the regime. Sharing ideas can be dangerous when you're trying to brainwash people (for more info, look up "North Korea" on Wikipedia), where too many innovative ideas can break the illusion of being a superior nation. Certain governments want their people to keep believing that – because, in a sense, these leaders are brainwashed enough to believe this themselves. After all, Asians are scared by democracy just like the Soviets used to be; in their eyes, free elections are evil, and following this same train of thought, so is the free flow of data.

3) Fair Playing Field For Media Outlets

One of the big controversies is media content filtering. People who support filter-free Internet want foreign countries to allow unrestricted access to any and all news, versus filtering content coming from entire countries or particular news networks. Here, the idea for support of a filter-free online world is that "just because you disagree doesn't mean it's wrong." Of course, if you're Hu Jintao or Kim Jong-Il, it IS wrong: if you disagree, then what you say is what goes. That's just how it works when you live in a dictatorship.

One point to consider is that there's not necessarily a lack of recourse from these Internet-filtering policies; change CAN be done. However, it's very unlikely. A protest or two won't do much productive work in the long run – they'll just cause more controversy. You need more than that to bring about change. Those who assert their power can only go one of two ways: if you're a leader who doesn't want to be a push-over, then once you introduce Internet filters in your legislation (however wrong that may be), there is no recourse. It becomes a political game, and it's not one where regular every-day citizens like you and me have an advantage.

Another reason that some parts of the world will continue filtering parts of the Web is because it's not a controversial enough issue. Think: would the United States go to war with China because the Chinese refuse to let their people see the Internet in its entirety? Probably not. And that's why the world demands a filter-free Internet… but they will never see it.

The world cares, but it doesn't care enough. Without significant action, nothing that's of much importance will occur in terms of reversing these Internet filter policies. How much you care is balanced out by how much it doesn't matter… and that's what's so scary about this whole controversy.

* Published for Tyler Banfield.

My Personal Top 3 Tips Of Proofreading Your Sales Copy

This article is for all copywriters who are looking to improve their existing services to their clients. I'd like to discuss the topic of proofreading. Most people only pay attention to obvious grammatical / spelling errors, overlooking many other blunders. Hopefully, my advice will help you no matter if you're copywriting for a client, or for yourself - the end result will be a better, higher-converting sales copy.

3 THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHILE PROOFREADING:

- Proper formatting
- Misplaced sentences
- An opportunity to insert a powerful headline

Appealing formatting will make the overall effect of the sales letter more professional and sharp. Sentences that are indented in one paragraph but not in another, for example, can throw a reader off. Using every color of the rainbow in every highlighted headline gets to be annoying, also; sticking to a brief color scheme is a must.

Misplaced sentences are sentences that would make more sense or provide higher impact on the reader in another place. Perhaps you need to shift it up or down a paragraph, or cut it and paste it in an altogether separate section of the sales pitch. Look for opportunities to focus your reader on one point at a time.

An opportunity to insert a powerful headline arises when you have boring paragraphs after paragraphs of text. Just straight lines of sentences, one paragraph, then another, then another... it gets frustrating to read, and the reader is forced to skim. You don't want that; you want the reader to see everything that you've got to say. A good headline can serve as a nice break between two separate parts of a sales page.

Please feel free to discuss my tactics in this thread. Thanks for reading!

The Unique Formula That I Use – Works Every Time

Before I start, I want to point out that I'm NOT selling you anything here. I wanted to write an article for DP only; perhaps it'll enlighten you to my easy 5-step copywriting method and I hope you'll learn something from it. Why pay $97+ for an ebook when you can learn from my experience - not theory - *for free?* In this thread, there are no tricks, no secrets, and no sales pitches to you the reader - just my experiences and consequent advice. Personally, what I'm about to discuss comes to me on autopilot: I just take it as common sense now a days, so I hope that my tips will help someone out there!

So a little bit about myself: I'm a student at UMD, and I've been here on DP for a few years now. I've done various things like graphic design and general web development, but lately I found my niche to be content creation (articles, web pages) and **copywriting**. It's my favorite because it makes me more money, and as a student I'm in constant need of rent, food, and entertainment money (not to mention tuition!)

I charge $6 per 100 words, but I discount it to $5 per 100 words for DP members. I also offer repeat-buyer discounts to encourage my clients to work with me instead of paying a lower premium elsewhere; that way I develop a personal relationship with someone who keeps sending me more and more work, which is what I want! 😊

I've made probably about 10 copies that I'd consider professional, and every time I write a new one I learn something new. I am by no means a true expert yet, because there is certainly someone out there with more versatility, more experience, and more know-how, but I do want to share something special with you - as a way to show my appreciation for all the business that I've found on DP.

There are many guides out there on how to make that "Killer Copy," and I've never bought a single one of those. All the information you need can be found online, for free - you just have to look for a bit. When it comes to copywriting, it's way different from article writing, but you already know that: your purpose is to SELL a product, not to INFORM about it. Selling someone something requires a call to action, rather than just fluid sentences that make you interested in a product.

Here is my personal formula for a great copy that won't only satisfy your copy buyer, but will also help that buyer pay for itself through sales on his site. This, in turn, will bring you repeat business from the same clientele.

1) Get as many details from your client before you even begin thinking about what to write.
Before, I found myself rushing to get to writing before I even knew what I needed to

accomplish. A lot of low-charging writers say, "here's an ebook, let's throw some catchy headlines and hopefully the client will like it." Besides the basics like the name of the product and its author, I usually ask for this information before I even draft an outline of the sales page:
- Who is your target audience?
- Can you send me any applicable graphics?
- How much will you be selling the product for?
- Do you have any authentic testimonials for me to use?
- Can I see a copy of the product to familiarize myself with what I'm trying to sell to your visitors?
- Are there any particular things that you want me to include? Any bonus products?
- Will you be offering a specific money back guarantee?
- Who will be your payment processor?
Other questions may apply based on the particular product that you need to promote. I've written on topics ranging from get-rich-quick schemes to male enhancement pills; as you could imagine, I would need different ideas from each individual client before I can get a sense of what they want to see, what their buyers need to know before buying, and how I can tweak that information to make them buy it.

2) Make a rough draft of the outline
Remember what they taught us in English class in high school? I knew I should have paid attention, and I'm glad I did: an outline does half of your work for you. This is the brainstorming stage. This is the point of the outline - you're getting your ideas down, before you actually put time and effort into copywriting. The format is simple:

I. Introductions
  i. First main idea
    a. Point one
    b. Point two
  ii. Second main idea
    a. Point one
    b. Point two
...
...
II. Sales Pitch Body
  i. First main idea
    a. Point one
    b. Point two
  ii. Second main idea
    a. Point one
    b. Point two
...
...
III. Closure
  i. First main idea
    a. Point one
    b. Point two
  ii. Second main idea
    a. Point one

   b. Point two
…
…

Things you want to do in your intro: introduce the topic and briefly highlight the short-term benefits of the product, establish author credibility, and tell a personal story of success using the product. The point is to glue your readers' eyes to the page, and keep them there until they read through everything and decide whether they want to buy or not to buy.

Things you want to do in your sales pitch body: discuss the details of the product, make an email form to build a list of laser-targeted leads for later use, list product testimonials, and pitch the price and money-back guarantee.

Things you want to do in your closure: reinforce the message of success, strengthen buyer confidence by repeating the money back guarantee, and offer them to buy the product. Allow them to sign up for the mailing list if they are unsure about buying yet. 😊

After your outline is done, send it to your client for approval. Ask them for their honest opinion and suggestions for changes. In 90% of the cases, they will point out something that you missed, or something that needs to go because they dislike it. This doesn't make you an insecure writer, which is what other writers might think - it actually does the opposite. By discussing the clients' needs, you appear as a provider of a professional, responsible service - which is what you are!

3) Confirm the outline
Have it set in stone before you begin drafting your ideas. This will provide a clear understanding between you and the client as to what's expected of you, and what the client is expected to pay for.

4) Sales brainstorming
Now that you have a good understanding of the product, you need to separate fact from fiction. All sales involve a bit of BS, and your job is to make it look authentic. Here's what I do: I make a list of 30 unique catch-phrases, slogans, or headlines (call them what you want), and "sleep on them." What I mean by that is, I come up with the ideas over the course of the day, or before going to bed, and then review them in the afternoon the following day. Sleeping legitimately helps you sort your thoughts out, and get a fresh look at things when you wake up. So from those 30 ideas, I pick my 10 favorites. I send those to my client and ask him which ones he likes best. If he doesn't like any, then guess what - you have 20 more to impress him with 😊 A bit of effort a day ahead puts you days ahead of the curve in terms of the writing process!

Isn't that pretty cool?

5) Writing, re-writing, and re-writing again
You want your copy to be between 1,100 and 1,500 words. Different products will require different text size, so ask your client about what they're looking for. Here on DP, I run a special for this forum members only - a full copy for just $150 flat, up to 2,000 words. I can usually bargain with the buyer a bit, sometimes as low as $100-$120, but I think one-fifty a fair price for my services: similar agencies with trained professionals charge thousands on the end, and I can do the same work for a fraction of the price.

Editing your rough draft of the sales copy is key. The more times you do it, the better it'll be, I guarantee it. In theory, I never deliver my "BEST" sales copy final, because if I proof read it again, I would probably be able to improve it.

Copywriting is a great endeavor for me. Keeping my client's budget and word count in mind, from start to finish, I tend to spend about 8-12 hours on one copy. Do the math, and that ends up being 15 bucks an hour for work from home - not too bad for a Business student in college, AND I get experience in writing and sales at the same time 😋

So, that's the beginning to my formula, everyone. Simple, time-tested, and proven to get you money if you put effort into getting the word out about your services. Just get in the habit of being honest, communicating quickly, and delivering on deadlines, and you'll be getting clients by word of mouth like I have been for the past... I don't know... I'd say, 6-8 months?