



3 Reasons Your Business *Needs* A Freelance Copywriter

By Erin Huffstutter

Copywriter, business writer, brand communicator, wordsmith...whatever you call it, your small business needs one.

Copywriters are sounding boards and word specialists all wrapped into one. Ideally, they've had years of experience working in the advertising, marketing and business fields. Freelance copywriters can be of particular use to small business owners because of that magic word: freelance. Translation? They're flexible, charge on a per-project basis and work within your unique time constraints and budget (a great boon for small businesses, indeed!)

The challenge to hiring a great freelance copywriter often isn't for lack of supply. Rather, it's convincing yourself – the independent, hardworking do-it-yourselfer – that despite your vast business acumen, a marketing writer you are not.

(It has to be said there are a lot of people in the world who “aced” English class and *still* shouldn't be writing their own website, brochure, print ad or commercial copy. It's a specialty, folks!)

To help wean you off the pen in favor of some expert help, we've come up with the top three reasons to hire a freelance copywriter. Let the white knuckling begin:

1) THEY CAN DO IT FASTER, SHORTER, BETTER

The problem isn't that you aren't well spoken or passionate about the “ins and outs” of your business. You are! But as a whole, business owners tend to be very wordy – thinking *every* tiny aspect of your product/service is as

interesting to the customer as it is to you. (It's not). Customers do not respond well to clutter.

A skilled freelance copywriter doesn't just write the words. They fully develop a brand identity for your business. This is a *big* deal and not to be taken lightly. Copywriters take your pages upon pages of text and edit it down to only the most delicious morsels of consumer-friendly, brand-relevant information. Making every facet of your marketing message faster, shorter and, ultimately, better.

2) THEY MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

Non-professional copy isn't just costing you customers. It's a tremendous time-sucker. As you struggle for hours or days to perfectly craft your own marketing verbiage, what other more-important jobs aren't you doing? After all, you didn't get into this business, *your* business, to write. Wouldn't your time be better spent crunching numbers, following up calls, checking inventory or brainstorming a new market to enter? Be honest.

Freelance copywriters are great because they're usually just a phone call away and highly available to turn copy on a moment's notice. (Even better, those writing projects that took you days to finish will take a skilled copywriter no more than a matter of hours). Need a last-minute press release to get the word out about a new product? Keep your copywriter's number handy and with one quick call, the news is flowing.

3) THEY OFTEN DROP PEARLS OF WISDOM, FOR FREE

Remember when we said that qualified copywriters have a background working for ad agencies and marketing firms? Well, that *really* benefits you, the small business owner, because copywriters work closely with marketing managers, graphic designers, printers and media consultants. Through so much exposure to this fount of expertise, copywriters pick up a thing or two – and often don't fully realize the wealth of knowledge they hold.

Once you've established a relationship with your freelance copywriter, ask them questions, *lots* of questions, about all things marketing. (Is it cheaper to print four-color or two? Where can I post my press release? How much would a local cable buy cost? Do you have any “outside the box” suggestions to help promote my business?) Even if they don't have the

answer to all your questions, they can most likely point you to someone who does.

So, armed with your three good reasons, are you ready to find your own freelance copywriter? Not so fast. As you call around and interview writers, there are a few things you should always look for.

First, your copywriter *must* be a good listener. If the prospective writer is doing more yakking than listening, politely end the call and move on. The last thing your business needs is another chef in the kitchen.

Secondly, make sure the copywriter agrees to send you a detailed project estimate before each and every project. This is just good business and a copywriter worth his/her salt will not fight you on this! Nothing stings like relying on a vague verbal estimate, only to pony up for an invoice that's twice what was expected.

Lastly, make sure your freelance copywriter is flexible, knowledgeable and willing to work with you and your input. You don't want a robot who just does what you say. At the same time, you don't need a creative martyr who'll fight you on every little change. Find a well-balanced individual who brings a fresh marketing perspective to the table, but ultimately respects your role as the client and differs to your business expertise. Good luck and happy hunting!

About The Author: *Erin Huffstutter is the owner of Erin Writes, a California-based freelance copywriting service specializing in big business, small business and everyone in between. To learn more and/or get a quote on your next copywriting project, visit: www.erinwrites.com*