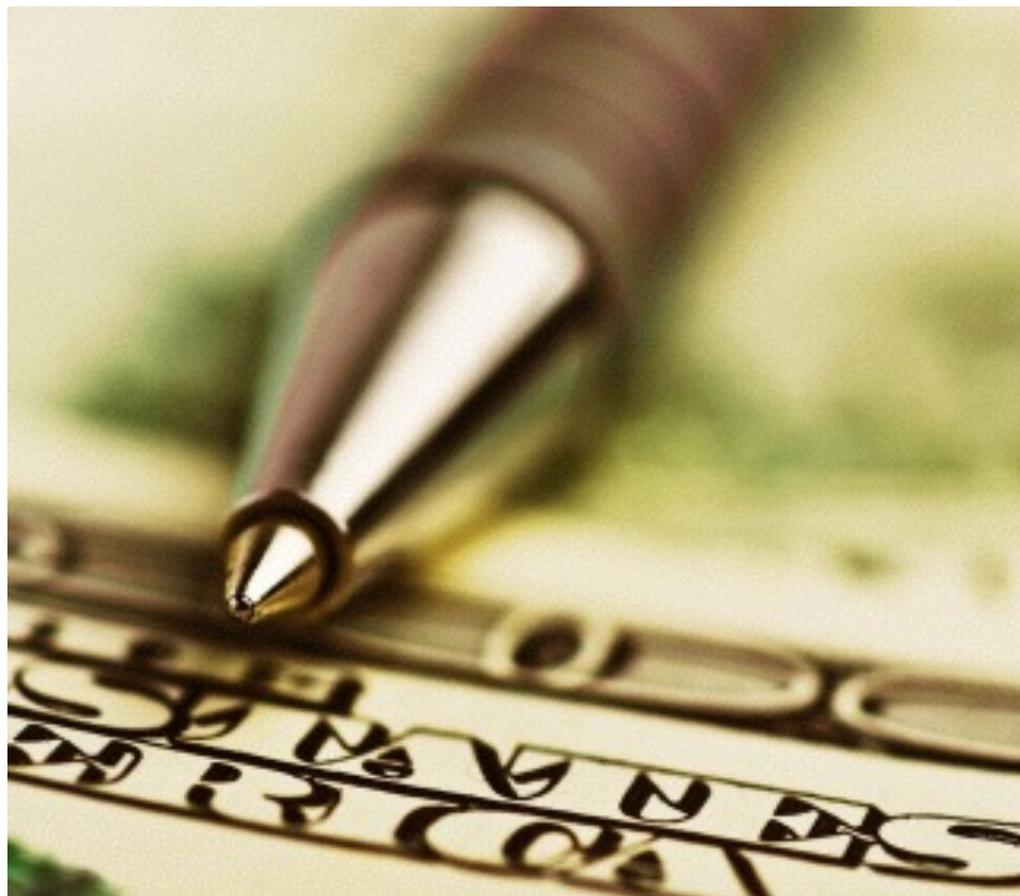


FILTHY RICH
Writer



BREAK INTO COPYWRITING

**A No-B.S. Guide to Exactly
What it Takes to Build a
Successful Career**

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HOW I KNOW WHAT I KNOW

Let me guess: You've been stuck.

You've been trying to figure out exactly what you want to do for a living and you've been stuck. Then, one day, in some way, you heard about copywriting.

It would let you wield your talent for writing and still make a really nice income. (And, yes, your instincts are right: It *is* the only writing career that will let you do that. Just ask a journalist.)

Eureka! So you started looking around...and you discovered that it's really hard to get into copywriting. Not only is it hard to find training for it, it's hard to get hired. Employers want to see a great portfolio, but to have a great portfolio you have to be employed.

Stuck again.

I get it. I do: I've been there. Exactly where you are is exactly where I was roughly 12 years ago.

I looked all over for resources and all I found was a few books that told me things like "be sure to buy a fax machine for your home office" and "send your business card to local talent scouts." (Free tip: Don't do either.)

So I figured it out on my own. And it was really hard. I made a lot of mistakes and ruined lots of opportunities. But I made it.

I've written for clients and employers including Marshalls and T.J. Maxx, Hasbro, a few TripAdvisor companies, adidas, Reebok, Keurig and even Harlequin. I've built teams of copywriters, hired (and fired) some and trained them to be great at what they do.

I've worked for ad agencies, in-house agencies and I've worked freelance. And, not at all to brag, but only to add some validation, I make six figures doing it.

So, long story short: I know what I'm talking about.

And I put together this booklet, the Filthy Rich Writer site, and our growing series of courses because **it just doesn't have to be as hard for you to break into copywriting as it was for me.**

There's no reason that you need to struggle to find the information, tools and techniques you need to get your first copy job. Will you have to put in some effort to learn them? Of course. But if you don't want to work, then copywriting isn't for you, anyway.

And, no, I'm not worried about "creating competition"—there is *more* than enough work to go around. But unfortunately, there are far too few competent copywriters to do it.

I made this booklet (and the site and courses and academy) to be exactly what I wanted when I was first starting out, and couldn't find. So here they are, to help you.

BEING "FILTHY RICH" IS HAVING A JOB YOU LOVE, DOING FULFILLING AND CREATIVE WORK, BEING GOOD AT WHAT YOU DO, AND MAKING GOOD MONEY DOING IT.

NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, BUT DOABLE.

THE BASICS OF COPYWRITING

Let's discuss 1) why people get into copywriting and 2) what it actually is.

Copywriting is the only writing career in which you can hope to make any kind of good income.

It's true. Journalists are facing massive unemployment, successful bloggers are few and far between and those "best-selling novelists" you see in the New York Times every Sunday still have to teach college courses to make ends meet.

Copywriting is where the money is.

Luckily, copywriting is also where the fun is.

Writing copy lets you blend creativity with business strategy. It puts you to work with some of the most interesting, imaginative people you'll ever meet. And it puts your work out in to the world every day for everyone to see, sometimes literally as big as a billboard.

So...what is copywriting, exactly?

COPYWRITING IS WRITING WORDS THAT SELL. ("COPY" IS THE ACTUAL WORDS YOU WRITE, AS IN "GET ME SOME NEW COPY FOR THAT AD.")

IT MAY LITERALLY SELL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, OR IT MAY "SELL" PEOPLE ON TAKING AN ACTION OR THINKING FAVORABLY OF A COMPANY/PRODUCT/SERVICE.

Copywriting is writing words that incite people to take a desired action or think in a desired way.

It could be an email, trying to get you to buy a brand of toothpaste.

It could be a newspaper ad, trying to influence you to vote for a politician.

It could be a commercial about what a company is doing to save the oceans, trying to get you to think positively about this company and perhaps even buy its products.

But it's not some kind of under-handed, trickster profession. **The best copywriting matches up a product with the audience that needs it.** (I'll say "product" throughout to make things easier, but know that I mean products, services, people, or companies.)

Companies come up with products to serve a consumer need. For example, a company might come up with a baby monitor that can alert a parent when a baby flips onto its stomach (which can be dangerous for infants). Many parents may need this.

But unless these parents are somehow told about this product—in a way that reaches them, resonates with them and gets across exactly how its going to help them—they'll never know about it.

Copywriting creates the bridge between needs and solutions.

And that's not easy.

Despite what random people may post on the internet or what your mother's friend's son thinks, copywriting is much, much more than just writing a few sentences.

Effective copy (read: copy that actually gets the desired result) is created by deftly wielding incredibly important techniques, combining them with creative concepts and then revising, refining and rewriting again and again.

It's a career that requires training, skill and practice.

And it's a career that's also pretty fricking fun.

Then What's Content?

Content, on the other hand, is writing that is *not* designed to sell. **Content is writing that informs, inspires or entertains.**

Content is articles, blog posts, Twitter tweets, books, slideshows and any number of other non-selling writing outlets.

Companies use content to engage their target audience, to try to get them to come back to see more again and again, to try to get them to share it and increase their audience, and, eventually and secondarily, to get people to buy their products.

Content writing is different than copywriting, but it can be improved by using copywriting techniques. **As a copywriter, you'll sometimes be hired to do some content writing.** Many clients (and even some employers) won't understand the difference between the two—but you need to.

Types of Copywriters You'll Find Online

If you do a Google search for copywriting, you'll quickly find that the copywriters you encounter will fall into two camps.

The first will be those working in ad agencies or in-house agencies and/or writing copy for freelance clients. That's the group I fall into.

And then...there's this other group. This is the group of writers that tell you that they're making massive amounts of money, working from home, writing online sales letters or emails. They make promises like "Make 6 figures in a year!" "Work from anywhere in the world!" and "I made \$30K by writing one letter!"

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm sure there really are people who are able to live like this. And I bet there are about six of them.

If you really want to be a copywriter and make a good living, you want to be in the first group.

If you want to fall for gimmicks and get rich quick schemes, try to get into that second group. And, to save you some time, you can also go ahead and stop reading here.

<Pause>

Good. I figured you were smarter than that. Courses like that and careers that look too good to be true, *are*.

The real way to potentially, eventually, get to six figures is to get training, practice your skills, get work for clients, work in agencies, work in-house, and contract or work freelance for these companies and various other clients.

Eventually, you could even get to work from home and still make those six figures, if that's the direction you want your life to go. But you sure won't do it in a year.

Besides, your career will be much more exciting, anyway.

Places You Can Work

Copywriters can work for ad agencies (or marketing agencies), in-house agencies or freelance for clients.

An ad agency, as you probably already know, is an agency that's hired by another company to come up with ads.

An in-house agency is a team of copywriters and graphic designers who work within the company they create ads for.

And freelance clients could be...well, anyone who's willing to pay you money to write copy.

Ways You Can Work

You could work on-staff for a company, you could contract for a company or you could freelance for a company.

On-staff means you're employed by the company. Pretty simple.

Contract means that you're not employed by a company, but you do work for them on an hourly basis. Often, you'll work from their office.

Freelance means that you're not employed by a company, but you do work for them on an hourly or project basis. Usually, you can work from wherever you want.

GET TRAINED

So, what's your first step to becoming a copywriter?

There are some people on the internet, posting on forums and commenting on blogs, who say things like, "Start reading ads! You'll learn what works and what doesn't. Then start writing your own!"

Which basically is tantamount to saying:

"Watch a lot of Animal Planet. Then, you'll be ready to tame lions!"
or

"Go sit in court for a while and watch carefully. Soon, you can be your own attorney."

No offense, but I want my attorney to have some education.

Like any career, copywriting requires training.

Hell, it requires training to make fries at McDonald's! Just being able to string words together doesn't make someone a copywriter—it just makes them literate.

THERE ARE RULES, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES THAT COPYWRITERS USE TO CREATE THEIR COPY, AND THEY'RE NOT RULES YOU CAN PICK UP JUST BY READING COPY. (ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE'S PLENTY OF BAD COPY OUT THERE!)

And you can't fake it. A copywriter has to have a reason for *every single word* he or she uses. I'm not kidding: The difference between "and" versus "but" needs to have been considered and needs to be able to be discussed.

When people offer you feedback on your work, you need to be able to explain what you wrote and why. And if your Why is, "It sounded good," your copywriting career is going to be a short one.

The progression goes like this: **Get trained. Get practice. Get better and better at what you do.** (By the way, both the opportunities and money increase along that progression, too.)

What to Look For in a Training

Just like every copywriter isn't created equal, every training isn't created equal. There are a lot of courses or schools out there that will go deep into some issues, while skirting others.

For example, a lot of courses will teach you the fundamental rules of copywriting, without teaching you how to build your portfolio.

A lot of schools will be heavily invested in teaching you how to build your portfolio, but won't necessarily go through all of the fundamentals and tactics you need to create ads in the first place.

And many won't cover the actual copywriting working life at all.

So, when it comes to a course, school or training, here's a list of things you'll want to make sure they cover:

The Fundamentals: This should include the basics like benefits versus features, brand voice, CTAs, and messaging hierarchy

Writing Tactics: You should learn how to come up with ideas, how to organize your ideas and how to edit your own work

How to Write for Print and Interactive—Separately: These are two very different beasts, so you should learn how to write about each of them distinctly, not just lumped together

How to Work with Designers: This is your most important relationship; you need to learn the right way to concept, collaborate and create with them

How the Creative Process Works: And that's not how it works in your head, but how it works in an office. Everything from the kickoff and creative brief to concepting, the review, and receiving and incorporating feedback

How to Present Your Work: There's a right way and many wrong ways to present your work to the decision makers; make sure you learn how to do it right.

How to Create Samples for Your Portfolio: From work with clients/employers to spec work, this should give you the right direction to go in to create ads that will convey your copywriting skills

How to Build Your Online Portfolio: Every copywriter needs an online portfolio. You need to get information about exactly what elements need to be in it and how to maximize its impact since, 99% of the time, prospective employers and clients will see *it* before they see *you*.

How to Stand Out: There's a lot of work to be had, but there may also be a lot of other writers vying for that work. A course or school needs to teach you how to make yourself and your work stand out from the crowd.

How to Find Clients: At some point or another, every copywriter is going to want to take on a freelance client or two, even if they're already employed. You need to know how to find clients and how to work with them, guide them and, yes, bill them.

How to Get Jobs: You need to know how to network, how to find opportunities, how to get your foot in the door and then how to sell yourself to a prospective employer. If a course or school doesn't offer you this, the rest of it is far less useful.

What You Need to Avoid

That's what to look for in a training, but what do you avoid?

Dated materials: Most of the copywriting fundamentals have stayed the same since they were discovered/created but the implementation has changed. If the material isn't current, it won't be able to help you with navigating the industry today and writing copy for the newest types of media.

Quick fixes: As we discussed before, if it sounds too good to be true—it is. Sure, you could very well make six figures as a copywriter. Eventually. If a training promises you'll make it in a year, head the other direction.

People with dubious credentials: Anyone can claim to be a copywriter. Make sure that the creator of your course or founder of your school has legitimate credentials and actually *knows* what he or she is talking about.

Minor mistakes that point to big issues: No working copywriter spells “spec” as “speck” or writes copywriting as two words. Run. Run fast.

BE WHAT BOSSES ARE LOOKING FOR

Ah, the creative director. He or she will be your guide, your mentor and, if you get a good one, your greatest advocate.

Right now, though, they're also your greatest gatekeeper between you and the job you want.

So what do creative directors look for? What skills do you have to build and what tactics do you have to get trained for now?

Creative directors look at your portfolio and they're not just looking for "clever" or "funny."

CREATIVE DIRECTORS WANT TO SEE THAT YOU HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING FOR WHAT NEEDS TO GO INTO AN AD.

THEY WANT TO SEE THAT YOU KNOW HOW TO GET THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE ACROSS IN THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY. IF THEY DON'T IMMEDIATELY SEE THIS IN YOUR SAMPLES, YOU'LL NEVER GET CALLED IN FOR AN INTERVIEW.

They also want to see that you have an understanding and appreciation for how design and copy work together. The best ads are those in which design and copy support and strengthen each other. Bonus points from creative directors if your ads already show this.

A creative director **looks for a desire to learn and a certain degree of humility from new copywriters.**

You don't know everything there is to know. You're not perfectly practiced. They know this—and they want to know that you know it, too. They'll be looking to grow you as a creative, so they don't want someone who already thinks they know everything.

They'll be looking for **both persistence and creativity**—but not just in your ad work. They also want to see them in how you apply for the job and how you interview for it.

**Anyone can put some ads online
and send a resume.**

**You don't want to be just anyone,
though—and a creative director
doesn't want you to be, either.**

BUILD YOUR PORTFOLIO

One of the most important ways you're going to make an impression on a prospective employer or client is with your online portfolio.

If this were online dating, it would be your profile. You're showcasing the very best of yourself in hopes that someone will like what they see. But, just like in online dating, there are a lot of fish in the sea. If you want to get bites, you'd better make sure you put your best foot forward.

Your ads need to show everything you've learned in your training.

They need to show your **understanding for the fundamentals**, your **understanding of the brand voice**, your **understanding of your audience** and your **ability to solve problems**.

Hmm. Wait. Just where are you going to get these samples for your portfolio?

Glad you asked.

Creating samples and learning ways to create more samples should be an integral part of your training.

You'll learn how to create "spec" work (which is how to create, essentially, fake ads to show off your skills), how to repurpose work you've done before and also how to find small business clients to work with.

Oh, and another benefit of those small business clients: They pay you. Don't you love copywriting?

Create Your Online Portfolio

Very simply put: You need an online portfolio to be taken seriously.

And, beyond that, you have to have the right elements in it, written in the right way, to sell yourself. Pictures of your samples and a paragraph about your background aren't going to cut it.

Your portfolio needs to include:

Your bio: A compelling write-up of who you are and what you can do for companies and clients

Your USP: Your Unique Selling Point is what makes you different from all other writers

Your contact information: If they can't get in touch with you, how are they going to hire you?

Your portfolio pieces: Your very best, and only your very best pieces, with explanations of exactly how the pieces solved the advertising problem and executed against the strategy

Your personality: Let people know what it's really like to work with you.

Your portfolio should *not* include:

A ton of articles or blog posts: These are content. (See the first section). You don't want a Creative Director to think you don't know the difference between copy and content, do you? Feature a couple to show your skills, but limit it to one or two.

Musings on everything: By all means, add your thoughts about the industry or about specific campaigns or projects. But don't start writing about every little thing you think of. Your personal musings have no place on your professional site.

MAKE CONTACTS

**I don't care which city you live in,
the creative community is a small one.**

Copywriters, designers and all of the people that we work with just generally hop around from job to job every few years. Once you get established in the community, you'll quickly discover that it's much fewer than six degrees of separation.

Now, this is a bad thing if you have a habit of doing reputation-ruining things like missing deadlines, burning bridges or being generally difficult to work with.

But it's a great thing if you're a personable hard worker who wants to grow as a copywriter and create great work. People will love you.

Since the creative community is so small, the more people you know, the better. Get out and mingle at industry events, go to meet ups and make an effort to socialize with other creatives.

And be prepared to meet other industry people just about anywhere you go. You want to make the right, professional impression the first time—but you may never know in advance when that first time will be. It could be at an event, but it could also be waiting in line at the supermarket.

(Creatives: We're everywhere.)

THE MORE PEOPLE YOU KNOW AND GET TO KNOW (BOTH ONLINE AND OFF), THE EASIER YOU'LL FIND IT TO GET FREELANCE WORK AND JOBS—AND THAT GOES FOR NOW AND THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER.

Cultivate real relationships with people; give just as much as you ask. Share information about job openings (unless you're applying yourself, perhaps), news, interesting art exhibits or movies/shows and other valuable things.

You'll have the best luck of getting people to help you if you've already been helping them.

MAKE YOURSELF STAND OUT

Your job right now is to prepare yourself to get a job.

As part of your training, you need to be working on making yourself useful and unique.

This is crucial, so let me repeat myself: Useful and unique.

Useful means that you come to a company trained and ready to work, with ideas about their work and their clients. You immediately bring value to them as a copywriter but also as a team player with visions and goals for the future of the company and the clients.

Unique means that you set yourself apart. Yes, there are probably a lot of other copywriters who are applying for the same job. But most of them are probably applying in exactly the same way: cover letter, resume, portfolio link. It's up to you to make yourself stand out.

Creative directors aren't looking for one of the crowd. They're looking for one in a million. **You can be that one in a million.**



Be Skilled



Be Useful



Be Unique

NEXT STEPS AND MORE FREE STUFF

This was a lot.

Aaaaaand it's just the tip of the iceberg.

Now you know the “whats” of breaking into copywriting. It's almost time to start working on the “hows”.

But before we do, though, there's one crucial step:

**You have to make sure that
copywriting is right for you.**

After all, you don't want to go down this road and head into this career if it's not a good fit, do you?

Of course not. So, head over to
www.FilthyRichWriter.com/BonusPartTwo

**I'VE PUT UP ANOTHER FREE E-BOOK AND QUIZ
TO HELP YOU FIGURE OUT IF YOU'VE GOT WHAT
IT TAKES.**

TIME TO TAKE STEP TWO!

(SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GO NOW!)