

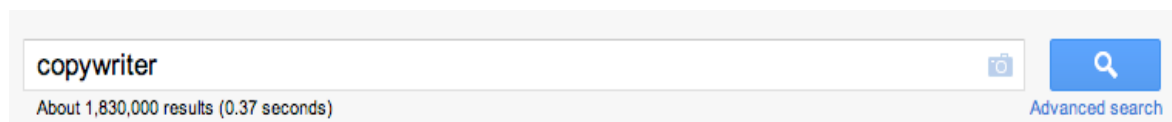
Find the right copywriter.

HELPFUL HINTS
FOR SUCCESSFULLY
CONCLUDING
YOUR SEARCH.

A pointers paper from

Feldman
creative

Find the Right Copywriter.



You wrote “copywriter” in the search field. Precisely 0.37 seconds later it retrieved 1.83-million results.

Now what?

What’s the plan for achieving the perfectly efficient post-search search? Click? Call? Assume the highest ranked writer rules the copywriting kingdom? Or do you fly in the face of search logic and see what lucky number 1,830,000 has to offer?

This is tough stuff. Despite the amazing muscle of Google, your odds for hiring the *wrong* copywriter are painfully high. How do I know? With pretty good regularity, potential new clients tell me I’m being contacted because a copywriter (or two, or three) has already let them down. They got an invoice, but not the persuasive prose they sought. Ouch.

Allow me to offer some helpful hints, which I hope will help you know when your search is a success. It’s free. And if it saves you time, money, or aggravation, it’ll be very valuable.

The right writer should offer...



Good questions

When you talk to your copywriting candidate for the first time, don't expect lots of awesome answers. Yes, in the course of the conversation or exchange, you may receive some worthwhile recommendations, or even ideas, but take this advice...

Rather than interview the copywriter, allow the dialogue to work the other way around. Experienced copywriters know they won't get far in meeting your marketing challenges until they really understand them. So, if you've hooked up with a winner, you're going to hear questions first and answers later.



Commitments

We could have covered this issue last. The topic sounds like a good way to wrap this dissertation up. However, I want to make an important point: great copywriters tend to be busy. If you don't want to date someone who refuses to ever marry, it's fair game to get that on the table early, right? I'm not suggesting you keep hunting until you find the underemployed copywriter no one wants to dance with, but before you spend an hour on the phone courting one another, it's a good idea to ask if your new partner can come through for you as needed, when needed. If your project isn't due on Monday, all the better. A copywriter who wants to work with you will multitask, carve a place in their schedule for you and come through. But don't deal with the non-committal type. Perhaps your parents gave you similar advice.



Creative direction

Creative direction? Isn't going from copywriter to creative director sort of like going from a paralegal to an attorney? I don't think so. Since you're on a hunt for a freelancer, you probably DON'T seek, or have, an agency, but you probably DO want the added value \ a copywriter with creative direction skills can offer. You'll find the creative director types are far more valuable. So, in the course of your conversation, keep your ear out for conceptual ideas, design concerns, questions about media, and even more. Decent writers aren't all that hard to find. But if "decent" won't do, hire a writer who can give you some direction.



Web savvy

If you should happen to have a 100% offline project in mind, you might be able to put a "throwback" copywriter to work and get good value. However, effective marcom today almost always integrates across various media and rarely steers completely clear of the almighty Internet. So realistically, you need to connect with a pro that knows his or her way around cyberspace. If you hope to make your marketing dollars work hard, I hope you're careful to make sure your writer's super savvy in the ways of the web and brings you a good grasp of the entire gamut of media.



Understanding

Follow me here. You sell something manly. Better get a male writer. You sell something feminine, so you need a female. You sell stuff for kids. A child would be the ideal writer. My point: you simply need someone who understands how to push the appropriate buyers' buttons.

Okay, if you market something complex such as networking equipment, you might spare yourself some pain by working with a writer who knows the terrain. However, don't underestimate the value of objectivity. If you insist on working with an industry insider or specialist, you might very well trade product expertise for marketing expertise. You don't want that. You simply want to be sure your writer understands your challenges and your market. So explain them and see if you're getting through quickly.



Great value

Times are tough. You can find a writer who will work for anything (or even nothing). And it's easier than ever to conduct a cattle call or create a bidding war. The best copywriters, the ones that will get it right the first time and help you achieve your objectives, won't play along. If you have a serious project, you need to get serious about employing a pro and paying fair fees. This is how you get a good return on investment. Don't base your decision on price. Insist on value and allow your prospective writer to show and tell you what value truly is.



Stellar storytelling

Great writers, yes, even copywriters, tell compelling stories. Take the time to review the writer's samples. Ask yourself if you enjoyed the time you spent flipping through the pages of his or her site. Please, never skip these steps, never accept any excuses for not having a site and/or portfolio, and never settle for a writer whose tells a boring story. If your copywriter can't tell a stellar story, there will be no audience there at the end when it's time to ask for action.



Clear correspondence

If you write to your prospective writer, the email you get back should shine. Are you finding mistakes? Online shorthand? Worse yet, "text talk?" LOL. Hit delete. If you talk to your writer (and you absolutely should), you want to feel good about the exchange. This is someone who will speak for your company. Does he or she speak well?



References

Perhaps there's something to be said for publishing success stories or posting testimonials on your site. But keep in mind how easy it is to fudge such stuff. Ask the writer you think you'd like to work with if he or she can connect you to a handful of clients who won't hesitate to endorse them. Whether you follow up with all or any of the references is up to you, but if your request for references isn't followed-up with a quick and enthusiastic "here you go," don't waste any more time wondering why.



Good chemistry

You don't need to have happy hour with your writer or take long walks in the wilderness, but you should think of the effort as a collaboration and enjoy it. If you weren't "feeling it" when you spoke, keep looking.



An action plan

Copywriting 101: tell your reader/viewer what to do next. Those in the ad fraternity call it the “call-to-action.” You should expect one. And your copywriter should have enough command of the challenge ahead and confidence in his or her ability to give you instructions as you wave goodbye. “Look for a proposal from me.” “Get back to me with your thoughts on my ideas and samples.” “Send me some money.”
Something specific and action-oriented.

Did your copywriter offer the things I’ve covered and then ask for the sale. Yes? Your search is over.

You’ve found the right copywriter.

*Barry Feldman, of Feldman Creative,
is a freelance copywriter, creative director
and marketing communications consultant.
You can see if he’s the right copywriter
for you by contacting him at:*

916.984.9988 | barry@feldmancreative.com