

Can I Make
REAL MONEY
As A
Freelance
Copywriter?



Introduction

Can I Make **Real Money** As A Freelance Copywriter?

By Alan Tarr

You enjoy writing. In fact, you love to write. You think it could be a cool way to make a living or earn some good side money. Well, I'm not going to rain on your parade. You see, I've spent most of my life as a copywriter and entrepreneur. And it is cool.

I haven't had a nine-to-five job since 1987...and I wouldn't have it any other way. Now, let me give back a little to the next generation of great, talented, and happy freelancers.

Premise

In this Report, we'll give you an inside look at the business of freelance copywriting. We'll include pertinent facts and figures as well as my own observations and experiences.

The report is in five sections with a following Bonus Infographic:

- What is A Freelance Copywriter?
- Why Copywriting Is A Nicely Paid Skill
- How - And Why - To Become A Freelancer
- How - And Where - To Find Work
- Where To Learn Copywriting
- Bonus: *5 Steps To Becoming A Darn Good Copywriter*

What Is A Freelance Copywriter?

What Is A Freelance Copywriter? In its most basic form, a freelance copywriter is one who writes for commercial use on a contract, or project, basis. While technically correct, I think that definition is overly broad. In my eyes, it could cover those who are not, in any sense of the word, copywriters. To be a freelance copywriter, you must first have the **skills and knowledge** to be called a copywriter.

I used to play Little League baseball and after winning a playoff game the team went to our sponsor – a pizzeria – and received a free meal. I had just been “paid” for playing baseball. Would you call me a professional baseball player?

Yes, I agree...it’s a ridiculous example. But I’m using it to point out the error in the definition. A freelance copywriter, in my opinion, is a *copywriter* writing on a per project basis.



Who Can Be A Copywriter? Anyone. Truth is, the industry has no certification standards or licensing. BUT...and I know you felt this coming... you really do need to prove your skills to others. It's all well and good to call yourself a copywriter, but it's exponentially better for others to call you a copywriter. And a darn good copywriter, at that.

Other articles/blogs re: freelancing often don't mention you need to **learn the fundamentals and the more advanced techniques of copywriting** before you can go out and represent yourself as a copywriter. So, you'll need to get trained in the art and science of copywriting. When you do, will you be at the same level as someone whose has spent 30 years writing for all types and sizes of businesses? No. But you can and should be proficient enough, to help smaller businesses, that have less-exacting needs, increase their clicks, conversions and sales. You will become their "go-to" freelancer and grow along with your client.



BTW, just getting to proficiency is great to start, but I'm sure you'll want to continue honing your skills, making you a candidate for more and more lucrative assignments. I believe in the Japanese concept of ***kaizen - constant improvement***. Even after 30-odd years, I study my art continually.

Learn the languages of the business - "copywriting" "marketing" and "digital marketing". Make it a priority to keep your knowledge base as up-to-date as you keep your skill set.

What To Expect. Understand that, in the beginning, business won't show up at your door, or in your inbox, waving money around. You'll have to do some groundwork and get yourself out there in the community, on Linked-In, copywriting groups, and as a blogger. A quick caution: don't write anything for public consumption you wouldn't feel proud to show to your paying clients. And that includes blogs and posts.



I've seen far too many "copywriters" submit posts with incredibly bad spelling, grammar, and syntax. They were too lazy or too arrogant to proofread their copy thoroughly. A major shortcoming. And it's bound to cost you assignments.

Get Trained. Untrained "copywriters" are a dime a dozen, and end up writing for 2 cents a word. If you want to succeed, attract and maintain a client base, you **MUST** be trained.

[Authors Note: I believe the best training available online is the "[How To Write Copy](#)" System at Write Like A Madman University. It contains 4 multi-media courses and over 310 well-illustrated learning experiences. I'm a bit biased because I wrote all of them.]



Fascinating Facts About Freelancing

- 52% female; 48% male
- 68% are college graduates
- Freelancers by age (Thimble)
 - 53% of 18-22 year-olds freelance
 - 40% of 23-38 year-olds freelance
 - 31% of 39-54 year-olds freelance
 - 29% of 55+ year-olds freelance
- National average earnings of a freelance copywriter is \$81,748 (Glassdoor)
- 91% say the best days lie ahead for freelancing (Thimble)
- 60% of freelancers wouldn't take a traditional job (Thimble)



60%

**60% of freelancers
say they couldn't be
convinced to take a
traditional job.**

Why Copywriting Is A Nicely Paid Skill

HIWEEBDI* - Let's not "Wag The Dog" here. Before you can be a success as a freelance copywriter...in fact, before you can even be considered by others to be a copywriter at all, you must prove you know what you're doing. So, the first thing I wish to stress is:

Few writers become copywriters on sheer, innate talent alone.

How do I know this? Personal experience and the experiences of others, like Aldous Huxley. Huxley was the author of numerous poems, sonnets, screenplays, and almost 50 books. His best-known work, *Brave New World* - a forerunner to Orwell's *1984* - was a literary sensation. Yet Huxley, great writer that he was, **tried but failed as a copywriter.**

* Hell, If It Was Easy Everbody'd Be Doing It



TWIZDOMS™

“It is easier to write
ten effective
sonnets than one
effective
advertisement.”

Aldous Huxley
Author of Brave New
World, Poet and Sonneteer

How - And Why - To Become A Freelancer

Why Should You Become A Freelance Copywriter? Different people have different reasons. It could be you're tired of life in the cubicle and want to do something where your skills will be adequately appreciated and rewarded. You may want a work-from-home job, full time, or as a side gig. You might want to use freelancing as a steppingstone to an agency slot once your portfolio is thick enough. Perhaps, you're a writer and want to use copywriting to pay the bills as you work on your novel. Whatever your reasons, if you love to write, and you understand the requirements of copywriting, you can make a good go of it.



What Are Some Benefits Of Freelancing?

- Flexible hours
- It's your own business
- Work with a variety of clients
- You get to see the results of your work
- You can have a real impact and be an asset to your clients
- Great outlet for your creative side
- Take on only the clients you want
- Good pay for good work



What Kind Of Projects Need Freelancers?

Writing or Re-writing marketing pieces such as:

- Websites
- Landing Pages
- Brochures
- Advertisements
- Email Campaigns
- Sales Letters
- Postcards
- Signage
- White Paper Reports
- Surveys and Quizzes
- Social Media Posts and Ads
- SEO Copywriting
- Articles and Blogs
- Technical writing (if you have a background)
- Medical writing (if you have a background)
- Academic writing (if you have a background)



Develop Work Product ASAP. Very few business owners are willing to buy a pig-in-the-poke (i.e. without seeing some evidence of your level of writing talent). I suggest, from experience, you create some spec ads (ads that haven't been requested) for businesses with which you are familiar. Even if those businesses wind up not buying the pieces, you'll have a start on building your portfolio. On the next page you'll see a good example of a spec postcard ad I created for a bakery. This one ad turned into a two-year campaign.

Build A World-Class Website. One budding copywriter wrote to me for advice. She took a (fairly expensive) copywriting course but realized she was never taught how to write and structure her website to make it an effective – and vital piece of her portfolio. [Note: My website, *Write Like A Madman University* has an entire 10-piece course, *Radical WebPower*, that will give you the tools and “how-to’s” to build an absolute killer of a website.]

Ode To JOY



**Castanza's Cakery puts Joy in your mouth
with 23 varieties of cupcakes and tarts made fresh daily**



Build Your Services List On Your Strengths. What do you most enjoy writing? Long copy, Short copy, emails, Facebook, Twitter and Linked In Ads, Reports, Video scripts, Postcards, Local print ads, Flyers, etc? Are you also a good graphics person? Do you have an eye for using the correct images? Do you write exceptionally strong Headlines and Sub-Heads? Take all this into consideration before you publish that services list. Why? Because you want to put your best foot forward and those “best feet” are your strongest talents.

Again, I’ll use my career as an example. I do not accept retainers for technical, medical, or academic, writing. It’s just not my cup of tea. I prefer websites, landing pages, and all kinds of advertisements, brochures, and email campaigns.

How - And Where - To Find Work

What To Do First. Start with your friends and neighbors who have businesses. Ask them if they advertise or post to social media. Offer to write two free ads or posts, so they can judge if what you write is superior to what they've been putting out. That little trick got me my first five freelance clients too many years ago to think about.

Volunteer. Charities, Churches, even Schools, need people to write their newsletters, emails, notices, etc. This is good, solid experience and a portfolio enhancer - plus you're bound to meet local small business owners and corporate marketing or communications managers. So, make sure you always have at least two things at the ready.

- Your well-designed digital or professionally printed business card.
- Your [Better Elevator Pitch](#).

“In order to be
irreplaceable, one
must always be
different.”

Coco Chanel





Now Let's Get Some Paying Clients. Where can you find copywriting work? The easiest answer is, “everywhere”, but it’s not as drop-dead easy as it sounds. Use a platform like Linked In to find company decision makers and marketing or content managers. Find local small businesses in your town. Make sure to update your profile with targeted keywords. Check “Who viewed your profile” section. Message the people who looked at your profile and engage with them. Ask questions about their businesses and advertising methods. Then, once they’re comfortable with you, start to message them with your services, or to show them how you helped another company (be sure to send a copy of your ad, email, report, or whatever). You can even enquire if they know anyone who can use a Darn Good Copywriter, at reasonable cost. Get enough of these interactions going and you’ll soon be on your way.



Remember, It's A Business. Whether it's a full-time commitment, or a Side Gig, it's a business. For most of us, the hardest part is the start-up phase. **Think like a business owner** and plan for a slow but steady growth over the first year or two. There are jobs and retainers out there. You'll get your share, but it's how you handle them that will determine your level of success in the future.

Like in any field, you'll start to develop a following. Jobs and retainers will materialize months, or sometimes years, after you did great work for a client. It's something to build towards, and something to enjoy.



Online Freelancer Sites. To begin searching for paying assignments outside of your sphere of influence (friends, family, local contacts) you'll soon want to spread your search out further. Another way of doing this is to utilize some of the freelance sites that list copywriting in their ads.

The sites listed below (short list gleaned from some freelancers I know that use and recommend them) all work pretty much alike. They list you, your qualifications and your asking price (though negotiations often take place). They bring people/businesses that need copywriting services together with the talent (you) and when a buyer and seller agree, the job is assigned. The site collects the money and holds it until client and copywriter agree that the assignment has been satisfactorily completed. At that time, the money is released to the copywriter and the "job" is released to the buyer.

[Note: I found a very good illustrator through Freelancer. Everything went as smooth as silk.]



Then, if you've done a sterling job, you are free to connect with that client on the outside and strike up a relationship.

Some Reputable Freelancer Sites

- Clear Voice: <https://www.clearvoice.com>
- Fiverr: <https://www.fiverr.com>
- Freelancer: <https://www.freelancer.com>
- Multiply: <https://www.gotmultiply.com/>
- Professional Copywriters' Network: <https://www.procopywriters.co.uk/>
- Toptal: <https://www.toptal.com>
- Upwork: <https://www.upwork.com>
- WritersWork: <https://writers.work>

(Note: The Professional Copywriters' Network charges a small subscription fee from the copywriter.)

Where To Learn Copywriting

Where Can A Writer Learn To Be A COPYwriter?

There are numerous copywriting courses available online, from a few dollars to several thousands. Not all are created equal - **regardless of price.**

Full Disclosure: I will plainly and openly declare I am biased toward **Write Like A Madman University** (WLAM U) for a slew of reasons. Here are some:

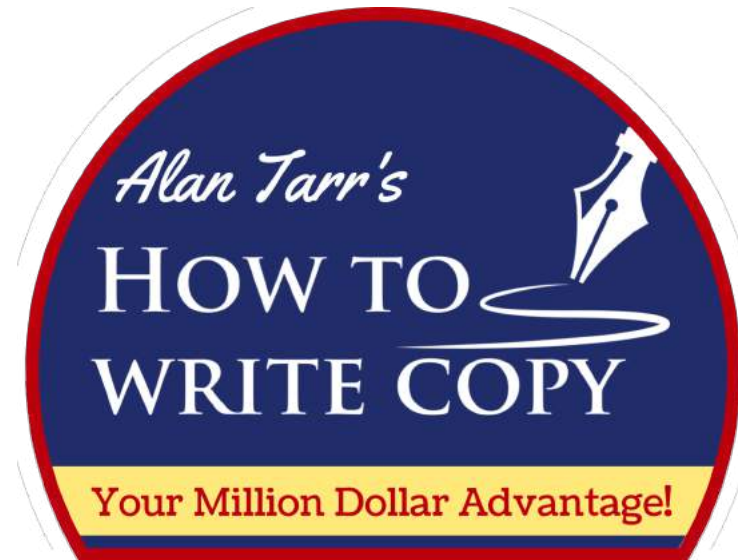
- Complete marketing/copywriting/branding resource specifically designed for budding copywriters and small business entrepreneurs.
- Our educational guides/videos/audios don't just explain what to do, but how to do it, in a uniquely illustrated fashion.
- Currently WLAM U has 5 Courses, 3 Tutorials and 7 Toolboxes



- Over 330 individual Guides, Videos, Lists, Templates, Audios, Articles, Case-Studies, Self-Tests, and TWIZDOMS™ (Marketing Wisdom In Twitter-Sized Bites).
- Every piece was written and/or edited by me, Alan Tarr, a Master Copywriter, trained by the best on Madison Avenue, with over 30 years writing - and freelancing - under my belt.
- You have access to me and my team for writing critiques, questions, and for help developing your talent.

Thank You

For giving us the opportunity to provide you with this information.
I wish you success as a copywriter, and hope you'll enjoy the ride as
much as I have.



At Write Like A Madman U.

Learn and Prosper,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

About The Author



Alan Tarr (aka *The MoneyWords Copywriter*) is a former Madison Avenue copywriter who discovered it was far more satisfying (and profitable) to market his own small businesses. It was this revelation that moved him to become an entrepreneur.

He has owned and sold four businesses and is now the founder of [Write Like A Madman University](#).

He has written copy and devised brand strategies for numerous national and international companies including Datsun (now Nissan), Taco Joe's, Phoenix Suns, NARPRO.com, HeliServices/Enstrom Helicopters, Commercial Credit Reports/TRW, LaddieBoy Dog Food, TopEdge Shears, and various Cruise Lines.

Alan is the author of *The Seven Deadly Sins of Marketing*, *WIN The Marketing Game And STOP Wasting Money*, *Write Like A MADMAN And Make Money Like Crazy*, and over 100 articles on marketing, advertising and franchising. He holds a BBA, MA and CFE (Certified Franchise Executive).

Apart from his business life as a branding strategist, copywriter and coach, Alan's passions are playing golf, making music (Irish, Blues, and Trop Rock) and attending musical theatre. One of his all-time favorite quotes is by advertising legend Raymond Rubicam “...**the beginning of greatness is to be different, and the beginning of failure is to be the same.**” Alan tries to live his life with this in mind.