

# CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE TO HIRING A QUALIFIED DIRECT-RESPONSE COPYWRITER



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# Consumer Awareness Guide to Hiring a Qualified Direct-response Copywriter

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*Presented by*

[FreshSalesCopy.com](http://FreshSalesCopy.com)

## WARNING: DON'T CALL ANY COPYWRITER UNTIL YOU'VE READ THIS CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE

Dear Interested Reader,

Choosing a direct-response copywriter isn't easy. Why? Because you're bombarded with misleading advertising, over-hyped claims, and lots of bad information.

Hiring a copywriter for your next project is a big decision. You will be in a relationship with this person for quite some time. In other words, you won't be buying something off the shelf.

You will have to think very carefully about the person you are going to hire for your next copywriting assignment.

You will need to have a clear objective, clear lines of communication and realistic goals. You can start by reading this Consumer Awareness Guide.

I wrote this consumer awareness guide to help you better understand direct-response copywriting and how to choose your next direct-response copywriter.

Sincerely,



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## What does a direct-response copywriter do?

A direct-response copywriter's job is to get a direct-response from your prospect—whether it's a lead or a sale. This often takes the form of the written word in print or on screen.

This also be used on video, TV, radio and other non-print media. In fact, an appropriate phrase was coined back in the 1920's that really defines what direct-response copywriters do. And that phrase is:

*“Salesmanship-in-print”*

You can think of a direct-response copywriter as your salesman (or rather salesperson) multiplied by a thousand or ten thousand or even more. A real salesperson can only make a few dozen calls a day, but a sales letter (or e-mail, landing page, ad, etc.) can be created once and sent out to literally thousands of people at once.

As you can see, a direct-response copywriter is an important investment for every business. However, like any other investment you should be knowledgeable in what you're getting into before making that investment. When you consult with a copywriter regarding your project, you should be about as knowledgeable as you can be.

This short guide will help you make that educated decision.

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# 8 Mistakes to Avoid When Choosing a Copywriter

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## 1) Not having a clear objective

Not having a clear objective about what you need from a copywriter can steer your project off course right from the start. You must be careful of the shiny object syndrome. There is a lot of information out there about how you should market and generate sales for your business. Be wary of those who have an agenda and try to fit your objectives into what they are selling to you. Having a clear objective—your final outcome—will help you choose the right copywriter for your project.

- Do you want leads?
- Do you want sales?
- Do you want to sell books?
- Are you looking to get hired for a corporate gig?

You should be clear on what you are looking for. And “getting more traffic” isn’t a clear objective. What is that “traffic” supposed to do, anyway?

Without a clear objective, you are putting the copywriter in the role of marketer, which is a different objective altogether. While many copywriters are very knowledgeable in many facets of marketing, you are confusing the role. If you put your copywriter in the roll of marketer, you can expect to pay more, and you may not get what you were looking for.

## 2) Only communicating by e-mail

If your copywriter only wants to communicate by e-mail, there might be an issue with the copywriter. Maybe he or she doesn’t have a full command of the English language.

When it comes to copywriting, you want a native English speaker who has a complete understanding of the English language.

On the other hand, *you* may only want to communicate by e-mail, which is fine. But you should be able to call your copywriter at any time when you feel like there is a misunderstanding about your project. A phone call often clears that up nicely; but if your copywriter is reluctant to speak with you on the telephone, your problems may continue.

### 3) Not hiring someone who is from the same culture you're advertising to

If you are from the UK, and your target market is in the UK, then you'll want to hire a copywriter from the UK. Same goes with every other country. There are some very talented copywriters who have written copy for clients in other countries and done fairly well, but this is not the norm.

You don't want to take a chance. Remember, direct-response copywriting isn't just about writing words, it's about understanding your audience.

If you are an American speaker and you are holding a series of seminars in Asia, you'll want a copywriter who understands that audience. And you'll avoid a lot of advertising mistakes, such as the ones below:

**HSBC campaign:** "Assume Nothing" was translated to "Do Nothing"  
**KFC in China:** "Finger-lickin' good" was translated to "Eat your fingers off."  
**Coors in Spain:** "Turn It Loose" was translated to "Suffer from diarrhea."  
**Electrolux** advertised in the U.S. with "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux."  
**Ford cars in Belgium:** "Every car has a high-quality body" was translated to "Every car has a high-quality corpse."  
**Braniff Airlines in Mexico:** "Fly in Leather" was translated to "Fly naked."  
**Ford Pinto:** In Portuguese this car's name means "tiny male genitals."  
**Mercedes-Benz in China:** Their car "Bensi" was translated to "rush to die."  
**Pepsi in China:** "Pepsi Brings You Back to Life" was translated to "Pepsi Brings You Back from the Grave."

### 4) Being cheap

We all want a bargain, but your sales copy needs to be written by the **best qualified person** for the project regardless of price. Understandably, we all have budgets to work within, but if you are selling a seminar, you should know there will be a big difference in the quality of the sales copy when you are considering paying either \$1,000 or \$10,000. You have to ask yourself what is it worth to you.

If you decide to cut corners on your expenses, you may find yourself having to start all over again with another copywriter.

Quick story:

I've personally ran into this earlier in my career. On a brochure design project, I had been deciding between two proposals. One for \$399 and one for \$799. Obviously, the \$399 sounded more attractive and that's the one I went with—with disastrous results.

Now, that the \$399 was in the dust, I was left with \$499 in my budget for this brochure. I looked for a new designer and found one. Again, I was faced with a \$499 designer and a \$799 designer.

As much as I wanted that \$799 designer to come in at \$499, it was like asking a frog to become a rabbit. It just wasn't going to happen. So I learned a very valuable lesson. Just go with the \$799 designer. It may be a bit painful on the budget, but in the end, you will save money.

There are copywriters on websites like Fiverr (with an emphasis on "err") where you are led to the false belief that you can get quality sales copy for \$5. That's just not going to happen. Or maybe you can bump it up to \$25. No good direct-response copywriter would (or could) write for those wages.

You would only waste your precious time in trying to get good sales copy out of a bargain copywriter. And if your time equals money, then you know what I mean.

## 5) Offering deals

You may want to offer a deal where you can get your copywriter some extra work from your "connections" if he just worked on his price for you.

I've seen this many, many times in my career. It never works out as promised.

Remember this: when it comes to copywriting (and other custom made products and services), the product has not yet been created at the point of sale. So, if you ask for a **discounted price**, you will get a **discounted product**. Don't expect a copywriter to reduce the price just for the sake of it.

Of course, there be many ways you can get a reduced price. However, you will have to reduce the level of copy you want, and reduce the amount of work to be done.

There is ONE way you can get a discount on your copywriting and that is to offer a bigger comprehensive project. For example, if you approach a copywriter with a sales page and want a discount, you should also offer to do a sales letter, a booklet, a series of e-mails and so on. You would surely get a discount on all of the products put together since the bulk of copywriting is in the research.

But don't offer deals where you can get the copywriter some extra work through your connections. The one exception is if you produce these referrals upfront before your project has begun.

## 6) Thinking your copywriter needs a Journalism degree

Truth be told, formal education in fine writing for news, newspapers and other content writing is a hindrance to the craft of good direct-response copywriting.

Many excellent sales copywriters come from all walks of life and very few of them have an education in journalism. They learned copywriting in the trenches and from the masters like Dan Kennedy, Gary Halbert, Claude Hopkins, John Caples, Eugene Schwartz and Joe Sugarman.

If you never heard of these copywriting legends, you will when you start working with a professional direct-response copywriter who knows his stuff.

Good sales copywriters are good sales people, not necessarily journalism graduates. As mentioned above, advertising copy is known as “salesmanship-in-print.”

Copywriting is sales. Journalism is reporting. Would you rather have a copywriter bring you customers or just tell you that there are customers out there somewhere?

## 7) Not having samples of what you're looking for

Don't try to make a copywriter into something he is not. Look for samples in their portfolio of what you are needing.

Many copywriters are versatile, but you will do a lot better if you have a good match. If you're a doctor who needs to sell supplements, your best bet is to go to a copywriter that has a lot of supplement samples in their portfolio. If you are a self-help author, then you would want to go to someone who has self-help samples in their portfolio.

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# 7 Questions to Ask Your Copywriter to Qualify Him or Her to Do Your Project

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Don't be afraid to ask questions. You should interview your copywriter like you would interview a candidate to work in your office.

## **1). *How long have you been in business?***

This doesn't just mean how long have they been in business in their current copywriting role. Many copywriters work freelance after working in an agency or another similar type of role such as a web designer, internet marketer, or engaged in SEO services.

You want to get a general idea of how long they've been writing sales copy in any capacity. Some copywriters may have started out as providing SEO services and then graduated into sales copy. Some copywriters come from a web design and internet marketing background.

And some copywriters may have an expertise in what your project needs. For example, a copywriter new to freelancing may have had a 30 year history as a chemical engineer, and you need a sales page for your chemical product. That expertise will come in handy. You'd get better results than if your copywriter only had a career in dog kennels.

## **2) *Can you write in someone else's voice?***

This is important. Some writers have a distinct style that is seen throughout their copy, and they may not be able to write in another person's voice.

Remember, direct-response copywriting is written in a loose and casual tone, so voice matters. If you're a self-help author and speaker, you'll want someone who is familiar with self-help programs and books.

Some sales letters are written from the voice of the company. Some sales letters are written in the voice of an individual as seen on many sales letters from doctors promoting nutritional supplements.

You'll want to make sure your copywriter can capture your voice.

### ***3) What is your current schedule like? Will you be able to handle my project?***

A lot of people neglect to ask this question.

No freelancer wants to turn away work, especially those building a business with only a few clients. But you need to ascertain if your copywriter even has the time to do your project.

The copywriter may take your project without really having the time to truly dedicate to it. Many projects can take two to three weeks to complete, so you should ask your copywriter if they have time in their schedule to do your project before dangling money in their face.

### ***4) How well do you take criticism? What is your protocol of handling critiques?***

This maybe a hard question to ask a copywriter and may be seen as confrontational, so you may want to phrase it differently. But ultimately, you'll want the answer to this question.

A copywriter should be able to take criticism and make revisions in accordance to your requests. Good copywriters know the business and can offer a lot of great advice on copy and internet marketing, but only you know your business as well as you do. Some copywriters may think otherwise and when they get criticism about their copy, they may get upset.

### ***5) Do you write the copy yourself or do you outsource it?***

You'd be surprised how many copywriters outsource their work to less costly junior copywriters.

When they submit the copy to you (via the junior copywriter), they will be resistant to rewrite the copy if you have an issue with it. They will start to see their profit margin shrink. This is why you should ask if they outsource their work.

It's a simple question, and I've been asked this several times. I always tell them, "No, I don't outsource my work. I write all the copy myself."

## 7) *Do you offer some kind of guarantee if I don't like the copy?*

Since copywriting is a custom made product, many copywriters don't offer any kind of guarantee. Your copywriter should deliver what you ask for. And, if after a few revisions, you should have an option to discontinue the work if you are not totally satisfied with the capabilities of your copywriter.

I've heard horror stories where a client would pay up to \$6,000 for an incomplete job. Now, this person is making complaints all over the Internet. This is why if there is a dispute, I like to work things out. If it can't be worked out, I offer a refund. Having a client bad mouth me all over the Internet just isn't worth to me.

Please note: we're talking about a **guarantee of satisfaction**, not a guarantee of delivering results (i.e. more sales, leads, Likes, followers, etc.). No one can guarantee that. There are too many variables at play.

## 8) *How are you developing your copywriting knowledge and skills?*

There are a few institutions online that sell the dream life of a copywriter, so the copywriting business attracts a lot of people who just want to write some quick copy and get some quick cash. They don't have a lot of interest in learning the finer points of the craft.

Beyond looking at their website and blog, you should ask them if they are keeping up with their knowledge skills.

- ✓ *Have you taken any courses recently?*
- ✓ *Are you involved in mastermind groups?*
- ✓ *Have you written a book?*
- ✓ *Are you keeping up with the latest trends in marketing and copywriting?*
- ✓ *Have you gone to any industry events?*

Asking any one of these questions will give you a pretty good indication of whether you are working with a real professional copywriter or some fly-by-night operation.

## 9) *Are you a full time copywriter, or do you do this part time?*

If you're looking to hire a freelancer, you'll want to know how much they can dedicate to your project. On the television show *Shark Tank*, if the entrepreneur wasn't dedicated to his or her business (i.e. must quit job), then that was a definite deal breaker for the investors.

It should be for you, too. And for these reasons:

- ✓ You will have trouble getting a hold of your freelancer
- ✓ You won't get full time devotion
- ✓ You won't get a quality product

Direct-response copywriting takes a lot of focused effort. If your copywriter is moonlighting, you won't see the results that you're looking for.

### **10) *How much research do you put into your projects?***

This is an important question because good copywriting is nearly all research. Once good and thorough research is completed, then the copy pretty much writes itself. If your copywriter isn't committed to spending hours and hours on research, then you might want to take a second look.

Research allows the copywriter to dig up new and exciting facts that will separate your product or service from all the others.

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# 6 Misconceptions About Direct-Response Copywriters

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## 1) Anyone can do it.

Since all that appears to be needed is a typewriter and an idea, many people think that anyone can easily write sales copy. This clearly is a misconception that could cost you a huge amount of money in the end.

Just like being a good salesperson, it takes a copywriter years and many hours of practice, training and learning to be a good direct-response copywriter. So anyone who just put up his or her shingle yesterday claiming to be a great copywriter should be looked at with much skepticism.

## 2) A content writer can write good sales copy

Your website designer who is writing your blog posts should not be the one writing your sales letter for your seminar or book publication. While some web designers, internet marketers and SEO experts have written all sorts of sales copy, writers who write blog posts, Facebook posts and ghost write books will not be your best choice to write your sales copy.

## 3) Hiring a copywriter is an expense

Hiring a copywriter is an asset. You should treat your sales copywriter and the money you spend on him or her just like any other sales force that's bringing sales or leads into your business. A sales copywriter truly is a salesperson in print. You should look at the return on your investment.

If your copywriter writes a killer sales page for your new book and you make hundreds of sales, what would be the price you would be willing to pay for that?

## 4) Confusing blog writing with sales copywriting.

Blog posts have several objectives. For most, the first objective is to attract the attention of the search engines. The second objective is to make some kind of impression on the reader.

Writing of these blogs posts is fairly simple. Often there is little or no research done before writing the post. And blog posts are cranked out at an incredible speed to keep up with the competition—all in an effort to get on the first page of Google... which is now taken up by ads and other miscellaneous doo-dads Google is experimenting with.

Direct-response copywriting is completely different. Direct-response copywriting follows proven rules for success. Some of these rules for success had been written down nearly one hundred years ago, and they still work today.

The direct-response copy must get people to act. It must overcome objections a reader may have while reading the copy. The copy must sell a product. It must garner a lead. It has a very important job to do. It must replace the salesperson.

Sales copy takes hours and hours of research. Sales copy must bring in new ideas to the reader. The blog posts role is to attract the search engines, and then get people to read it.

## 5) “No one reads anymore”

People believe that “no one reads anymore” because there is so much video on YouTube and elsewhere. But the fact of the matter is people are reading more today than ever. And they are reading sales copy more than any other advertising medium.

If this is your belief, you will miss out on many sales and marketing opportunities.

## 6) Direct-response copywriting is only for printed materials

Direct-response copywriters can and will write:

- ✓ TV scripts
- ✓ Radio/podcasts scripts
- ✓ Webinars scripts
- ✓ Video Sales Letters

All these would be considered non-printed matter, but they all need the services of a well-trained direct-response copywriter.

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# 5 Good Reasons Why You Need a Direct-Response Copywriter Today

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## 1) Take things off your plate

Tim Ferris' book, *The Four Hour Workweek*, is about outsourcing your work. If you have a higher level work such as speaking engagements, scheduling seminars and so forth, then getting bogged down with your sales copy is not something you want.

## 2) Professionalism

You may be very skilled in the art of sales and writing persuasively, but a dedicated copywriter stays well-informed of all the latest trends in the art of direct-response copywriting.

If you aren't skilled in the area of sales copywriting, then you should seriously consider hiring a copywriter for your marketing needs.

## 3) Outsider perspective.

Everyone needs an outsider's perspective. Sometimes we're too close to our business to see the big picture. Hiring a copywriter is like hiring a consultant to help you with your business and your goals.

## 4) Make a good impression

"You'll never get a second chance to make a first impression." We've all heard that before. It's repeated because it's true.

Too many landing pages, e-mails and other digital sales letters are hastily put together—often with the idea that it can be fixed later.

Don't make that mistake. Make a great impression the first time around by hiring a professional.

## 5) Writer's block

You may have the wisdom, the knowledge and the charisma to speak to an audience or write a quick e-mail, but when it comes to writing a sales letter that brings in sales, you may just find yourself freezing up at the keyboard. This is the time to call on a professional.

## About the Author:

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Ash Waechter is a direct-response copywriter for self-help authors who want a huge following.

Ash has completed training with AWAI (American Writers And Artists) with such training programs as:

- ✓ Six Figure Copywriting
- ✓ Secrets of Writing for the Self-Help Market
- ✓ Ash Waechter is a certified Dan Kennedy trained info-marketing copywriter\*

Ash is a big proponent of self-help ever since reading *How To Win Friends and Influence People* in his senior year in high school. His influencers are Earl Nightingale, Napoleon Hill, Dan Kennedy.

You can read more about Ash Waechter on his website at: [FreshSalesCopy.com](http://FreshSalesCopy.com).

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