



Special Report: How to Choose a Writer

Published by Renae E. Gregoire

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Everyone wants their writer to be good, cheap and fast. But if they have one of those qualities, you can forget about the others.

Unknown

Match Your Writer with Your Target Market

Lots of people out there call themselves writers. And many are. But how do you know which writer is the “write” one for your project?

First, who is your audience? Who will be reading what’s written? If you need writing to sell products or services to consumers (B2C), look for someone with creativity, pizzazz and a solid sales know-how.

Are you writing to sell your products or services to businesses? Business to business (B2B) writing differs from B2C writing in that most business purchases are necessary. Businesses need products and services to operate, while consumers have very few true “needs.” They need soap. They need toothpaste. They need clothes. But

do they really need a new pearl necklace? Or more knick-knacks for their house?

B2B writing requires a certain level of sophistication, especially when you’re targeting the VIP level. Make sure your B2B writer has a professional style, and understands the business and executive buyer.

Also realize that B2B writing requires less creativity, and more direct marketing knowledge. Business buyers won’t read through fluff and flowery words. They want the facts, and they want to know how your product or service will solve their problems. Period.

Check potential writers’ styles--and make sure they fit the market you’re targeting.✍

Other Tests Your Writer Must Pass

- Do they use the word “you” frequently? If not, please, pass them by.
- Are they long-winded and write in flowery prose? Is that what you want for YOUR copy?
- Does their voice and style match the image you want to project? Select a voice and style you like, and you’ll be halfway home.✍

Don’t Overlook the Basics of Grammar

Imagine this. You go to a website, or open a brochure, because you’re interested in a product or service. You begin to read. And you see spelling mistakes. Grammar gaffes. And just plain poor writing. What would you think of the person or company that produced the piece you’re reading? I’ll bet you would-

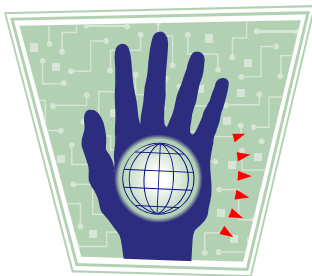
n’t want to do business with them--and so it will be when customers read your sloppy copy.

Just because someone calls themselves a writer doesn’t make it so. Check their portfolio. Check their proposal. If they can’t take the time to correct errors before they try to sell you on their services, chances are you’ll

be left with an editing job after they turn in their piece.

Grammar and spelling DO count.✍





If your writer writes it right, you can have the whole world in the palm of your hands.

Choosing a Press Release Writer

When you need a press release, make sure your writer realizes that he or she is writing to TWO audiences--editors, and the ultimate reader.

Editors are picky, and want releases written in a certain way. They're supposed to be newsworthy and presented in the inverted pyramid style (which means the most important information is at the top, and the least important at the bottom).

Your main clues to a good press release writer are the sample releases they show you. Look at the copy. Do you see adjectives, and flowery phrases like this: "Now

introducing the best and most widely-acclaimed and freshest smelling soap EVER!" If so, don't choose that writer.

Why? Because it sounds like an ad, and it's guaranteed to be thrown in the trash. News releases are supposed to be objective, and the sample above is anything but that. Instead, look for a writer who puts descriptive adjectives into quotations from company representatives, and ties the story into a newsworthy issue or topic.✍

"Remember, if you flood me with stuff that is not important, you're diluting my interest."

Mike Martin, News Director KRBE-FM, Houston, quoted in The Publicity Handbook.

Can Any Writer Create Web Content?

Unfortunately, the answer is NO.

The web is an intimate medium, and your copy needs to be clear, concise and very conversational. You need to choose a writer with a clear, strong voice, and one who knows how to write for the web.

Some important things to look for in a writer's copy:

- Short sentences, and short paragraphs.

- Communicates your most important points, or offer, at the top of the page.
- No large words or jargon.
- The word "you" should outnumber "we or I" by at least 3 to 1.
- Grammar rules are broken--fragments are ok!
- Very intimate and conversational in style, so your readers (and hopefully buyers) get to know, and trust, the people behind the site.✍

Need a Ghostwriter for Books or Articles?

Then look for a style and voice that matches your own--one that matches the sound you want to project.

Some writers are snappy. Some are abrupt. Some are clearly corporate, while others sound bland, and less than confident.

Beyond finding a style you like, look for testimonials that relate to reliability, and the writer's responsiveness and willingness to meet your deadline. If they've struggled

to meet deadlines in the past, what's to make you think that YOUR project will be any different? Are they willing to talk to you by phone? Or will communications be by email only? Do they have a full-time day job, and will be squeezing your project in at night, when they're tired and sleepy?

Find a voice you like, and working habits that are in tune with your expectations.✍



Daring ideas are like chessmen moved forward. They may be beaten, but they may start a winning game.

Goethe

So You Need a Brochure Writer?

Look for a writer who clearly understands the sales process, and who wants to know where the proposed brochure fits within your particular process.

Will it be mailed cold, to prospects who aren't expecting it? Will it be mailed with a letter? Or, will your brochure be sent as a follow-up to people who've already expressed interest in your product or service?

If your writer doesn't know the difference between these types of brochures, you've got the wrong writer.

A brochure is much more than an informational tool--it's a direct marketing medium

that if used correctly, can get your prospect to take the next step towards buying your product or service.

And, make sure the writer you choose knows the components of a winning brochure. Is there enough content to make it meaty, so the prospect feels like they've learned something? Is pricing information included, even if it's just a comparison to something familiar? Does it ask for a response? Does it lead the reader to take action?

The right brochure copy can increase your response--and increase your sales.✍



The man who doesn't read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them.
Mark Twain

Good Sales Letters Writers Bring a High ROI

If you're one that balks about the price good writers charge for proven sales letters--read this.

When your writer is an experienced direct marketer, and follows proven and tested techniques, and when your product or service is good, and you're targeting your market correctly, a good sales letter is worth 10 times its weight in gold.

Think about this: You pay \$350 for a sales letter that you're sending to 1,000 people.

What's your product or service sell for? \$99.95? Even a standard 1% response rate will bring you about a 300% return on your investment.

Say your list is off, and you get just a .5% return. You've still made more than you paid, and now have names to add to your list for future marketing.

How do you know if a writer's letters are good? Ask for past samples, and past response rates.✍

"Even a standard 1% response rate will bring you about a 300% return on your investment."

Do You Want Advertising Jingles? Or Copy that Sells?

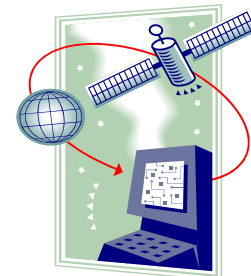
Lots of writers boast awards for cleverness, or for literature, or for style and form. It's a fact that advertising agencies want to create ads that are more clever, or prettier than other ads out there. But--ask them if the ads actually SOLD anything. Chances are, they won't know.

So ask yourself: Do you want a writer that wins awards and gets other creative types oohing and aahing? A writer who creates

ads and other materials designed to impress advertising judges and other creative types? Or do you want an ad that makes your customer say, "I've got to have that?"

The bottom line is that a good creative writer may win awards. But find out--do their pieces sell?✍

Check the article on the next page for lots of good quotes on the advertising business.



The Web Takes Your Words Around the World.



**Target Your Market Precisely.
With Copy by The Write Idea.**

Rena E. Gregoire, President
St. Petersburg, Florida

To Prospective Clients

Advertising--Not All It's Cracked Up To Be!

Ninety-nine percent of advertising doesn't sell much of anything. David Ogilvy

Hollywood has its Oscars. TV has its Emmys. Broadway has its Tonys. And advertising has its Clios. And its Andys, Addys, Effies and Obies. And 117 other assorted awards. And those are just the big ones. Joanne Lipman

I saw a subliminal advertising executive, but only for a second. Steven Wright

Advertising: the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it. Stephen Leacock

Great designers seldom make great advertising men, because they get overwhelmed by the beauty of the pic-

ture--and forget that merchandise must be sold. James Adams

Just because your ad looks good is no insurance that it will get looked at. How many people do you know who are impeccably groomed...but dull? William Bernbach

There is a great deal of advertising that is much better than the product. When that happens, all that the good advertising will do is put you out of business faster. Jerry Della Femina

If your ads don't sell, they're not worth the paper they're printed on. Rena E. Gregoire



**High Energy
Coherent
Precision
Tightly Focused
Strong**

