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**How to Increase Your Copywriting Success**

**By Chris Marlow**

Take a look at your prospecting list, if you have one. Where did all those names come from?

Most likely they're a hodge podge of names from a hodge podge of sources...with few added to your list solely on the criteria that they're especially good leads.

Now ask yourself how successful your clients would be if their lists were compiled in such an unscientific manner?

When you consider that the single most important element of a direct mail campaign is the list (followed closely by the offer, and THEN the copy), it becomes painfully apparent that a sloppy list is a liability indeed!

So how do you go about creating a solid list of quality prospects that you can mine for years to come?

There are some methods you can use and sources you can tap, and I reveal a few of the best here. However, It always boils down to looking in the right places for your particular specialty.

**MY FAVORITE STARTING PLACE**

Roughly half of my coaching students are new copywriters and when it's time to share my list building strategies with them, I always introduce them to Who's Mailing What,

<http://www.whosmailingwhat.com/>

, a rich online archive of more than 130,000 direct mail packages

collected from more than 7,000 companies since 1994.

For about \$30 per year, you can go into the archive and literally see "who's been mailing what," which can be a real boon for copywriters who specialize in the dozens of categories – publishing, financial, collectibles, technology, and more – covered by WMW.

## How to Increase Your Copywriting Success

For instance, I specialize in software. And while there are more than 7,300 software companies in the U.S., I need only 500 to keep busy. So which 500 should they be? Well, the BEST 500 of course...the 500 that I know are direct mailers...the 500 that I know are financially stable...the 500 that I know are well respected and trustworthy.

When I started compiling my list, I mined Who's Mailing What to discover the names of software companies that had mailed over the past two years. As "sure mailers," these companies became the richest names on my list, and remain so today.

### OTHER GREAT PLACES TO LOOK

Nearly every large industry has an association, and most associations have member lists. To get your hands on the list you often need to join the association, but unless the price is really exorbitant, it's usually worth it. Remember, time is money in the freelancer's world, so the faster you can put together your list, the faster you can market to it.

The library is another place to look for lists. In addition to my "sure mailers," I added the world's most profitable software companies to my list, tracked down at the local library in the Computer and Software section of the Dunn and Bradstreet Gale Industries Handbook.

I completed my goal of assembling 500 strong names by surfing the Internet in search of newsletters, Web sites, and publications that serve the software market. There I found lists like "The Top 50 Software Venture Capital Investments," which listed software companies that had recently been infused with millions of dollars each, in venture capital.

### SOME STRONG SOURCES FOR GENERALISTS

Although I believe that every business freelancer should carve out a niche for him or herself, many start out as generalists. If you fit this category, you'll find some excellent list-building sources at the library.

Chuck Thompson, one of my early coaching students, discovered the "Mail Order Business Directory" at his Chicago-area library. It lists over 5,000 names, addresses, and basic facts about U.S. firms doing business by mail.

Library sources I used in my early days of freelancing included the "Standard Directory of Advertisers" and "Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies." Also known as "the Red Books" by industry insiders, you should be able to find them at any main library; I've had less luck finding them at the local level (and they're too expensive for most freelancers to buy).

The "Standard Directory of Advertisers" contains information on over 24,000 U.S. and international advertisers who each spend more than \$200,000 annually on advertising. Each listing includes advertising expenditures by media, contact information, address, and more.

The "Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies" contains detailed profiles of nearly 13,500 U.S. and

international advertising agencies, including accounts represented by each agency, fields of specialization, contact information, and much more. These directories are truly exciting sources of information for the freelancer who recognizes the value of smart targeting.

Finally, you never know what you'll come up with while searching the Internet. After helping dozens of coaching students build their niche market list, I have a folder full of rich places to look for high quality names.

Compiling your own personal prospect list is never fast or easy, but there is a silver lining. And that is that no other copywriter will be marketing to the same exact list that you are. So do your homework and make your list as strong as it can be. Because most of your success will flow from your list, it pays to make it as powerful as it can be.

Master copywriter and coach Chris Marlow publishes a free ezine for copywriters who want to quickly build a profitable business. Visit:

<http://www.FreelancersBusinessBulletin.com>

### **Profit Boosters Copywriting Checklist**

**By Mike Pavlish**

You can use this copywriting checklist when you are copywriting – or to evaluate copywriting. It is based on what works best from over 1,200 copywriting projects we have done since 1978. It will lead to significantly more response from your copywriting.

Before writing:

1. Study the company and the product/service being sold thoroughly so you have all the information you will need.
2. Research the prospects and the market to determine what benefits the prospect wants most, secondary benefits wanted, objections, and what would get him to buy now. Key: Don't guess; research.
3. Develop the main emotions you can touch with your copywriting for this project, and how you will do it. The strongest emotions are love, fear, greed, acceptance, survival, anger, and health.
4. Think like your prospect; and not like the marketer.
5. Develop the best offer(s) you can make to the prospect. Your offer includes pricing, terms, bonuses and guarantee.

At this point, you know the company and product, what the target prospect wants most, his objections, the main emotions you can touch, and you have developed a terrific offer.

## How to Increase Your Copywriting Success

Headline and start of copy:

6. Write at least 20 different headlines before choosing the best one.

Headline winners include a big, bold promise of the benefits the prospect wants most, specific figures, a guarantee, credibility enhancers, a special offer.

Legendary marketers John Caples and Claude Hopkins proved that one headline can pull 10 times the response as another headline ... with no other changes in the copywriting.

7. Start of copy should re-enforce the main benefit(s) of the headline, elaborate, and incorporate the secondary benefits the prospect wants most.

Body of copy:

8. Develop the prospect problem and pain points. Reinforce how these problems will remain or even get worse unless he takes action, and how your product/service is the best solution.

9. Copywriting should be first person, one-to-one, conversational.

10. List the prospects likely objections to buying, and overcome those objections.

11. Sincerely flatter the prospect if you can.

12. Get the prospect to mentally "picture and enjoy" the end-result benefits of buying.

13. Use testimonials, specifics, tests, clients, studies, success stories and memberships to add credibility and believability.

14. Be sure it is easy to read and "scan". Use sub headlines with prospect benefits, short sentences, short paragraphs.

15. If any copy is dull or boring, cut it or revise it.

16. If the flow gets slowed or stopped at any point in the copy, fix it.

17. Copywriting must be passionate, enthusiastic.

18. Create urgency to get a response now.

19. Tell the prospect what he will lose if he does not respond now.

20. Tell the prospect exactly what to do.

21. Close, Close, Close. Get action now.

## How to Increase Your Copywriting Success

Mike Pavlish is the president of Profit Boosters Copywriting. They have completed more than 1,200 copywriting projects for clients since 1978. Fees start at \$3,000.00 and up. He can be reached at

<http://www.ProfitBoostersCopy.com>



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