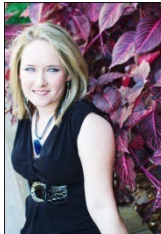


The Bottom Line

Effective copywriting can provide ongoing value as customers download your informational newsletters and white papers. The value increases when they encourage friends and colleagues to do the same. These products allow businesses of all sizes to tap in to the exponential power for professional and social networking. People return to sites that give them something useful for no cost. At Writing Career Coach we are able to combine article writing, entrepreneurial writing skills, and the storytelling of fiction to create engaging and informative copy for businesses. We have helped both fiction and non-fiction writers strengthen their craft. We've ghostwritten books for busy professionals who don't have time to learn to be authors, and we've offered consulting skills to people who want to learn to do it on their own.

To learn more about how Writing Career Coach can bring results to your company, visit www.WritingCareerCoach.com or call Tiffany Colter at 517.936.5896.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tiffany Colter is a passionate freelance writer whose credits include Charisma Magazine, Toledo Business Journal, regular columns for Afictionado E-zine and the Suspense Magazine where she writes the "Ask your Writing Career Coach" column. She is tenacious in her approach to not only create a great story, but to mentor other writers. Tiffany won the 2007 Daphne du Maurier Award for Excellence in Mystery/Suspense in the inspirational unpublished division for her manuscript A Face in the Shadow and was a semi-finalist in Operation First Novel in 2004. She earned her BA in Political Science with a History minor and French Language Concentrations from the University of Toledo's Honor's College in 1998. She earned a Summa cum Laude distinction and was inducted in to numerous honor societies, including Phi Kappa Phi and Golden Key. She writes a blog for businesses and writers called The Writing Career Coach. On that site she mentors writers in matters of business management, marketing, and time management principles. Tiffany also travels and speaks on these topics to writers and small business owners at conferences and via online webinars. She is an active member of local and national writing groups where she has served as a judge in writing contests for published and unpublished writers. She offers a variety of online lessons for a fee as well as a monthly free feature at www.WritingCareerCoach.net.

About Writing Career Coach

Writing Career Coach was created to be a place where writers could learn about businesses and businesses could learn about writing.

This tool to help build your business has been provided to by:

Fred St Laurent SVP Marketing and Strategic Planning
fred@write4biz.com 517-682-0093 direct

Writing for Small Business Owners

By Tiffany Colter, Writer, Speaker, and Writing Mentor

Writing Business Owners Need

Newsletters-to inform your customers of changes, benefits, features and, specials on a regular basis. The e-newsletter is replacing the print version. This provides considerable savings and allows even sole proprietors to now use this.

Fliers-to distribute to potential customers when you or your employees meet them in person.

Websites-No longer billboards on the superhighway. Websites are now the coffee shop where you develop a relationship with people interested in your products and services.

White Papers-Give detailed information to your customers while pointing to the benefits of using you for that service. It is a mix between a brochure and an article.

TiVo, iPods, Ad blocker, and spam folders all exist to weed out the standard forms of advertising that have been used to drive customers to your business. In an era of changing economies and shifting industry norms, being noticed will have far less to do with your loud flashy commercial and more with the relationship you have with your customers.

One recent outgrowth of the internet is the expectation of getting something for nothing. While this has been painful for magazine publishers, businesses can use this new reality to create a strong relationship with potential, previous, and current customers. In order to continue to build your business you need to know the ways to use written communication to market and sell your products and services.

Introducing New Ideas to your Customers with white papers

Robert Bly, author of *The White Paper Marketing Handbook*, defines a white paper as, "A promotional piece in the guise of an

informational article or report." They give people a reason to see you as a source of information and, eventually, a good place to make a purchase. To do this you need to engage the reader, provide information that is detailed and useful, and do it in a way that does not make them feel like they're being sold something.

Novel writers focus on Showing vs. Telling when trying to build their stories. When a reader feels they have an immediate connection to the character they will continue to read. As long as there is the promise of new adventures or an unanswered question, they will keep going even when the pace of the story slows. Once authors have earned the readers trust they will read book after book by that author.

The same is possible with business owners. When you provide a person with a promise and then exceed expectations-even in the form of free information-they will continue to come back to you when they need services. Not only that, but they will refer their friends to the free information. This is where white papers are used by smart companies to increase their contact list and build sales.

Thinking from Both Sides

Your customer wants to make their own purchasing decision. They do not want you to decide what is best for them and then hard sell. So, how can using writing to do that? You think from both sides. Novelists do this when creating their scenes. Look at it through the eyes of two or more characters.

By filtering thoughts and emotions, perceptions and misconceptions, the author is able to create the scene in a way that will provide the best story for the reader.

For you, thinking from both sides will keep your written communication from sounding bossy. Try this exercise. Write out a page describing what you like and don't like about your cell phone as if you're writing your friend. Next, do the same thing as if you're describing it to a potential customer. How did the way you highlight features and benefits change? How did your wording change? Finally, go to the website of your cell phone provider and find a description of your cell phone.

In each example you found that the word usage was slightly different. If you were a customer, which one would be most convincing? Why?

An understanding of how to write in a way that feels conversational without fake, professional without pushy, is the sign of an excellent copywriter.

Effective Writing

Think about the writing that most appeals to you. There is meaningful content. You don't feel you're being sold something. There is relevant and specific information. There are real benefits enumerated. Put this in your own business writing.

That is easy to say, but how do you start? You start by answering a few questions:

- * What is your message?
- * Who is your audience?
- * What action do you want them to take?

Putting this in to your own business writing

What action do you want them to take?

- Always give a call to action.
- Get permission to contact again.
- Find a way to track your results.
- Avoid Clichés

Converting the written word to repeat sales

Always tell the customer what the benefit is to them of using your product or service.

Be very specific.

Refer them to your website so they can subscribe to your newsletter.

Considerations when Hiring a Writer

Prices will vary depending on what you need done, how quickly, and if technical knowledge is needed. They range from 10 cents a word for an article to \$10,000+ for a book.

You can reasonably expect most copywriters to charge \$25-\$85/hour.

You can reasonably expect most editors to charge \$25-\$60/hour to edit what you've written.

Hiring a writer saves you time and will allow you to focus on things that will build your business.

Having an outsider's opinion can add new perspective to the way you reach out to your audience.

Questions to ask

How long have they been writing?

Kinds of writing they've done.

Bylines

References/Endorsements

Go to their website-Do they convey a professional image? Is their website all about sales or do they offer meaningful content to their readers?