



briar
copywriting

How to get the
most from your
copywriting budget

**A simple
guide to the
copywriting
process**

Copywriting

“...writing copy for the purpose of advertising or marketing. The copy is meant to persuade someone to buy a product, or influence their beliefs.”

(Wikipedia)

Hardworking Words

Copywriting is about a lot more than just stringing words together to create pretty sentences. It's about engagement, persuasion and building trusting relationships.

Contrary to popular belief, a copywriter doesn't need previous knowledge of your company or industry to create powerful copy.

You are the expert in your field; she is the expert in her field. Together, that's a powerful combination.

This simple guide takes you through the copywriting process:

- Finding the right copywriter for you
- What to ask a copywriter
- How to give a good brief
- Dealing with the review process
- What copywriting fees include

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Finding your perfect copywriter

How can you be sure you find the right copywriter for you?

Simple, do your research.

It's a very collaborative process, so it's recommended that you speak with potential candidates before making up your mind because if you don't click your project will be doomed.

Great copywriters come in all shapes and sizes, but they all have some traits in common.



Creative

Anyone can take a brief and write text, but not everyone can devise concepts that will carry a strong message to your customers that will knock their socks off.



A bit of nous

Copywriters aren't generally industry specific, so it's vital they can grasp the subject quickly.



Understanding

Not only do they have to understand your goals, they also have to understand the needs and wants of your customers. After all, that's who the copy is aimed at.



Great listener

A good copywriter will listen first, weigh up the project and then offer feedback to develop a campaign that will work.



Organised

They must be able to follow directions. Work to deadlines, manage multiple tasks and drive the project through to completion.

Finding your perfect copywriter continued...

How can you be sure you find the right copywriter for you?

Simple, do your research.



Stand firm

Your copywriter won't bully you, but will speak up if what you're asking won't achieve the goals you've set.



Simple

Your copywriter will use simple language that's jargon free. They are not there to make you look intelligent; they are there to sell to your customers.



Consistent

Your copywriter will create copy that is on-brand and consistent, in tone and voice, with your other marketing materials.



Unassuming

There's no room for your copywriter's ego in your project. Everything that's written is there to meet your goals, not gain kudos for your copywriter.



Web savvy

When creating content for your online marketing activities it's essential your copywriter has a firm understanding of search engine optimisation, linking and how to cultivate persuasive momentum that will keep your readers hooked.

What to ask a copywriter

When speaking with potential copywriters, it is important to know what to ask.

I've already mentioned that knowledge of your business or industry isn't necessarily a requirement, but it's worth finding out if they are familiar with your sector.

What's more important is to find out:

- Who they've worked with in the past
- The types of projects they have worked on
- Whether they are up to date with the intricacies of online content writing. Especially in relation to SEO (search engine optimisation)
- Can you see some of their past work?
- How do they work? What processes do they follow?

How to brief your copywriter

This is the most important part of the copywriting process.

Taking an “I’ll know what I want when I see it” attitude is a recipe for disaster. You must have a clear idea of what you’re looking for from the outset.

Copywriting is a collaborative process. You’ve been doing what you do for years, but your copywriter has no idea how your business works, which is why she’ll be relying on you to give her as much detail as possible.

Ideally, you should have a face-to-face meeting with her so she can gather the information she needs to get a feel for your company. But if that’s not possible ask if she has a briefing document you can complete and make sure you answer all her questions in as much detail as possible covering areas such as:

- **Who is your audience?** - How old are they? What are their aspirations? How affluent are they? What problem do they have? Why would they buy from you?
- **What is your product/ service?** - What benefits does it offer? What would stop people from buying it? What makes it stand out from anything else on the market? How does it work? What problem does it solve?
- **Your brand** - Do you have an established brand? Do you have a style guide? How do you want to be perceived by your customers? What tone do you want? (professional, conversational etc.)? Are there any word/ styles you don’t like?
- **Your project** - What are you aiming to achieve? What is it? How is it to be structured? What type of information is to be included?
- **Your company** - What is your ethos? What are you doing that sets you apart from your competitors? What is the background of your company?

The review process

From your brief, your copywriter will go away, do whatever research is necessary and then create an initial draft.

This is just the starting point.

Your job is to review what she's come up with and offer constructive feedback.

First draft lands on your desk:

- Read through it several times to get a feel for it
- If it's spot on - great sign off
- Not quite right - think about what needs changing and whether you gave all the information needed for the project - give constructive feedback about what's not quite right

Second draft arrives:

- Read through it several times to get a feel for the amended text
- If it's spot on - great sign off
- Still a few changes needed? - give constructive feedback

Third and final draft arrives:

- Spot on - sign off

Frequently, you'll find that you think you know what you want until you see it in writing. Then you start to have doubts. If that's the case tell your copywriter what's not quite right and she'll use that feedback to shape the content and create a second draft.

The cost of copywriting

How does a copywriter work out her fees?

There appear to be 3 main ways of charging.

1. By the word

This one always seems a bit odd.

For starters, how can you possibly know how many words you're going to use?

It's a bit like hiring a builder to build a house and paying per brick.

You could end up with a massive home with 8-foot thick walls!

If you limit the number of words your copywriter can use, you're effectively asking her to write in a straight jacket.

No - this isn't a viable charging policy.

2. Per hour/day

For a one off project, this approach is fraught with danger.

From the outset it's impossible to know how long a project is going to take therefore, unless you've specified a number of days, you could be opening yourself up to a massive bill at the end.

Having said that, if you're looking to hire a copywriter on a retainer basis, this is a great option. All you have to do is agree their daily rate and book them for a certain number of days per month. That way you have someone on hand to work with you as an extension of your team.

The cost of copywriting continued...

How does a copywriter work out her fees?

There appear to be 3 main ways of charging.

3. Fixed fee

This option gives you cost certainty.

Once a full brief has been received, a fixed fee is calculated that takes into account:

- Research time
- Meetings/ interviews
- Complexity and scope of the project
- Creation of the initial draft
- Up to 2 sets of amendments

There will also be a clause stating that should additional work be required due to a significant change to the original brief, the extra work will be charged at the copywriter's standard hourly rate.

Most new clients will be asked for a 50% deposit before work begins, but for regular clients, payment is often invoiced at the end of the project.

A bit about me

Who am I?



My name is Sally Ormond and my company is Briar Copywriting Ltd.

Since starting out in 2007, I have worked with companies around the world, creating powerful communications that get results. My clients span a broad spectrum of industries and range from SMEs to multinationals.

By becoming one of their team and taking the time to understand...

- Them
- Their personality
- Ethos
- Brand
- Product/services
- Customers

...I help them become more effective in their marketplace by producing eye-catching, powerful marketing copy.

It would be pretty boring if that's all I did, so when I get the time I'm a keen cyclist and gym goer, I love reading, volunteering for the Make A Wish Foundation and taking care of my family.

Get in touch...



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