The Top 6 Skills Every Copywriter Must Have

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The Covid-19 crisis has changed the world and our lifestyles drastically. These days, we open up our Zoom app to talk to friends. We join a Slack call to meet with the boss. We help our kids as they navigate their virtual classrooms.

It has been a huge change for many, but the truth is that we've been slowly moving online for a long time. Covid-19 simply clicked the "fast forward" button on the shift to cyberspace.

Still, the numbers are astounding. For instance, Google searches went from 3.5 billion in 2019 to 6 billion in 2020. More than ever, businesses are turning to the web to market their products and stay afloat during this unprecedented time.

If you've been thinking of learning copywriting, this is a huge opportunity for you to jumpstart your dream career. Businesses need you. Non-profits need you. The healthcare industry needs you. Life coaches, mental health specialists, and marketers need you.

But what skills do you need to be a top-notch copywriter? Be a talkative extrovert? Be good at selling? Not quite.

Let's look at six top-notch copywriting skills that are often overlooked.

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1. Hard skill: conversational writing skills

The truth is, hard selling turns people off. We cringe when we see flashing ads or get “moved down the funnel” by a grinning salesman who tries to shove a product down our throats.

On the other hand, we listen with rapt attention when a friend tells us about a product they love. There’s something about their tone that draws and interests us.

Tip: Be conversational in your copy. Imagine yourself telling a friend you care for about a product that will genuinely change his life.

2. Soft skill: empathy

The beauty of high-quality sales copy is that it isn’t about tricking people. It isn’t about shoving a product down their throats.

Instead, it’s about helping. It’s about improving people’s lives.

To showcase this understanding and come from a place of help, you as a copywriter need empathy. You need the ability to step into your audience’s shoes and see the world through their eyes. Only then can you craft copy that speaks to their hearts.

Tip: Each time you sit down to write copy, imagine yourself in your audience’s place. What keeps them up at night? What are their biggest goals and desires? Once you feel what your audience feels, you’ll be able to speak to them in a compelling, irresistible way.

3. Hard skill: SEO know-how

A lot of people think copywriting is bizarre television ads selling random kitchen appliances, but this time with the written word as a medium. And while copywriting is about selling, it’s more than that.

For example, copywriters are often tasked to craft powerful SEO-optimized web copy. This is essential in a world where SEO drives 1000% higher traffic than organic social media.

Tip: Learn how to write SEO-optimized copy. Download this free SEO cheat sheet to get started.

4. Soft skill: creativity

Copywriting isn’t about loading an email or landing page with jargon and endless lists of statistics. More often, it’s about telling stories readers can relate to.

To be an excellent copywriter, you need to learn how to take dry, old sales copy and turn it into something new. When your audience is nodding, laughing, and crying with you, you’ll create a bond with them that’ll make them see you’re on their side.

Tip: Practice your storytelling skills. Imagine scenarios in which people struggle with your audience’s pain points, and craft engaging stories around them. For instance, if you’re selling the book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, tell a story about the time you checked your email for 20 minutes because you didn’t know what to say at a party.

Related: 7 Steps to Becoming a Professional Copywriter

5. Hard skill: content strategy

As mentioned above, powerful copywriting is like persuading a dear friend to buy something that will improve his life. The problem is, what if you don’t know who that friend is, how he talks or how you should address him?

When you learn content strategy, you learn to put the pieces of your content marketing puzzle together. You learn how to speak to your audience using audience personas, how to be consistent in your conversations with them, and how to be unique in a world where a ton of marketing messages are released each day.

Tip: Learn the basics of content strategy, even if you don’t plan to become a content strategist.

6. Soft skill: curiosity

As a copywriter, you need to be an excavator. To write stellar copy, you need to answer questions such as:

- How does this product work?
- Why is this product better than others?

Your curiosity will drive you to find all the answers.

Tip: Stoke your curiosity by asking the five “WH” questions about every product you write copy for. An enquiring mind will help you unearth a long list of interesting facts you can use as gold nuggets in your copy.

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