



How to sell web content to your clients

Tips, tricks and insights to help you **increase your agency's content offering** and **work more effectively with skilled external copywriters and content creators**



Who are you?

You run a web design and development agency, a marketing agency or a brand consultancy, and you don't have specialist copywriting or content creation skills in-house.

Words are the sticking point for your larger projects. Your clients don't have the time, the knowledge or the inclination to write their copy or content themselves – and, quite frankly, neither do you.

You can't sign off your designs, builds and campaigns until the text has been supplied. But it takes an age to get the wording anywhere near sign-off – and when it has finally been approved, you have no way of knowing whether it's been correctly structured, adequately optimised for search, or whether it contains key mistakes that could leave a poor impression on your client's customers.

You know that the road to completion would be much smoother if you worked with a content partner, but you struggle to get your clients to see the value in this service. You also have your own reservations about outsourcing this element of the work to another provider.



Who am I?

I'm Danielle, a copywriter and content consultant with nearly a decade of experience in my field.

After a long time at the helm of a full-service digital marketing agency, I set up Indy in 2017 to focus on providing web-centric copywriting and content support solutions to companies and entrepreneurs that take their digital presence seriously.

I listen. I interpret. I recommend. I implement. I liaise. I consult with my clients to make sure their content is working as

hard as it can for their business, and to give everybody involved in their project the support they need to deliver the best possible results, on time and on budget.

I'm not your average copywriter. My work is very much consultancy led, which is why you'll sometimes hear me call myself a Content Consultant.



A bit about Indy

Indy is a team of expert copywriters and content writers with experience in many different sectors.

We also work with a wider network of designers, developers, marketers, PR specialists, photographers and videographers who all complement our work.

We service all kinds of businesses directly. We don't have a niche as such, but we do tend to attract work from professional service providers, tech trailblazers, coaches, consultants and property-related organisations.

What really sets Indy apart from our competitors is our ability to support agency owners who are keen to outsource their copywriting, content creation and onsite optimisation requirements to somebody who 'gets' what they need, understands why they need it, and who will work tirelessly to make sure their clients are happy with the work they receive.

Copy and content are not the same thing

Copy is used in marketing and advertising. It persuades your audience to take a desired action.

Content is information communicated to a reader. It tells your audience what's what.

Remember:

All copy is content, but not all content is copy!



The different types of copywriting explained

Copywriting

From coming up with snappy headlines to crafting compelling copy for ads, ebooks and email campaigns, copywriters specialise in all things sales; they aim to create words that get your brand noticed, and that gets people to try, buy or sign up to your product or service.

Content writing

Content writers produce everything from blogs and social media posts to more in-depth articles and white papers. Their work is at the heart of any decent content marketing strategy.

Technical writing

This is the art of taking high-level information and turning it into easily digestible content for a wider audience.

Technical copywriting

Not to be confused with the above, technical copywriting involves coming up with marketing wording for software or technical products and services. It's kind of a mix of technical writing and straight-out copywriting.

SEO copywriting

SEO copywriters develop copy and content that's optimised according to best practices to ensure it ranks well in the major search engines. This kind of copywriting is both an art and a science – and it's much more than stuffing some keywords into some headings and hoping for the best!

UX copywriting

UX copywriters use language to make branded digital experiences easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable for your users. They often work hand in hand with UX designers.



Copy and content can be used to:

Define a brand

Ever picked up a piece of copy and immediately recognised the tone and the language? Copy and content can be used to create a memorable corporate identity.

Inform and educate

Well-thought-out content will provide the answers customers are looking for. If they can find what they're looking for on a landing page, in a blog or on social media, they're less likely to hound sales reps for information.

Explore emotions

Expertly written words can help to identify

an emotional state within the reader – then alter it.

Persuade and sell

Excellent copy will generate more conversions. It can be used to not only bring the customer round to the company's point of view, but also inspire them to take the company's desired action.

Upsell or cross-sell

Tactfully written text can be used to pique interest in better packages and additional products that might also be of benefit to the audience.



The 5 main barriers that stop your clients from investing in copywriting and content creation services – and how to overcome them

1. The fear of the unknown

Many clients may not realise that working with a copywriter is an option. They may be confused by what that means for the design or development process, and concerned that creating copy or content will hold up their project.

They may also be afraid of wasting time and money on a relationship that doesn't bring them the results they need.

Client Profile:

They're new to running a business, or they've not been involved in the marketing side of things until now.

Solution:

Educate them.

You need to:

- a) Explain how the service works, and
- b) Help the client understand why it's a great investment from the off.

To make things easier, create evergreen resources that talk the client through the process and shout about the benefits of outsourcing this part of the project.

Host this kind of educational content on your website as pages, blogs or PDFs, or create a digital brochure or presentation that covers the key points. Clients can take these assets away and digest them in their own time, without feeling under pressure to buy.

2. The client had a bad experience of working with a copywriter in the past

As in any profession, there are copywriters out there who are not delivering great work. But that's not the only reason the client's previous relationship may have broken down. Sometimes two people just aren't on the same page, or there's an obstacle in the process that cannot be overcome.

What has led them to this point is irrelevant, really. The issue now is convincing them that they will not receive the same terrible experience the second time around.

Client Profile:

They've been in business for a while and have had some success to date. They're cynical about outsourcing because they've been burned previously (or they know someone else who had trouble getting the results they wanted).

Solution:

Reassure them.

Remind the client that there is scope for revisions within the copywriting quote, so if they're not 100% happy with the work the first time around, they can suggest amendments.

Reiterate that the copywriter is here to help. He or she wants to 'get it right' just as much as the client does (assuming you've chosen the right copywriter, of course!). Give the client the option to speak to their copywriter directly so they can build a relationship with them, under a white labelled agreement if needs be.

Also, send them your terms and conditions documents early in the proposal process so they know what to expect moving forward.

3. The client assures you they can write their own copy

STRAIGHT FROM THE AGENCY:

"I've had many clients come to me in the past and say, 'Why should I pay for something I can write myself?' But there's so much value in outsourcing this part of the work to someone who works with words for a living."

Client Profile:

They believe that, as the man or woman on the ground, they're the best person to write their copy or content. They struggle to believe that somebody else with lesser knowledge could capture their message as well as them.

Solution:

Convince them that there are many benefits to bringing in the professionals.

Explain to them that hiring an external copywriter will take the work off their desk. After they've completed the initial consultation and provided a brief, they will be able to pass their requirements over to somebody else and get back to doing what they do best, whatever that might be.

Plus, they will know that the copy or content they receive will be technically correct and designed to show off their company in the very best light. It will be benefits-driven as opposed to self-indulgent; it will communicate the value of what they can offer in a real-world setting, instead of going over and over the merits of the company itself.

4. The client doesn't believe an external copywriter can produce something that accurately reflects their business

STRAIGHT FROM THE AGENCY:

"The biggest benefit to professional copywriting is the outside perspective. A copywriter can write something that potential customers actually want to read, not just a load of fluff that's irrelevant or unimportant."

Client Profile:

In our experience, most new clients have concerns that a third party won't be able to describe their business, let alone 'sell' it.

Solution:

Strengthen their faith in the service with testimonials, case studies and reviews.

If somebody is unsure about something, they want to be reassured by other people they respect who have been in the same position. Use social proof to reinforce the fact that other clients' copywriting requirements have been successfully outsourced in the past.

Collect resources that highlight the positive experiences other clients have had after investing in professionally written content. Where possible, put your copywriter in touch with the client directly for initial consultation. Better still, ask your copywriter to visit the client's office or work premises so they can get a real feel for the business, immerse themselves in its culture for a few hours, and establish a relationship of trust with the person responsible for curating the copy or content.*

**Most copywriters will need to charge for their time and travel expenses if you ask them to conduct an onsite visit – but we'll go into this more later.*

5. The client has limited budget

This one crops up a lot. A LOT.

Client Profile:

For whatever reason, the client has nominal funds to put towards their copy or content. They could be a start-up with limited investment, or they could have forgotten to include copywriting in their design or development budget.

Solution:

Reiterate that more investment now means less expenditure later.

Why? Because great copy captures the interest of screen-weary readers. It leads to better engagement rates and, ultimately, more conversions. On the flip side, poorly-put-together copy turns off potential customers and leaves a bad impression, giving them a legitimate excuse to jump into the arms of a competitor.

Spend a little on a professional copywriter now, and the website will be set up for success in the longer term.

Also, remind the client that one piece of content can be re-engineered across multiple formats. For example, landing page copy and blog content can be cut, re-adjusted and re-purposed for social media posts, infographics, videos and much more!



The 3 main benefits of working with a professional copywriter

1. You'll save time

You'll sidestep having to wait for completed copy or content for your client – and the project will run more efficiently.

2. You'll save money

Ever heard the phrase 'pay peanuts, and you'll get monkeys'? The same principle applies to copywriting. Get things right first time, and you (or your client) won't have to splash out in the future to correct shoddy work.

3. You'll get better results

Your copy will present your client's business in the best possible way – and it will be carefully designed to help them achieve those all-important conversions.

Let's talk about the finer details

What should be in your proposal?

Ideally, you need to be introducing the idea of professionally written copy in your opening conversation with the client. Once you have reached proposal stage, you'll need to contain a section in your document that talks about:

- ✓ The benefits of investing in professionally written copy
- ✓ What the client can expect from the process
- ✓ How the copywriter will help to speed things along and keep the project on track
- ✓ What will be expected of them if they do not decide to hire a copywriter

Should you offer to provide free samples or free consultancy time?

The short answer is no. Copywriters provide a professional service, and they deserve to be paid for anything they produce for your clients.

However, it's always a good idea to ask for recent samples from your chosen copywriting partner so you can get a feel for their work and pass on their portfolio to your clients.

What should be in your contract?

To cover yourself (and your copywriter), you need to include:

- ✓ The scope of works – exactly what the client can expect to receive
- ✓ Any confidentiality clauses
- ✓ Your revision policy (how many rounds of revisions are included in the fee)
- ✓ When you expect input and feedback from the client
- ✓ How the copy will be provided – whether that's in Word format, or in Google Drive or another shared facility
- ✓ Your payment terms, along with a timeline of when invoices will be due if you've opted for a staged payment agreement
- ✓ What happens to the copy once full payment has been made. In most cases, copyright will be automatically transferred to the client, and they will be able to use the work as they please
- ✓ What happens if the client does not review the copy within the set timeframe. Usually, this will imply that they have 'accepted' the work, and monies are owed

Make sure your agency terms align with those you have agreed with your copywriter!

And for complete peace of mind, always ask for advice from a qualified solicitor when creating or adjusting your client agreement.



What should you expect from your external copywriters?

Skills and experience will vary from person to person. But there are certain traits you should expect from every copywriter you work with, regardless of which area of copywriting they specialise in, or how large their portfolio is.

Your external copywriters should:

Ask for a full brief

The more information your copywriter has, the more likely it is that he/she will nail the client's requirements first time.

Be open to communicating with the client directly

You don't want to be the middleman between copywriter and client – and you shouldn't have to be. Your copywriter should be confident in talking to your client directly via email, phone or web conferencing software.

Factor in time for research and analysis

Copywriting is more than putting pen to paper (or fingers to keys). Your copywriter should factor ample research time into their scope of works.

Submit work on time

Missed deadlines don't leave a great impression on your clients.

Let you know if your requests incur any extra charges

Your copywriter should never assume you (or your client) has the budget for deliverables that weren't included in the original scope of works.

STRAIGHT FROM THE AGENCY:

“Most of the freelancers I work with offer a 20-30% discount to agencies. This is because the agency spends time and money finding and nurturing the client which is then naturally passed to the freelancer. It also allows for agency markup.”



What are the standard payment terms amongst copywriters?

It's widely accepted that copywriters bill for a 50% deposit before work starts, then invoice for the remaining balance once the content has been approved and signed off by the client.

Some may choose to bill a percentage of the total fee at various stages of the project (for example, upon receipt of first drafts, completed revisions and final sign-off).

It's also not uncommon for some writers to bill for the full amount upfront. Doing so allows them to secure time in their schedule

for the work whilst reducing their risk of non-payment due to project delays, lack of communication from the client, or unforeseen circumstances at the agency. It's up to you what payment terms you choose to accept from your external copywriters. But if you've followed the advice in this guide, you should be more than comfortable accepting invoices for 50% or even 100% of the total balance upfront, because your clients will be truly invested in the benefits of the service and will be eager to commit to the project.



Your agency checklist

- ✓ Know the different types of copywriters – and find a writer you trust who falls into each category (or who is multi-skilled)
- ✓ Know the benefits of great copy inside out
- ✓ Have resources to hand – brochures, web pages, blogs and other assets – so you can educate your clients on these benefits when you need to
- ✓ Nail your process – and develop T&Cs that are as comprehensive as possible
- ✓ Collect feedback, testimonials and case studies – any kind of social proof to reassure your clients that professional copy is a worthwhile investment
- ✓ Develop a killer proposal!
- ✓ Set up a white labelling arrangement so your copywriter can build a direct relationship with the client (and you don't have to co-ordinate client communications)

Key takeaways

When it comes to selling content to your clients, you need to sell the *outcome of the service*, not the service itself.

And as an agency, you also need to incorporate your copywriter(s) into your processes as soon as possible to ensure they have everything they need to deliver exceptional value, regardless of the project they're working on.



At Indy, we practice what we preach

We supply our referrers with proposal, agreement and sample copy that they can adapt to suit their own terms and branding, then use within their own sales processes.

We also make sure payment terms are clearly outlined before we start the project, so there's no confusion further down the line.



Need help? Want advice? We're always here to chat

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