

**Bob Bly**  
Copywriter/Consultant/Seminar Leader

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31 Cheyenne Drive, Montville, NJ 07045 • (973) 263-0562 • Fax (973) 263-0613  
e-mail: [rwby@bly.com](mailto:rwby@bly.com) • website: [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com)

Thanks for your interest  
in my copywriting services ...

Now, maybe you asked for this information kit out of curiosity. Some folks do--especially those who never hired a freelance copywriter before.

But, more likely, you need a good direct-response copywriter--someone who combines writing skill and sales ability with technical know-how and knowledge of Internet marketing.

Whatever your reason for calling or writing, you want to know more about a writer before you hire him. If we were sitting face-to-face, chatting in your office, you'd ask me questions. Let me try to answer a few of those questions right here.

### **"WHAT ARE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS AS A COPYWRITER?"**

As a freelancer, I've written copy for more than 100 clients. And, I'm the author of more than 75 books, including THE COPYWRITER'S HANDBOOK (Henry Holt & Co.) and INTERNET DIRECT MAIL: THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL E-MAIL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS (NTC Books).

I've given seminars on copywriting and direct marketing for numerous corporations and associations. I also taught copywriting at New York University.

Before becoming a freelancer, I was advertising manager for Koch Engineering (an industrial manufacturer) and a staff writer for Westinghouse. The attached material will give you the full story.

### **"DO YOU HAVE A TECHNICAL BACKGROUND?"**

I have a bachelor's degree in engineering from the University of Rochester. Ninety-five percent of the work I do is in business-to-business, online, and direct response.

I've written copy about computers, chemicals, pulp and paper, mining, construction, electronics, engineering, pollution control, medical equipment, industrial equipment, marine products, software, banking, financial services, health care, publishing, seminars, training, telecommunications, and many other areas. In the computer field, for example, I'm the author of five computer books, including A DICTIONARY OF COMPUTER WORDS (Dell/Banbury). I'm also a Certified Novell Administrator.

Most important to you, I'm a direct-response and online copy specialist. Writing direct-response copy isn't something I do to pass the time between TV commercials. Rather, it's my bread and butter. So I put all my skill, knack, and know-how into every piece of direct-response copy I write. And, after writing hundreds of web pages, e-mails, articles, brochures, and sales letters for people like you, I've learned how to sell to corporate executives, entrepreneurs, managers, purchasing agents, technicians, engineers, IT professionals, Internet users, and direct-response buyers.

(over please)

### **"DO YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE IN MY FIELD?"**

If you sell to businesses, online or through direct response, chances are I already have experience dealing with your type of product or service--or something very similar.

Take a look at my writing samples enclosed with this letter. Do they seem "right up your alley"? If not, give me a call, and I'll send additional samples that are closer to your area of interest. Or take a look at my portfolio online at [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com).

### **"WHAT KINDS OF ASSIGNMENTS DO YOU HANDLE?"**

I cover the full spectrum. About 80% of my business is writing direct-response copy -- for business, publishing, Internet, and high-tech clients. The rest involves creating a wide assortment of marketing communications, including ads, feature articles, presentations, scripts, press releases, newsletters, catalogs, case histories, annual reports, speeches, Web pages, e-mail, and SEO web copy.

My specialty is my ability to write clear, credible, persuasive copy about a wide range of products and services, from the simple to the highly technical.

I am able to quickly grasp complex marketing problems and understand sophisticated technologies. Clients appreciate the fact that I can sit down with engineers, scientists, systems professionals, stock analysts, and other specialists, ask intelligent questions, and speak their language.

What's more, my copy gets results. One ad, written for a manufacturer of pollution-control equipment, was the No. 1 inquiry producer in four consecutive issues of Chemical Engineering magazine.

Another piece of copy, a direct mail campaign I wrote for a telephone company, won the Direct Marketing Association's Gold Echo Award... and generated a 50% response rate (and \$5.7 million in revenue) for the client. And one of my landing pages selling an e-book generated a 32% conversion ratio.

I can't predict how many responses my ad, mailer, or landing page will pull for you. But I can--and do--guarantee your satisfaction with the copy you receive from me.

### **"WHY DOES YOUR LETTERHEAD SAY 'COPYWRITER/CONSULTANT'?"**

In addition to writing copy, I also work with many of my clients as a consultant, helping them plan marketing campaigns that generate maximum response. They're pleased and happy to get on-target advice that works--at an affordable fee--and they like the fact that I don't charge a monthly retainer.

### **"YOUR FEE SCHEDULE LISTS A PRICE FOR A 'COPY CRITIQUE.' WHAT'S THAT?"**

A Copy Critique provides an objective review of an ad, sales letter, brochure, or direct mail package. You can have me critique either an existing piece OR a draft of copy in progress. It's up to you.

When you order a Copy Critique, you get a written report of two or more single-spaced typed pages that analyzes your copy in detail. I tell you what's good about it and what works ... what doesn't work ... what should be changed ... and how. My critique covers copy, design, strategy, and offer. It also includes specific directions for revisions and rewriting, although I do not write or rewrite copy for you under this arrangement.

A Copy Critique is ideal for clients who want a "second opinion" on a piece of copy, or who need new ideas to inject life into an existing package that's no longer working. It also enables you to sample my services at far less cost than you'd pay to have me write your copy from scratch.

### **"SPEAKING OF MONEY, WHAT DOES IT COST TO HIRE YOU FOR A PROJECT?"**

For any copywriting assignment--a direct mail package, a sales letter, an ad, a landing page, a feature article, a web site--just let me know what you have in mind and I'll quote you a price. The enclosed Schedule of Estimated Fees gives typical prices for a variety of projects.

### **"WHO ARE YOUR CLIENTS...AND WHAT DO THEY SAY ABOUT YOUR COPY AND COUNSEL?"**

"Working with Bob Bly was easy," reports Robert Jurick, CEO of Fala Direct Marketing. "Bob Bly is more than a copywriter; he becomes part of the client team and writes with understanding and sense. His copy resulted in several projects from some of our big accounts."

Andrew Frothingham, former ad manager of Timeplex, comments: "When I was the ad manager at Timeplex, I used Bob Bly a lot, because he has the best understanding of any writer I found of the issues in the world of high technology."

"I would like to express my thanks for your assistance in helping us develop a marketing program via the mass media," writes Stan Stevens, president, Personal Health Profile. "I was impressed with your professionalism, knowledge of the field, willingness to extend yourself, and your eagerness to help us succeed. It was a real pleasure working with you."

A partial list of clients and a testimonial sheet are enclosed. For a complete client list and additional testimonials, visit [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com).

### **"HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE YOU TO WRITE MY COPY?"**

Ideally, I like to have 2-3 weeks to work on your copy. That gives me the time to polish, edit, and revise until I'm happy with every word.

However, I realize you can't always wait that long. So if the job is a rush, just indicate on the enclosed order form the date by which you must receive the copy. If I take on the job, I guarantee that you will have the copy on your desk by the deadline date--or sooner.

No matter what the deadline, the copy I submit to you will be right. You can depend on it.

### **"WHAT HAPPENS IF WE WANT YOU TO REVISE THE COPY?"**

Just tell me what you want improved and what the changes are, and I'll make them--fast. There is NO CHARGE for rewriting. Revisions are included in the flat fee we've agreed to for the assignment, provided they are assigned within 30 days of your receipt of the copy and are not based on a change in the assignment made after copy has been submitted.

Most clients are pleased and enthusiastic about my copy when they receive it. But if you are not 100% satisfied, I will revise the copy according to your specific guidelines... and at my expense.

(over please)

## **"HOW DO I ORDER FROM YOU?"**

Putting me to work for you is easy. First, just tell me what you're selling and who you're selling it to. Send me your control mailing, brochure, catalog, web site URL, or any other material that will give me the background information I need to write your copy. Use the enclosed order form as a guideline. But don't worry about organizing anything--I'll do that. If I have any questions, I'll pick up the phone and ask.

When you give me the go-ahead, I'll write the assignment for you. You will receive your copy on or before the deadline date. And remember: it is guaranteed to please you.

Dozens of firms – including Phillips Publishing, Medical Economics, Philadelphia National Bank, Digital Linguistix, Prentice Hall, GE Solid State, IBM, F&W Publishing, Alloy Technologies, Ascom Timeplex, Allied Signal Aerospace, and Edith Roman Associates – have found my copy ideal for promoting business-to-business, online, and direct-response offers.

So... why not try my service for your next sales letter, e-mail, landing page, or white paper? I promise you'll be delighted with the results.

Regards,



Bob Bly

P.S. If you have an immediate need, call me right now at (973) 263-0562 or e-mail me the details at [rwbly@bly.com](mailto:rwbly@bly.com). There is no charge to discuss your job with you and give you a cost estimate. And there is no obligation to buy.

### **Bob Bly's Clients Say It Best!**

"The Bly package seems to be a success! At Day 9 of response to 30,000 names we're at 77% of break-even with a .46% response."

--Crystal Washington, The Oxford Club

"The Internet direct mail you wrote for us got an excellent response: 7.55% from a rented list of hard-to-excite prospects."

--Ken Paston, Studebaker-Worthington Leasing Corp.

"All who received your copy agreed it was terrific. Certainly it's the best DM copy I've had to work with, because you've hit the rare combination of good writing and a good knowledge of what you are writing about."

--Lois DeLong, American Institute of Chemical Engineers

For more client testimonials, visit [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com).

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT BOB BLY'S COPY AND COUNSEL:

"I don't know a single copywriter whose work would not be improved by reading this book [THE COPYWRITER'S HANDBOOK, by Robert W. Bly]. And that includes me. After reading it, I am a born-again fundamentalist."

-David Ogilvy, Author  
OGILVY ON ADVERTISING

"My initial mailing was 1,677 letters into 31 states for a 3.28% rate of response. That rate is terrific."

-Dick Barry, Management Consultant

"Thanks for your great copy. This is the first letter I've written in years to thank you for increasing my sales. Coming from an advertising background, I checked all famous copywriters and thought your direct mail letters and brochures were very good. The market confirmed that your work is great. Your work was worth every penny we paid. It is always a pleasure to work with someone who is a master of his trade. And most of all, without your knowledge of computer software, this project would have been impossible."

-Max Rambod, Executive Vice President  
PC Publishing

"Thanks for the ad copy. As usual, a job well done. You know how to listen--and give us copy that's right on target the first time. We seldom change even a single word in the ads and brochures you write for us. Your technical know-how and copywriting skills are an unbeatable combination for industrial and business-to-business advertising. We know we'll keep on using it--and you."

-Kenneth I. Weissman, President  
Graphicom

"I'll have to admit that I was initially somewhat skeptical that copy for a brochure could actually be written by mail, without all those meetings we've come to associate with the process. But your excellent copy made me a believer. It was clear that you had not only read the materials that I'd sent, but you also understood them. Your fresh approach won all-around approval. I don't think the changes we made affected more than three or four sentences. I look forward to future projects."

-John W. Alexander, Jr., Vice President  
Philadelphia National Bank

"Bob Bly is a first-rate writer of industrial print advertising. Bob has developed efficient methods for working quickly and effectively by mail, fax, and phone. And his price structure, deadlines, and revisions policy are fair and easy to understand. Bob is a pleasure to work with--I've never been disappointed."

-Bernie Powers, Partner  
Pruitt Humphress Powers & Munroe

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"I just finished reading your copy for our CERTINCOAT System brochure and I was very happy with it. You did an excellent job of editing a large amount of information, much of it extraneous, into a strong, cohesive selling message."

-Len Lavenda, Advertising Manager  
M&T CHEMICALS INC.

"Potence insert is looking good, currently projected to achieve a 3.64% response with a \$60 (three units of purchase) average order."

-Glory Kneass, Vice President, Creative Development  
Drs. Preferred Acquisitions

"Bob Bly is one of the best! He's adept in all media and has a stylistic range that allows him to communicate effectively with virtually any audience. Bob truly delivers."

-David Totten, Creative Supervisor  
Chapman Stone & Adler

"In addition to Bob's obvious skill as a copywriter and expertise in marketing, his most all-encompassing characteristic is his professionalism. Working with Bob is a pleasure because of it. He contributes brilliantly, delivers on time, and always provides quality work."

-Steve Isaac, President  
The Stenrich Group Inc.

"Bob Bly, our marketing consultant, helped us produce over 8% response in less than 2 months. We got inquiries from the cream of the crop on our target list and we generated about a 350% increase in dollar business over the previous year."

-Sheila M. Anderson, President  
Commercial Property Services

"The advanced renewal you wrote for *Utility Forecaster* is doing great! Mailed 4/29 ... 5.2% response [as of 5/27] and an average sale of \$116. Thanks!"

-Lori Bethea  
KCI Communications

"Congratulations. Your *Forecasts & Strategies* 'Internet Infrastructure' package is a winner ... your piece is doing almost twice as good as our 'Y2K Sample Issue' mailing. I am looking forward to working with you again in the future."

-Chris Marett, Senior Vice President  
Phillips Publishing

For more client testimonials, visit [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com).

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### **BOB BLY: CLIENTS/EXPERIENCE (A PARTIAL LIST)**

Abcor (ultrafilters)  
Academic Information Services (book publisher)  
Advance Floor Technology (floor treatments)  
Advantage Presort Service (first-class mail presort service)  
Airco Gases (industrial gases and gas distribution systems)  
Alloy Technology (metal alloys)  
AMAX (chemicals)  
American Techmart Services (software and hardware)  
Aspex Incorporated (supercomputers and software)  
Associated Air Freight (freight carrier)  
BankWire (electronic funds transfer)  
Berkley Electronics (electronic components)  
Bill Bishop & Associates (audio-cassette programs)  
Brooklyn Union Gas (cooling and heating systems)  
Business Envelope Manufacturers (office supplies)  
The Conference Board (organization membership, publications, conferences)  
CBSI (warranty and home protection plans)  
C&C Print Shop (commercial printing)  
CCI/Connections (DP consultants)  
Chemical Bank (electronic cash management services)  
Clement Communications (newsletters)  
Communication Briefings (newsletter)  
Convergent Solutions (software)  
Crest Ultrasonics (cleaning systems)  
Digital Linguistix Corporation (software)  
Dow Chemical (chemicals)  
East Hampton Industries (software)  
EBI (medical equipment)  
EBSCO (magazine subscription agency)  
Edith Roman Associates (mailing lists)  
Epner Technology Inc. (high-tech plating)  
Executive Enterprises (conferences, seminars)  
Fala Direct Marketing (letter shop)  
FIFE (the American Institute of Fellows in Free Enterprise)  
GE Solid State (semiconductors)  
Gerald P. Lepp (attorney-at-law)  
Geyer's Office Dealer (trade publication)  
Goodman Communications (beeper and answering services)  
Graver Chemical Company (chemicals, chemical equipment)  
Grumman Corporation (aerospace)  
Hearst Business Communications (subscription promotion)  
Henderson Industries (engineering)  
High Technology Associates, Inc. (database marketing)  
IEEE (professional society)  
Institutional Investor Journals (finance industry magazines)  
Interactive System (production support software)  
ITT Engineered Valves (valves)  
ITT Fluid Technology (process equipment)  
James Kurpiel Inc. (contractor)  
Jane's Defence Weekly (magazine)  
JGB Systems (computer systems)

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JMW Consultants Inc. (management consultants)  
Ken Weissman Inc. (computer graphics)  
KeySystems (vocational disability analysis)  
Knysak Process Equipment Company (process equipment)  
Koch Engineering (process equipment, pollution control)  
Ladenburg, Thalmann & Co. Inc. (stockbrokers)  
Letterset (desktop publishing software)  
Loveland Controls (calibrators test system)  
Lucent Technologies (telecommunications)  
Major Printing Company (commercial printer)  
Manhattan MultiMedia (audiovisual producers)  
Marketing & Business Strategy (consultants)  
Medical Economics (PHYSICIANS' DESK REFERENCE and POCKET PDR)  
Meeco Inc. (moisture analyzers)  
Micro Logic Corp. (software)  
Midlantic National Bank (retail banking)  
Millar Elevator Industries, Inc. (elevator controls)  
MKS (software)  
M&T Chemicals (specialty chemicals)  
National Information Corporation (newsletters)  
New York Publicity Outlets (directory)  
NIBM (newsletters)  
Nortel Networks (telecommunications)  
Object International (DP training consulting, software)  
Odesta Systems (Macintosh software)  
Official Hotel & Resort Guide (directory)  
On-Line Software International (software)  
Pascal (real estate analysis software)  
PC Publishing (software)  
Philadelphia National Bank (commercial banking)  
Phillips Publishing (newsletters)  
Prentice Hall (publishing)  
Rentrop (newsletters)  
Retrieval Masters Creditors Bureau (collection agency)  
Ricoh Corporation (facsimile machines)  
SCI (mainframe software for CICS and MVS)  
Select Information Exchange (postcard publisher)  
Software Corporation of America (software)  
Sony Corporation of America (video and imaging systems)  
Soundcoat (noise control)  
SPS Technologies (computerized joint-control systems)  
Studebaker-Worthington (computer leasing)  
Sumitomo (industrial equipment)  
Thomas Publishing Company (subscription promotion)  
Timeplex (data communication equipment)  
Value Line (financial publisher)  
Value Rent A Car (car rentals)  
Wallace & Tiernan (process equipment)  
Weiss Research (newsletters)  
Westinghouse (radar defense systems)  
Wolfram Research (software)  
Writer's Digest (magazine)  
Yourdon, Inc. (CASE software tools)

For a complete client, list visit [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com).





## How I write

# Robert W. Bly

He has been called "perhaps the most famous copywriter of them all." From his office in Dumont, N.J., Robert W. Bly, author of the popular guide *The Copywriter's Handbook*, has been a full-time freelance copywriter for 20 years. The job, often described as "selling with words," involves creating such products as ads, news releases, press kits, brochures, direct-mail letters and Web sites. As a "side gig," Bly, 44, has also written or co-authored some 50 books, most on business topics (though his oeuvre includes such lighter fare as *Star Trek* quiz books). He has made a specialty of direct mail, he says, because it lets him write in a more personal voice and its success can be precisely measured. Copywriting novices, he reports, can earn \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year; savvy veterans, \$75,000 to \$150,000; and "superstars," \$200,000 to \$500,000 a year or more if they specialize in direct mail.

**Credits:** author/co-author of *Write More, Sell More*, *The Elements of Technical Writing*, *The Online Copywriter's Handbook* and many other books.

**Why:** It's an impulse bordering on addiction. I love it. I can't imagine doing anything else. I love words, writing, communication, ideas, information.

**How:** For a nonfiction book, I make a detailed outline of the chapters and subheads within each chapter, and then basically fill them in with text. For copywriting, my process is to gather and digest research, then write headlines that represent different concepts until I find one that works. Once I pick the concept and the client agrees, I do a rough outline, then a first draft, then polish until satisfied. Most work is done on a PC, though I do print out and read hard copies with a red pencil after each draft. Alternating between hard copy and PC for draft review helps keep me fresh.

**Ideas:** For copywriting, I continually study the market. By studying what others are mailing and taking note of which direct-mail packages are being mailed over and over again, you can find out what is working and adapt those winning techniques. A direct-mail package that is successful and is mailed repeatedly is called a "control."

Studying controls is the best education you can get about what works and what doesn't in direct mail. For books, I tend to write about things I have learned about through practical experience and can therefore teach others about.

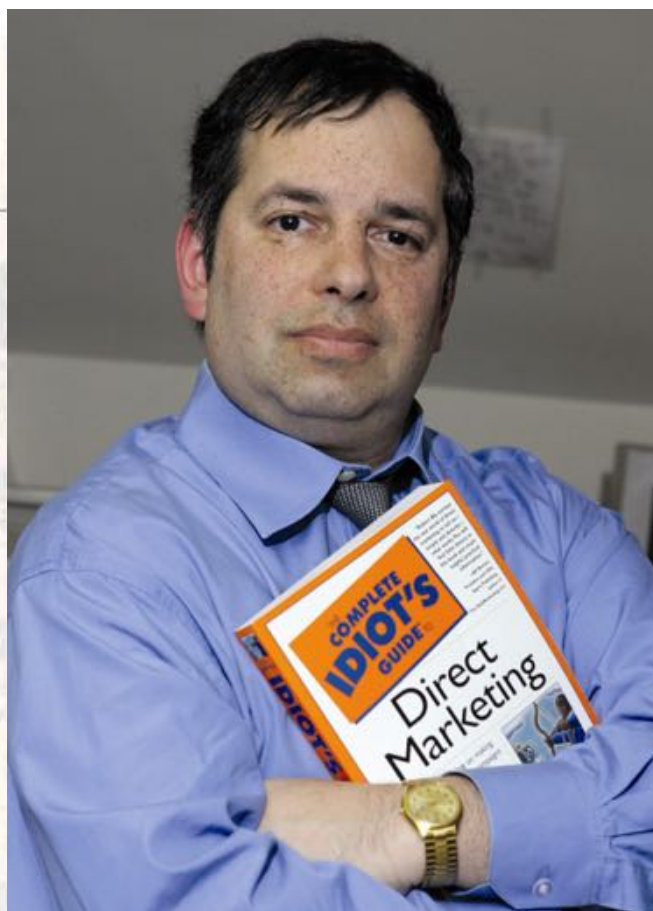
**Research:** The more, the better. You are not trying to be clever; you're trying to be relevant: Find out what about this particular product would make people want to buy it. You can never do too much research. (The preparation process I follow is on the Methodology page of [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com).)


**Success secret:** In freelancing copywriting, the people who are busiest and most successful are those who are the best at marketing and promoting themselves, and at client service. Lots of people can write copy, but they don't know how to get clients. Another secret: You don't want assignments; you want clients. Too many freelance writers fail to realize the profits are in repeat orders for the same client, and do not do nearly enough to cultivate good client relationships. Another tip: Specialize in an

industry (e.g., health care) or format (e.g., annual reports, direct mail). Specialists are more in demand and get paid better than generalists.


**Writer's block:** I don't get it because I use a method I learned from Isaac Asimov: Work on many different projects at one time. If I get stuck on a direct-mail package, I can turn to my book project and write that until ideas for the direct-mail piece start to flow again. If I have to stop the book because I need more research, and don't have an idea for the direct mail yet, I turn to another project, like writing a Web site or ad. And so on.

**Other advice:** My book *Secrets of a Freelance Writer* shares everything I have learned about being a freelance copywriter. Others in the field have also written books (a recent one is *The Well-Fed Writer* by Peter Bowerman). Reading a book by someone in the field can shave years off your learning curve. Whatever you decide to write, make up your mind to be the best. It's the only edge you have over your competitors. Be a student of your craft and art.





# THE COPYWRITER'S HANDBOOK



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO  
WRITING COPY THAT SELLS



THIRD EDITION

"I don't know a single copywriter whose work  
would not be improved by reading this book.  
And that includes me."

—David Ogilvy



REVISED  
AND  
EXPANDED

**Robert W. Bly**

*Author of Secrets of a Freelance Writer*



# TouchPoints

INTELLIGENCE FOR A NEW AGE OF MARKETING

COMPILED BY KEN BEAULIEU

## BEST PRACTICES

### Stand Out in the Mailbox

Five ways to generate more leads with B-to-B direct mail

BY ROBERT W. BLY



**D**espite rumors to the contrary, direct mail is still an effective B-to-B marketing channel for both lead generation and customer retention. To increase the response rate of a direct mail campaign, consider these tips:

**1. Put it to the test.** The only way to know whether a mailer will work is to test it with a small sample group before rolling it out to a broader audience. Sending a sales letter, for example, to a list of 150,000 dentists without first testing could waste tens of thousands of dollars if the mailing flops.

**2. Get the list right.** The success of a direct mail campaign is often determined by the quality of the mailing list. Even lists that seem similar may yield widely varying results, which is why testing is critical. Today, the common practice is to rent prospect lists from large integrated database providers, such as ReachBase and MeritDirect.

**3. Test different formats.** Direct mail consultant Craig Simpson says he has tested postcards, self-mailers, and envelopes for driving B-to-B prospects online. "Over and over," he notes, "the envelope package gets the highest response." Why? "My guess is that the postcard and self-mailer

formats get tossed by the gatekeepers," Simpson says. Another direct mail guru, Bob Hacker, says that for lead generation, a package consisting of an envelope, a letter, a response device, and a brochure will, in some cases, exceed the response rate of a postcard or self-mailer by as much as 500 percent.

**4. Provide offers that truly matter.** A strong direct mail offer can outperform a weak one by as much as 10:1. For example, a car rental service once tested two offers: deep discounts on rental prices vs. free upgrades to larger cars. The deep discounts generated 10 times more revenue than the free upgrade offer.

**5. Use multiple response mechanisms.** Despite the fast-paced evolution of the digital age, not everyone wants to go online to respond to an offer. Give prospects their choice of response mechanism, such as a business reply card, a phone number, an email address, or a hyperlink to an offer landing page.

*Bob Bly is a freelance copywriter with 37 years of experience in B-to-B and direct marketing. He has written copy for more than 100 companies. For a free copy of his book, The Business-to-Business Marketing Handbook, visit [bly.com/b2bhandbook](http://bly.com/b2bhandbook).*

## PERSPECTIVE

### SMARTER TOGETHER

The Milwaukee-based marketing agency Nelson Schmidt Inc. recently conducted a Twitter poll asking marketers if B-to-B marketing is "alive and well," "on its way out," or "dead as a doornail." Nearly 70 percent of the 339 respondents said the discipline is either dying or dead. Before you start contemplating a new career, however, Nelson Schmidt CEO Dan Nelson Jr. says the results validate that the lines between business and consumer marketing are blurring.

"The biggest consumer marketers all have distribution channels (i.e., other businesses) that are crucial to their purchase cycles and need marketing support to be successful," Nelson says. "And pure-play B-to-B marketing must ultimately communicate and resonate with a person, who happens to be consuming products and services in a professional capacity. At the end of the day, we're a community of marketers, and we need to start thinking and functioning as one. There is much that can be learned and applied across business and consumer marketing, and we can all be better marketers by focusing on the similarities, rather than the differences, between the two."

# COPYWRITING

## How To Prepare For A Copywriting Assignment by Robert W. Bly



Business-to-business copy persuades readers by giving them useful information about the products being advertised. The more facts you include in your copy, the better.

When you have a file full of facts at your fingertips, writing good copy is easy. You simply select the most relevant facts and describe them in a clear, concise, direct fashion.

But when copywriters don't bother to dig for facts, they fall back on fancy phrases and puffed-up expressions to fill the empty space on the page. The words sound nice, but they don't sell because the copy doesn't inform.

Here's a four-step procedure I use to get the information I need to write persuasive, fact-filled copy for my clients. This technique should be helpful to copywriters, account executives, and ad managers alike.

### Step #1: Get all previously published material on the product.

For an existing product, there's a mountain of literature you can send to the copywriter as background information. This material includes:

- Tear-sheets of previous ads
- Brochures

- Catalogs
- Article reprints
- Technical papers
- Copies of speeches
- Audio-visual scripts
- Press kits
- Swipe files of competitors' ads and literature

Did I hear someone say they can't send me printed material because their product is new? Nonsense. The birth of every new product is accompanied by mounds of paperwork you can give the copywriter. These papers include:

- Internal memos
- Letters of technical information
- Product specifications
- Engineering drawings
- Business and marketing plans
- Reports
- Proposals

By studying this material, the copywriter should have 80 percent of the information he needs to write the copy. And he can get the other 20 percent by picking up the phone and asking questions. Steps #2-4 outline the questions he should ask about the product, the audience, and the objective of the copy.

### Step #2: Ask questions about the product.

- What are its features and benefits? (Make a complete list.)
- Which benefit is the most important?
- How is the product different from the competition's? (Which features are exclusive? Which are better than the competition's?)
- If the product isn't different, what attributes can be stressed that haven't

been stressed by the competition?

- What technologies does the product compete against?
- What are the applications of the product?
- What industries can use the product?
- What problems does the product solve in the marketplace?
- How is the product positioned in the marketplace?
- How does the product work?
- How reliable is the product?
- How efficient?
- How economical?
- Who has bought the product and what do they say about it?
- What materials, sizes and models is it available in?
- How quickly does the manufacturer deliver the product?
- What service and support does the manufacturer offer?
- Is the product guaranteed?

### Step #3: Ask questions about your audience.

- Who will buy the product? (What markets is it sold to?)
- What is the customer's main concern? (Price, delivery, performance, reliability, service maintenance, quality efficiency)
- What is the character of the buyer?
- What motivates the buyer?
- How many different buying influences must the copy appeal to? Two tips on getting to know your audience: If you are writing an ad, read issues of the

magazine in which the ad will appear.

If you are writing direct mail, find out what mailing lists will be used and study the list descriptions.

### Step #4: Determine the objective of your copy.

This objective may be one or more of the following:

- To generate inquiries
- To generate sales
- To answer inquiries
- To qualify prospects
- To transmit product information
- To build brand recognition and preference
- To build company image

Before you write copy, study the product—its features, benefits, past performance, applications, and markets. Digging for the facts will pay off, because in business-to-business advertising, specifics sell.

*About the author:*

*Robert W. Bly is an independent copywriter and consultant specializing in direct response. He may be reached at [rwby@bly.com](mailto:rwby@bly.com).*

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## **Business-to-Business/Online/Direct Response**

BOB BLY is an independent copywriter and consultant with over 35 years of experience in business-to-business, high-tech, online, and direct marketing.

Bob has written copy for over 100 clients, including Network Solutions, ITT Fluid Technology, Medical Economics, Intuit, Business & Legal Reports, and Brooklyn Union Gas. Awards include a Gold Echo from the Direct Marketing Association, an IMMY from the Information Industry Association, two Southstar Awards, an American Corporate Identity Award of Excellence, the Standard of Excellence award from the Web Marketing Association, and AWAI Copywriter of the Year.

Bob is the author of more than 85 books, including *PERVASIVE PRESENTATIONS FOR BUSINESS* (Entrepreneur Press) and *THE COPYWRITER'S HANDBOOK* (Henry Holt & Co.). His articles have appeared in numerous publications, such as *DM News*, *Subscription Marketing*, *Writer's Digest*, *Amtrak Express*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Inside Direct Mail*, and *Bits & Pieces for Salespeople*.

Bob has presented marketing, sales, and writing seminars for such groups as the U.S. Army, the Independent Laboratory Distributors Association, the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, and the American Marketing Association. He also taught copywriting and technical writing at New York University.

Bob writes landing pages, sales letters, direct mail packages, ads, e-mail marketing campaigns, brochures, articles, press releases, white papers, Web sites, newsletters, and other marketing materials clients need to sell their products and services. He also consults with clients on Internet marketing, mail-order selling, and lead generation.

Prior to becoming an independent copywriter and consultant, Bob was advertising manager for Koch Engineering, a manufacturer of process equipment. He has also worked as a marketing communications writer for Westinghouse Defense.

Bob Bly holds a B.S. in chemical engineering from the University of Rochester and is a Certified Novell Administrator (CNA). He is a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, the Business Marketing Association, and Specialized Information Publishers.

### **Contact Information:**

Bob Bly

31 Cheyenne Drive, Montville, NJ 07045

phone: 973-263-0562

fax: 973-263-0613

[rbly@bly.com](mailto:rbly@bly.com)

[www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com)



**Schedule of Estimated Fees**

Print ad, direct response	\$2,500-\$3,000
Print ad, trade journal	\$1,500-\$2,000
Sales letter, 1-2 pages	\$1,500-\$2,500
Direct-mail package, lead generation	\$2,500-\$5,500
Direct-mail package, mail order	\$4,500-\$9,500
Renewal series	\$1,000/letter
Blanket renewal	\$2,000-\$3,000
Insert	\$2,000-\$4,000
Magalog or tabloid	\$9,500-\$15,000
Bookalog or digest	\$9,500-\$20,000
Self-mailer	\$1,500-\$3,500
Postcard or double postcard	\$1,250-\$2,250
Voucher	\$2,000-\$2,500
Brochure	\$750/page
Data sheet	\$1,000-\$1,500
Slim-Jim brochure	\$1,250-\$1,750
Catalog	\$750/page
Newsletter	\$500-\$750/page
Feature story	\$1,500-\$2,500
Short article	\$500-\$1,500
White paper	\$3,500-\$4,000
Mini-white paper	\$2,000-\$2,500
Case study	\$1,500-\$2,000
Booklet – Special Report	\$2,000-\$3,000
Tip sheet	\$1,250
Press release, 1-2 pages	\$650-\$850
Video script	\$550/minute
Telemarketing script	\$1,500-\$2,500
Radio commercial (three-spot package)	\$2,000-\$2,500
DRTV 2-minute commercial	\$1,500-\$2,500
Taglines (set of 5)	\$2,000-\$2,500
Copy critique	\$750-\$1,500
Online copywriting	Request fee schedule

**Terms:**

Purchase order or letter of authorization required for all jobs. Copywriting fees are payable 50% in advance, balance upon delivery.

All revisions must be assigned within 30 days of receipt of copy. Two rewrites are made free of charge unless the revision is based on a change in the assignment made after copy is submitted.

Listed fees are guidelines only. Call today for a prompt price quotation on your specific assignment.

NOTE: This fee schedule current as of September 2016 and valid for 120 days from date of receipt. Be sure to call for current fee schedule when ordering copy.

## Online copywriting fee schedule

### *30- minute video sales letter -- \$6,500*

Selling a dietary supplement, info product, or other offer requiring long copy.

### *Long-copy landing page -- \$5,500 – \$7,500*

Designed to sell a consumer product – such as a newsletter, info product, or membership site – directly.

### *Medium-copy landing page -- \$2,500 – \$4,500*

Used for direct sales of products requiring less lengthy copy (e.g., merchandise, software, professional services, seminars, b-to-b offers).

### *Squeeze page -- \$750 – \$1,500*

A landing page for white papers, software demos, Webinars, special reports, and other free offers capturing an opt-in e-mail address.

### *Medium-copy e-mail -- \$950 – \$1,500*

Designed to drive traffic to a landing or order page selling a product.

### *Short copy e-mail -- \$550 – \$750*

A short e-mail designed to drive the reader to a landing page with a free offer.

### *Online e-mail auto-responder series -- \$650 per effort*

A series of follow-up e-mail messages, sent via auto-responder, designed to convert an inquiry into a sale.

### *Online ad (package of 3) -- \$500*

An online text, banner, or PPC ad to drive readers to a microsite or landing page.

### *E-mail capture pop-under page -- \$550*

A window that appears when visitors attempt to exit your Web page without ordering; offers free content in exchange for the visitor's e-mail address.

### *Web site package -- \$5,500 – \$6,500*

A modestly-sized business Web site consisting of a home page and approximately five additional optimized pages.

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*Home page, simple -- \$1,250 - \$1,500*

Simple home page with a headline and up to 300 words of text describing the company or site, optimized for search engines.

*Web page, optimized -- \$650 – \$850*

A headline and 200–500 words of text plus metatags optimized to a predetermined list of key words.

*Website audit -- \$5,000*

A comprehensive review with specific recommendations on how to improve conversion and other key performance metrics. Covers website structure, copy, content, design, calls to action, e-lists, sales funnels, and more.

**Terms:**

**Purchase order or letter of authorization required for all jobs. Copywriting fees are payable 50% in advance, balance upon delivery.**

**All revisions must be assigned within 30 days of receipt of copy. Two rewrites are made free of charge unless the revision is based on a change in the assignment made after copy is submitted.**

**Listed fees are guidelines only. Call today for a prompt price quotation on your specific assignment.**

**NOTE: This fee schedule current as of September 2016 and valid for 120 days from date of receipt. Be sure to call for current fee schedule when ordering copy.**



# USE THIS FORM TO ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!

1. Your name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your title \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your company \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_
5. Your phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_  
Website \_\_\_\_\_
6. The name of your product or service \_\_\_\_\_
7. The market for your product or service (who are you selling it to?)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The kind of copy you need:  

<input type="checkbox"/> Landing Page	<input type="checkbox"/> E-mail	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mail
<input type="checkbox"/> White Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Article	<input type="checkbox"/> Ad
<input type="checkbox"/> Brochure	<input type="checkbox"/> Web Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Press Release
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> Copy critique	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
9. The desired length of the copy (how many pages, words, minutes?)  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. The purpose of the copy (check all that apply):  

<input type="checkbox"/> to generate inquiries	<input type="checkbox"/> to answer inquiries
<input type="checkbox"/> to generate sales	<input type="checkbox"/> to build awareness
<input type="checkbox"/> to transmit information	<input type="checkbox"/> to build company image
<input type="checkbox"/> to announce new products	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____
11. Please enclose any literature that will provide me with the background information I need to write your copy. This can include previous ads, brochures, mailings, article reprints, press releases, internal memos, proposals, technical papers -- send whatever you feel appropriate. Don't worry about organizing the material. I'll do that.

12. What are the key selling points of this product or service?

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13. What is your deadline date (the date you need to receive the finished copy)?

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14. Use the bottom of this page for any additional comments (attach more sheets if needed).

15. Order your copy or copy estimate by checking one of the options below:

- ☐ ( ) I've enclosed the order form, background material, and a check for half your fee. Please write the copy I've ordered and send it to me by the date indicated on this form. I understand that the balance of your fee is payable and due on the day I receive the copy from you.
- ☐ ( ) Here's my order form and background material. Please call me with an estimate of what my copy will cost before you start writing.
- ☐ ( ) Give me a call so we can discuss my copy needs in more detail.

16. Mail this form to:      Bob Bly  
                                     31 Cheyenne Drive  
                                     Montville, NJ 07045  
                                     Phone: (973) 263-0562  
                                     Fax: (973) 263-0613  
                                     E-mail: [rwby@bly.com](mailto:rwby@bly.com)  
                                     Web: [www.bly.com](http://www.bly.com)

MY GUARANTEE TO YOU: The copy I write is guaranteed to please you. If you're not satisfied, I'll rewrite, based on your specific guidelines, at no extra charge. Revisions must be assigned within 30 days and don't include changes made in the original assignment after copy is submitted.