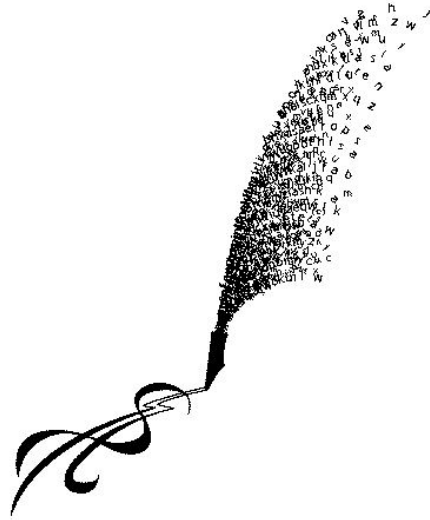


The VersaQuill Copywriting Workbook

Introduction and Sources

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Compiled by Dianne Durante



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Introduction

What is the *VersaQuill Copywriting Workbook*?

The *VersaQuill Copywriting Workbook* is a systematic way to generate ideas for writing copy and to check what you've produced against accepted "best practices," as described by David Ogilvie, Victor Schwab, Bob Bly, and many other prominent copywriters.

If you're making a living as a copywriter, you know there's no quick and easy way to write effective copy. What you need is a reliable way to mine some of the great ideas that have been accumulating in your subconscious as you compulsively read everything from cereal boxes to copywriting books.

The *Workbook* is for those of us who know how to write and love doing it—but who occasionally need help figuring out the most effective way to present a particular product or service, and are willing to work hard to find it.

Part 1 of the *Workbook* covers generating ideas and settling the basics of an ad. Part 2 covers writing the ad, from creating a hook through the final checks of nitty-gritty details and layout. Both parts are organized as a series of fill-in-the-form worksheets for gathering information and checklists for reviewing the ad: 14 worksheets and 2 checklists in Part 1, 18 worksheets and 10 checklists in Part 2.

For example:

- What are the most important features of this product and their corresponding benefits? Worksheet 1.1, with 20 questions
- How does this product compare with the competition? Worksheet 1.4, with 12 questions
- What physical, emotional, intellectual, social, or career factors might make a customer want to buy this product? Worksheet 2.2, with 51 questions
- How can you jumpstart your search for a name, slogan, or tag line? Worksheet 5.2, with 20 questions
- How can you develop a hook for the ad? Worksheet 8.2, with 15 questions
- Have you missed any major points in the content of the ad? Checklist 8.20, with 14 questions
- Have you made any major errors in the layout of the text? Checklist 9.4, with 13 questions

Will the questions on these worksheets and checklists be new to you? Probably not. If you're earning money as a copywriter, you've heard and responded to most of them before ...

But I'm betting you've never seen them organized so that you can work through a project step by logical step, or so that you can quickly locate advice that applies to a specific part of a project.

What makes the *VersaQuill Copywriting Workbook* different from other guides to copywriting?

- Distilled wisdom - Advice from copywriters such as David Ogilvie, Victor Schwab, Rosser Reeves, Joseph Sugarman, and Bob Bly, with references to parts of their works that are relevant to specific topics.
- Logical presentation - The *Workbook* is arranged so that you can work through a project systematically, confident that you haven't blithely ignored the 800-pound gorilla, the pink elephant, or the tiny leak that will burst the dike and flood the whole damn zoo.
- Worksheets - Gather your ideas and identify which are the most important *before* you face that blindingly white, terrifyingly blank sheet of paper.
- Summaries - Condense your decisions to a single page, so writing a draft doesn't involve shuffling through a jumbled heap of notes.
- Checklists - Check your ideas against accepted best practices, and decide consciously whether to follow them in a particular case.
- 500 copies in one - Print worksheets, checklists, and summaries as often as you need them from the e-book in PDF format.

Why was this book written?

If you're reading this, chances are that you, too, find it difficult to resist books and articles that promise to make you a better copywriter. For almost 30 years I've been ravenously eager to benefit from the wisdom of others in the field.

Alas, when it comes time to sit down with a blank piece of paper and produce an ad—particularly under a tight deadline—I often find myself unable to dredge up those nuggets of wisdom from my subconscious. Often I've felt I was using less than half of what I'd read.

Since one of my other long-time professions is teacher and lecturer, I finally decided to organize the "best practices" of copywriters into a logical, hierarchically organized set of notes.¹ I've used these worksheets and checklists for everything from trifold brochures to cover letters to this landing page—even for a scholarly essay. They've allowed me to work more efficiently and to produce copy that has more impact.

¹ The idea of organizing this material was inspired by the "Thinking Tactics" course offered by Jean Moroney of www.ThinkingDirections.com. In her seminars on thinking skills, Jean stresses the need to break projects into steps and to record as much information as possible on paper, so that one can view the relevant data, grasp it, and make decisions regarding it.

Why pay me to tell you things you already know?

During the last few months, I've spent at least 75 hours reading or rereading books and articles on copywriting. Another 100+ hours went to taking notes, organizing the notes into an outline, and creating the worksheets, summaries, and checklists in the *VersaQuill Copywriting Workbook*.

Could you do this yourself? Absolutely. But ... if your usual rate for copywriting is \$50 per hour, it would cost you \$10,000 in billable hours to compile a similar workbook.

Rather be working for pay? Then use the *Workbook*. If you bill clients at \$50 per hour, the price of the *Workbook* is equivalent to 2.5 hours of your time, and it will save you at least that much time in the first month. If you're not satisfied, there's a 30-day money-back guarantee.

Intellectual property

As an author, I'm prickly about intellectual property rights. When material in the workbook is not attributed to a specific author, I have seen it cited without attribution, and have assumed that it comes under the heading of common knowledge.

If you see a passage that you think violates a copyright, please notify me immediately. Give the full reference to the work you think ought to have been cited (author, title, edition, and page number), and the chapter and section of the *VersaQuill Copywriting Workbook* that you think ought to include the reference. I'll check it out and promptly give credit or delete the reference.

Single-user license

The *Workbook* is sold with a single-user license or a multi-user license (for 5 copies). Please do not share or distribute it to others. If your friends or colleagues lust after a copy, refer them to this site or have them contact Dianne@VersaQuill.com.

Updates & corrections

The *VersaQuill Copywriting Workbook* is a work in progress. If you see typos or other errors, please email them to me at Dianne@VersaQuill.com, so that I can incorporate them in the next version of the book. The text will be updated as I read more books and articles (2 of them are sitting on my desk right now, just begging for attention). If you have a legal copy of the *Workbook* and I have your current email address, I will notify you of the updates and offer a discount on their purchase.

Sources Consulted

as of January 2010

NOTE: These are books and articles I've read since starting the Workbook. All the works cited in the text are listed here, but not all works listed here are cited in the text. If you have favorite sources that don't appear on this list, please feel free to email the author and title (or the URL) to Dianne@VersaQuill.com.

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