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NEXT STEP

WHAT THE HECK IS A COPYWRITER? And why you should(n't) become one

Every now and then, advertising agencies will ask to hire copywriters. You may have even met one and wondered if that person is another unemployed individual with a vague job title like the CEO of a Facebook called 'What I Ate Today'. A five year old's explanation of copywriter was "You know when I don't know the answer to an exam question, but my friend does? I'm a copy writer when I write the answer from his copy. Especially if the teacher doesn't catch me." I loved it. But no, that is not it. I asked a 35 year old banker. "Er, those people that write official documents or deal with copyright issues, right?" No one really knows what a copywriter does.

The myth: If they can write, they must be a copywriter.

Copywriting is a distinct form of writing with one strong end goal: you want people to take an action. Those last three words are everything about copywriting: Take An Action.

David Ogilvy, some call him the father of marketing, said, "When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative.' I want you to find it so interesting that you buy the product."

Some view copywriters as advertising professionals that write the text responsible for selling. How about enticing offers like 'Buy One SIM, get 4GB data free'? While that fits Ogilvy's mantra, copywriting goes far beyond offering consumers a straightforward deal they cannot refuse. Copywriters are responsible for creating brand awareness in a consumers mind. They shape, redirect and reinforce opinions. It isn't simply tapping out a couple of adjective laden lines.

How does copywriting work?

Strong copywriting is the marketer's greatest tool. The job is a form of inbound marketing. You create content (all that written stuff) so people come looking for you. Today's consumers' preferred channel for looking for things is digital communication. That means online searches, radio and TV. Marketers now focus less on

WE HEAR YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR COPYWRITERS.
WE'RE MADE FOR BOTH
PARTS OF THAT TITLE.



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

going out to search for consumers. That is because 61% of the internet users around the world type into a search engine to research what they want to spend their money on.

Who hires copywriters?

Advertising agencies, for starters. Their whole job is to convince someone to buy, buy, and buy. This involves creating that very convincing spiel on billboards, print ads and those awesomely (or awfully) catchy jingles. Companies selling perfume, cellphone and cars need copywriters to create online content for their social media. Marketing communications involving white papers and PR material need clear, concise copy so the stakeholders reading them are not left bewildered.

Know who else is big on the list for copywriters? Meme pages and YouTube videos. Sure, these are not as big and established as the ones in the paragraph above, but they shape people's opinions. Case in point is Bangladesh's

very own Rantages. One well executed image with the right words can polarise the public opinion for or against an organisation. With over 200k followers, they are quickly becoming the go-to guide for scathing social commentary.

How valued are they?

This is something they won't teach you in class. Copywriters are the heart and soul of an agency. Sadly, in Bangladesh, they're generally placed somewhere along the bottom of the feeding schedule. The account directors meet the clients and they are considered the top dogs. But without copy, you do not have account directors. Or an agency for that matter.

As a result pay is low in most agencies for someone just starting out. Although, smart agencies understand the value of a good copywriter and are willing to pay upwards of TK 25k for a fresher. That comes to a \$3500-4000 annually. The national annual average salary for a copy-

writer is \$56,600 (over ₹460K) in United States and €32464 (over ₹323K) in Europe. A lot of companies are now focusing on creating content for their websites, social media, and blogs. 2017 saw about 66% of marketers incorporating blogs as part of their social media content. This has given rise to entrepreneurs offering their writing skills to companies looking to expand beyond traditional 'Look at my leaflet' methods.

Should you become one?

There are three questions to answer. Do you love the foreplay of words? Do you work and rework your text till you can convince an Eskimo to buy ice cubes? Can you be honest?

Consumers are smart. But they are also fickle. Your words are designed to build trust and reliability after generating that initial interest. The reason many companies now resort to heavy presence in blogs and social media is to develop a strong reputation. As Benjamin Franklin said, "Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing."

What else does a copywriter need to know?

Just knowing how to write is not enough these days. If you've watched Mad Men, you'll notice the ad world seems to be a lot about coming up with that one good tag line amidst a lot of partying and personal drama. Real life is nothing like the fictional admen in Mad Men. It's just a hell lot of work.

Being a good copywriter requires research into pop culture and constant reading of various styles of writing. These two practices will allow you to adapt quickly to different clients' demands and their requirements.

But then, being a good copywriter isn't about writing only. You need to make your content easy to find. A thorough understanding is needed of how the content traffic moves around the twisted, congested highways of the internet. Copywriters need to comprehend website analytics, SEO (search engine optimization), graphics design and video editing. As of 2016, blog articles with images get 94% more views. Expanding the skillset makes a copywriter just that much more valuable.

As you can see, copywriting is becoming an increasingly popular and valuable service for companies willing to get a good return on their marketing investment. The future is about breaking through the clutter of online chaos, to be heard. Only a good copywriter with a strong understanding of how the internet works is capable of this.

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Writer has been an agency copywriter for more than 4 years and freelancing for over 9 years. He is also Editor of Next Step, Shift, and Bytes of The Daily Star.



Ennovators launch event at National Press Club

Banglalink Ennovators, a platform for future professionals

Ennovators is a digital ideation competition for Bangladeshi youngsters who are preparing for a future in innovative, sustainable companies. This grand platform was unveiled as a latest endeavour of Banglalink at a press conference on November 5, 2017 at the National Press Club. Present at the press conference were Monzula Morshed, Chief of Human Resources and Administration Officer, Asif Ahmed, Communications Director, and Mustafa Raihanul Alam, Head of Talent Acquisition at Banglalink. Interested participants can submit their technology based business ideas about entertainment, lifestyle, education, cloud computing, or even artificial intelligence. It aims to encourage the involvement of young minds in materialising the vision of a truly digitised Bangladesh. Interest participants can submit their tech-based business ideas by visiting <https://www.banglalink.net/en/ennovators>. The competition will start off with individual ideas, but the final round will be team-based. Winners will be awarded TK 5 lakh in cash and will directly enter the assessment stage of the Strategic Assistant Program of Banglalink. The first and the second runners-up team will be awarded TK 3 lakh and TK 1 lakh cash prizes respectively.

6 WAYS TO STUDY HARDER & SMARTER



Do you have a record of cramming on the night before exams? Do you work too hard, but still get disappointing grades? You should follow these simple tricks to ace your upcoming finals. Good luck!

Divide & conquer

30 minute sessions are more effective than 10 consecutive hours of studying. Remember to take breaks every half an hour.



Get some sleep

You won't remember a thing unless you get a good night's sleep. Try to avoid all-nighters at any cost.



Make flash cards

Reading the entire book is a waste of time. Use flash cards to weed out the redundant information.



Set goals

Attainable goals help you break down your work and get a better idea of each component.



Find your spot

A designated study spot will condition your brain to focus whenever you sit there. Equip your spot with all necessary items beforehand.



Practice

You can't retain what you learn unless you practice and challenge yourself regularly.

