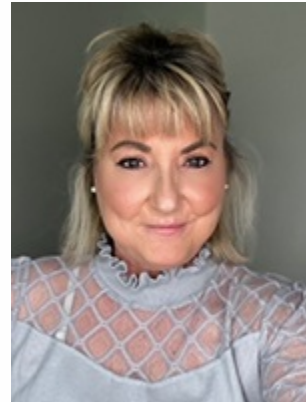


# The Mixed Martial Arts Technique That'll Sharpen Your Copywriting Skills (Without the Blood, Sweat, and Tears) *By Sandy Franks*

- **Why I love "the octagon"**
- **The highly technical side of MMA**
- **A winning technique fighters use to learn new moves**
- **A sales letter's components work together, but practice them separately**
- **Become an expert in a misunderstood niche**



**Sandy Franks**

I have a confession to make — I enjoy watching MMA. For those not familiar, MMA is Mixed Martial Arts.

Honestly, I've never been much of a sports fan otherwise. I watch a few football games, especially when my home team, the Ravens, are in the playoffs.

But there's something about watching two fighters climb into "the octagon" (an eight-sided ring enclosed by a six-foot high steel cage) to try to knock each other out. Or pummel each other into submission as often happens.

Now, I realize some people find this sport barbaric. After all, the participants are hitting and kicking one another in some harsh ways. Both fighters often step out of the octagon bloodied and black-eyed. But the truth is, MMA is actually quite technical. In fact, it's called "Mixed Martial Arts" because the competitors use a variety of highly technical fighting styles during their bouts.

Some rely on their boxing skills. Others specialize in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, muay thai, or judo. There's even a rare breed of fighters who are "jacks-of-all-trades." They strategically mix-and-match different styles in each fight to combat their opponents.

I also find the training methods fighters use fascinating. One strategy that's particularly effective for learning new moves is called the "whole-part-whole" method.

When using this strategy, a fighter will learn a new move by first seeing and practicing it in its entirety. For example, if he's learning to perform a double-leg takedown, he'll start by going through the whole move.

From there, he'll break the takedown into its components and practice each one separately. This might mean he spends some time just working on the footwork that puts him in position for the takedown. Later, he'll just practice snaking his opponent's legs with his hands.

Finally, after learning and practicing each step of the process, he'll practice the whole move again. And at this point, he'll be much better at performing it because he can execute each step more effectively.

Now, Dear Copywriter, you might be wondering why I'm telling you about Mixed Martial Arts, and this strategy fighters use to learn their craft. Well, the answer is that you can also use the whole-part-whole method to advance your copywriting career.

How? Glad you asked. I'm going to show what I mean. Let's say, for example, you're learning how to write a sales letter. You know it's great practice to study classic letters (like those found in the AWAI Hall of Fame collection) or current controls and copy them longhand.

But, as you study these letters, pull them apart into their components — the headline, lead, proof, claims, benefits, call-to-action, the close, the P.S., etc. You've seen how they all work together, but now focus on them individually.

For example, practice writing headlines over and over until you start to get good at them. Then, figure out what makes a great lead, and practice writing leads. Do this with each piece until you're ready to put them back together and write one cohesive letter.

It's hard to get good at something complex without learning the individual parts. And it's also hard to get good at those parts without first seeing them incorporated into the whole.

It's kind of like that old expression about seeing the forest for the trees. With this learning strategy, much like the world's best cage fighters, you'll build yourself a beautiful forest. But you'll do it because you perfected each tree.

Your takeaway for today: Whatever type of copywriting project you're learning, consider the scope of the whole project first. Then, break it down into its components. Practice each one separately, until you feel comfortable writing it. Finally, put the pieces together again, so you can write a cohesive project.

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# 6 Responses to "The Mixed Martial Arts Technique That'll Sharpen Your Copywriting Skills (Without the Blood, Sweat, and Tears)"

Great write-up, Sandy. This will be most helpful.

*Theresa Kusumah-Atmadja* – over a year ago

Thank you for your analogy. It brought a very helpful insight towards my copywriting skill development!

*Guest (Guy Maesaka)* – over a year ago

Love your extended analogy, Sandy!

Kathy

*Guest (Kathy V Moll)* – over a year ago

This is really a good article Sandy that resonates with me perfectly. My background is in sports.

I can see and understand how effective this can be.

Thanks for another well written article.

Marcellus Greene

*Marcellus Greene* – over a year ago

Great info, Sandy "Spider Silva" Franks. I love this spot on article comparing MMA to copywriting. Additionally, we have to research and understand thoroughly the "target" before approaching him with our "offerings." And, after learning every section (move) as well as it's place the whole, we sometimes let go, go into flow and allow our inner fighter / muse / instinct guide us next in the piece.

*Sean White* – over a year ago

Excellent article! Very insightful perspective. I found this by searching MMA copywriting. Thank you!

*Guest (Kenny Ross)* – 8 months ago

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