



Like last year's \$10K Challenge Winner, Jon Stoltzfus ...

He has a full-time job as an engineer and makes six-figures writing financial copy in his spare time for Dent Research, one of Agora's many financial publishing companies.

Whatever income goal you set for yourself, it's important to follow the same steps that Jon and all the other six and even seven-figure copywriters use. There are no shortcuts for learning to be a great copywriter.

It takes patience, practice, and perseverance. But if you learn the [fundamentals of copywriting](#), your *writer's life* will be everything you imagined it could be and more.

What steps did they follow? Here's six steps you can put to use right away.

**Become a Copywriter Step #1:** You know how to write or have a passion for writing. Now it's just a matter of focusing those skills on copywriting. The best way to get started is learning the basics or laying the foundation. This means understanding what copywriting is all about (hint: persuasive writing), how it's done, the structure behind sales letters, and techniques used to write winning copy.

You don't have to learn the basics on your own. AWAI has a complete program designed to fast-track your learning, [The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting](#). It's our most popular program and the strategies you'll be learning are the same ones used by all those million-dollar copywriters.

**Become a Copywriter Step #2:** Every high-earning copywriter has read what we refer to as the copywriting classics. These are books written by copywriting legends that give you a deeper understanding into the world of copywriting. Every "A-list" copywriter has their special list of classics you should read. As a copywriter and also Copy Chief, here's the ones I recommend you start with:

- *Breakthrough Advertising* by Gene Schwartz
- *Cash Copy* by Dr. Jeffrey Lang
- *Ogilvy on Advertising* by David Ogilvy
- *Great Leads* by Michael Masterson and John Forde
- *Copy Logic* by Michael Masterson and Mike Palmer
- *Sales Letters that Sizzle* by Herschell Gordon Lewis

**Become a Copywriter Step #3:** A golfer such as the likes of Tiger Woods didn't become great overnight. He practiced every day even as a young boy. Doesn't it make sense then, that if you want to be a greater copywriter, you practice writing every day?

Sure it does. Jon Morrow, CEO of Smart Blogger and whose blog posts have been seen by over two hundred million people worldwide, used to spend about five hours a day writing. In fact, at one time, he wrote 10 headlines a day to impress his boss,

Brian Clark. At the end of the month, he turned in over 300 headlines. Talk about the ultimate way to practice your craft.

I suggest you do the same thing. Start by writing headlines because they are one of the most important elements of a sales letter. If you can't manage to write 10 per day as Jon did, start out writing three. Then work your way up to writing 10 headlines each day.

What happens when you do this exercise, is you start to get comfortable creating attention-grabbing headlines. And over time, you'll be able to write headlines with ease.

**Become a Copywriter Step #4:** Get feedback on your writing. Not a single "A-list" copywriter you hear us talk about here at AWAI hasn't asked for feedback on their writing. Red ink edits are a great way to improve your copywriting skills.

As AWAI's Copy Chief, it's my job to give writers feedback. It's something I enjoy doing. I want to see writers succeed. It's the highest form of flattery.

And when I write promotions or articles, like the one you're reading now, you can bet someone else has looked it over.

Maybe you might feel a little awkward or shy asking someone else to read your words and offer feedback. When others comment, they aren't deliberately trying to be mean. Most people take your feelings into consideration and give constructive feedback.

Now, there are some Copy Chiefs I know that are harsh with feedback they give writers. But that generally only happens with more experienced writers who "can take it." Plus, those harsh comments aren't personal attacks. It's more of a down-to-business approach to speed things along. Personally, I focus on offering constructive feedback, explaining why I'm proposing the changes, and providing positive suggestions for how to improve any copy you write. Just remember, you and your Copy Chief are on the same team — you both want the copy to be as good as it can be.

**Become a Copywriter Step #5:** Study one sales letter a week. Doing this is like leapfrogging your way to success. I'm sure you've heard how important it is to read one sales letter a day. And while on the surface I agree, if you dig deeper than just reading and truly study what's going on with that sales letter, you'll gain far more out of the effort.

By studying the letter, I'm talking about reverse engineering it. As you read the letter, take note of the tactics used and make notations in the margins. Why is that particular paragraph used? What type of terminology is the writer using?

What promises are they making and how did they show them to be true? Look at the headline and identify six U's: Unique, Useful, Ultra-specific, Urgent, Ultra-relevant, and Ultra-curiosity and/or intrigue.

**Become a Copywriter Step #6:** Keep learning. Copywriting and direct response are continually evolving fields. The minute you stop learning is the minute you become not relevant to a client. You have to know what is working, what tactics are being used, formats that drive response, pricing terms that are too good to turn down by the prospect, and on and on.

You can stay in tune to what's cutting-edge by making use of the many resources AWAI offers from our [State of the Industry report](#), to guides on the top projects.

I've been involved in copywriting for over 28 years ... from writing packages to training writers. It's the best career choice I've ever made.

If you're committed to earning a living as a writer, there's really no better way to do that than becoming a great copywriter.

Have any questions for Sandy about becoming a great copywriter? Post them in the comments and she'll be happy to answer them.

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- [The Power of Research: Are You Asking the Right Questions?](#)
- More by [Sandy Franks](#)
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## 4 Responses to "Six Steps to Becoming a Great Copywriter"

Sandy:

Great article, informative, stimulating and highly encouraging.

An observation and a quick question. About Brian Clark's being able to write those many headlines in a single day, where did he get the ideas or products to write those headlines?

I am curious as I would like to duplicate that feat in my push to become an effective master copy writer.

Thanks for a great article and for your prompt response.

Winston

*drblowin* – over a year ago

Reading this has reminded me of why I am doing this. Thank you! :-)

*qnbeees* – over a year ago

This was very helpful. I am going to definitely work on all 6 of these steps. Thank you.

*Tourre* – over a year ago

Hi Sandy I have really enjoyed your articles. Thank you. I also wondered about how to practice headlines. I thought about getting ideas from promotional emails in my inbox. Do you have any other suggestions?

Thank you!

*Ann* – over a year ago

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