

# Working with a Legendary Copy Chief

*By Sherri Caldwell*



Forgive me, Sandy Franks. When I first started copywriting 2½ years ago, I didn't know who or what a "Copy Chief" was.

At the mere mention of those two words, I would have conjured up images of Perry White, the editor-in-chief of the Metropolis *Daily Planet* newspaper from Superman comics and movies ... or Ed Asner as Lou Grant from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, or the real-life Helen Gurley Brown, editor-in-chief of *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

In Superman lore, Perry White is described as a character with "very high ethical and journalistic standards ... an archetypal image of the tough, irascible but fair-minded boss."

Which brings us closer ... not that Sandy, who serves as Copy Chief at AWAI is anything like Perry White or Lou Grant ... physically, anyway.

But tough? Yes, in a good way.

Irascible? Absolutely not.

Fair-minded? Yes.

Above all else ... Sandy is the "boss," as far as copy, copywriters, and editorial writers go, at AWAI.

Sandy came to AWAI in 2015. I had just recently joined AWAI and was a total newbie, but I remember reading how Katie Yeakle persuaded Sandy out of a brief retirement after 26 years at Agora, Inc., to become their Copy Chief.

Sandy has a tremendous amount of experience working with writers of all levels, from just starting out to already earning six-figures a year. She's now been entrenched in direct-response marketing and copywriting for over 28 years, first learning and writing copy herself to managing a team of in-house copywriters, and overseeing multimillion-dollar campaigns and product launches to running a \$25-million publishing company.

At Agora, which is the world's largest privately owned newsletter publishing company, Sandy learned from masters of the universe marketers and copywriters, Bill Bonner and Mark Ford.

Other "A-list" copywriters she's worked with include Mike Palmer, Copy Chief at Stansberry Research, Clayton Makepeace, Paul Hollingshead, Lee Euler, and Chip Biggs, to name just a few.

Many of those names you'll recognize as teachers and mentors for several AWAI training programs ... and who also share their secrets to success at Bootcamp.

My first year as a member of AWAI, working through *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting* and preparing for my first Bootcamp in 2015, I was so focused on learning the basic techniques and strategies, working through programs, specs, and samples, I hadn't really thought much about the actual how-to of working with a client, editor, or supervisor ... much less a Copy Chief.

But when the student is ready, the teacher appears ...

It happened for me in the summer of 2016, when I listened to a webinar presentation for *Advanced Training* by Rebecca Matter and Sandy Franks. The two were talking about what it's like working with clients and marketers, including how to get hired and create a good working relationship with a Copy Chief.

By that time in my new copywriting career, I knew the basics of persuasive communication and the mechanics of a sales letter. I just needed to put it into practice.

Later that summer, as I listened to another interview with Sandy, she said, "Growth comes from when you're being challenged."

That stuck with me. When you are working on your own and not surrounded by other talented writers, growth doesn't really happen. I told myself that if I were ever given the chance to be challenged, I would take it.

Well, it wasn't much later that the exact opportunity came my way. I joined AWAI's newly launched beta-test program for advanced [copywriting training](#). The program is modeled after the method multimillion-dollar publishers — like Agora, Weiss, NewMarket Health, Oxford Club, and others — train brand-new, in-house copywriters.

Going through the program, I felt like I was getting on-the-job training on the finer points of direct-response copy, from the basic collateral pieces such as landing pages, stick emails, email lift notes, to the full sales package. All under the guidance of a legendary Copy Chief ... yet with all the flexibility and freedom of freelancing.

As part of the training, we were encouraged to submit copy for review. And during a live webinar, everyone who submitted copy received honest, constructive feedback from Sandy. It wasn't always gold stars and happy faces, but always encouraging,

helpful, practical advice for improvement.

The experience of working with Sandy taught me that a Copy Chief is more like a movie director or producer than a regular editor. (Although they edit. Sometimes ruthlessly.)

Copy Chiefs are involved in the smallest pieces of content, yet carry a much larger perspective of what's going on overall, and how all the pieces fit together to make up the whole project.

They work directly with "talent" (you and me) to make what we write better. While a Copy Chief may be nurturing and encouraging, like Sandy, they also have high expectations and rigorous standards.

They have to. The work they do is measured in numbers from response and conversion rates, to new leads and paid orders.

After following Sandy's advice on the pieces I submitted during those copy review webinars, I'm happy to say I landed my first paid direct-response copywriting projects.

If you get the chance to work with a Copy Chief who is willing to mentor you through the process, leap at the opportunity. Nothing will make you a better writer, faster.

Working with Sandy Franks as my Copy Chief changed the path of my freelance career; it very well could do the same for you.

Have you worked with a Copy Chief yet? Do you have any questions about their role and how you successfully work with one? Please share with us in the comments below.

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## 3 Responses to "Working with a Legendary Copy Chief"

Beautiful writing with lots of insight, I too would like to achieve the position one day of becoming a great copywriter, but learning is the first word towards your goal.

*Trevor* – over a year ago

Having a great coach to keep me on track would be a huge plus in helping to move me along the learning curve.

I have begun the accelerated program and am very excited to be part of AWAI.

Each day is becoming an adventure in discovery. I set my alarm to begin writing daily prompts at 7:30 and keep going for at least to hours, until the financial markets open with the ringing of the bell.

TI review my trading positions until 10 and then write again until 12 noon.

Thanks everyone for all the helps.

*Baughsten* – over a year ago

How do you get started working with Sandy, or any Copy Editor chief? Is there a charge for working with someone who is working with AWAI?

*Guest (JoAnneF)* – 11 months ago

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