

# Why Some People Call It the Secret Society for Copywriters

*By Sandy Franks*



*"It's in my blood."*

That's how Rebecca Schmidt-Ruebensaal describes her passion for creating custom-made stationery and special occasion invitations.

She got the idea for her business after talking to a few of her friends who were newly engaged. Each complained how difficult it was finding a wedding invitation that didn't look like "all the rest."

So in 2011, Rebecca began making wedding invitations in the middle of her New York apartment, under the pen name of Mr. Boddington.

Thanks to word-of-mouth, her business took off. Now Rebecca has an entire team of designers that create highly stylized invitations for all kinds of events and occasions including birth announcements, engagements, and birthday parties.

She moved the business out of her apartment and into a Manhattan studio, which she named Mr. Boddington's Studio.

Rebecca, who is a former conflict resolution manager, is super-passionate about the details that go into making each item. Everything is hand-pressed to give the invitations a unique look and feel. And Rebecca personally designs the fonts and style of calligraphy her company uses on everything they make.

One customer described receiving a Mr. Boddington invitation as akin to discovering a precious family heirloom or an old love letter in your grandparents' attic.

And these days, Rebecca and her team of designers make quite a lot of high-end, custom designed paper products including personalized stationery, writing paper, wrapping paper, and book covers.

In fact, Rebecca recently partnered with Penguin Press to create customized book covers for classics such as *Jane Eyre*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Little Women*, and *Pride and Prejudice*.

Rebecca's quest to create the perfect invitation has blossomed into a mission to bring back handwritten letters. And she's found the ideal audience for her new business venture: young kids.

Rebecca launched the wildly popular, The Secret Society of Letter Writers. Her goal is to encourage children of all ages to spend more time writing.

The Secret Society is free and members receive secret messages and letters from Mr. Boddington, along with the name of a letter-writing pen pal.

Now, you might be wondering who the heck is Mr. Boddington? I'll tell you in just a minute, but first let's talk about your copywriting career and the five steps you can take that will help you go from aspiring writer to full-time freelancer.

**Copywriting Career Step #1: Read the classics.** 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.

Of course, every "A-list" copywriter has their own personal list of classics they recommend you read. As AWAI's Copy Chief, here are the ones I suggest 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

**Copywriting Career Step #2: Write every day.** You don't need customized writing paper to practice writing copy every day, regular pen and paper will do (and computer too).

Why practice at all? The answer is simple: It makes you a better copywriter. Let's use Jon Morrow, CEO of Smart Blogger as an example of how well it works.

To become great at writing headlines, and before teaming up with Brian Clark, founder of Copyblogger, Jon practiced writing headlines every day for 30 days straight. At the end of the month, he turned in over 300 headlines. Brian was so impressed, he hired Jon on the spot.

Jon's blog posts for Copyblogger have gotten over 200 million views. And those views wouldn't have happened without Jon's eye-catching headlines.

I suggest you do a similar thing. Start your practice exercises with 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.

This practice exercise helps you get comfortable creating attention-grabbing headlines. And over time, you'll be able to write headlines with ease.

**Copywriting Career Step #3: 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.

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

**Copywriting Career Step #4: 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.

**Copywriting Career Step #5: 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. You can pick and choose the ones that suit you best and take your time with each one, learning at your own pace.

Or you can get access to all of them, and even get the chance to have your copy reviewed by our team of in-house experts. It's just one of the many privileges you enjoy as member of our highest level of membership, *Circle of Success*, which is like a

secret society for copywriters. ([You can find out more here.](#))

These five steps will go a long way in helping you get your copywriting career off the ground. And just like Rebecca found her true passion in creating high-end invitations, you might find your true passion lies in creating high-performing sales copy.

**Who is Mr. Boddington?** It's a fictional character Rebecca created to help make her line of products stand out from the competition. And she's even created a story that keeps customers engaged in her business; wanting to know what new products she's creating. Here's how she describes him:

The shocked nurse nearly dropped the newly born Master Boddington on his head. She cried to her fellow midwives that this baby boy was born with two purple ink-stained thumbs, a clear sign of the paper trade that would define his life's work.

As a child, he moved around the world with his parents, his nanny, and a caravan of royal supporters. His first correspondence was sent from an island in the south Pacific at the age of five. He requested that ten boxes of "Van Dyke" Drawing Pencil No. 600s be shipped to his tent.

And as a young adult, he apprenticed with the Russian Tsar Nicholas' correspondence court. Nick and little Boddington could never agree on the perfect shade of rose for the Russian's new paper so they spent much of their time riding under the pines.

He created his first wedding invitation for a stunning duchess and her wedding on a small hillside in Udaipur, India. She later wept to find Mr. Boddington applying the silk fabric from her wedding gown to the back of a post card. The tears were not for her destroyed gown, but for the beauty of her new stationery.

Now, since Mr. Boddington is often traveling the world in pursuit of leisure and inspiration, he maintains a studio in New York City to keep his craft humming. Above the bakeries on 36th Street in Brooklyn, you will find a team of talented artists, designers, illustrators, production specialists, and biscuit nibblers.

Published: October 29, 2018

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