



## *Books Feed Her Soul, Copywriting Feeds Her Bank Account*

When researching her most recent novel – a murder mystery set in a surf town – award-winning author Pat McCord traveled to Huntington Beach, California, where she spent a day at the beach with a former champion surfer and a week interviewing the local police and working on her book.

It's just the sort of on-location, in-depth research Pat does for her books. And it works well. She's published 15 books, earning numerous awards and recognition.

Pat lives for writing books, but like most authors, books are not how she makes her entire living. Given the industry's inconsistent nature, Pat had to find another source of income. But how do you fit in writing books if you work full time?

"To be an author, I discovered that it was really tough working full time in an office and then trying to write on the weekends," she said. "I needed a permanent Plan B to help pay the bills."

### *Pat's "Permanent Plan B"*

Pat found her "permanent plan B" in freelance copywriting. On that seaside research trip, she hadn't yet earned a penny from her mystery novel, but she made money anyway.

"While I was on the trip, I worked on a copywriting project for a client, which I almost always do when I travel," she said.

For the serial author, copywriting is the answer to being an author and making a living. It gives Pat both flexibility in her schedule and the income to support book writing. At any given time, she's working on one book – or more – as well as writing copy for several regular clients.

#### **CASE STUDY:**

### *Pat McCord*

*"In truth, my first AWAI program introduced me to a world I knew nothing about. I soon realized I was buying a lifestyle as well, where I found expertise, activities and friends."*

#### **MEMBER:**

Pat McCord

#### **LOCATION:**

Tucson, Arizona

#### **OTHER CAREERS:**

Book author; in-house writer for Boeing and Microsoft

#### **HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:**

Pat wrote a fundraising appeal pro-bono for a client, and immediately used that sample to land a paying client.

#### **TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:**

- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*
- *FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp and Job Fair*

## Bootcamp: The Missing Link

Pat is a lifelong writer, penning everything from children's books to mysteries to self-help guides. She also spent more than a decade in the corporate world, where her ability to write simply about complex subjects made her an asset at Boeing. At Microsoft, her children's novels earned her a gig writing game products. "I found that one skill complemented the other," she said.

Copywriting was a natural fit; however, Pat was unsure how to begin her business. Nearly a decade ago, she found the boost she needed by investing in AWAI's *Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*, the program that has launched hundreds of copywriting careers.

When Pat made the decision to invest, she was all in, diligently completing every exercise. As the fall approached, her husband urged her to attend AWAI's flagship annual event, the *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp and Job Fair, but she wasn't sure.

"I almost didn't go to that first Bootcamp," she recalls. "I had just purchased the basic copywriting course and didn't feel ready for the 'big time' but I went anyway – and I'm glad I did."

At Bootcamp, Pat discovered the missing pieces in her writing career thus far: the know-how to write promotional copy, a network of support and much-needed confidence. Several connections made at Bootcamp led to writing assignments, for AWAI and copywriting legend Bob Bly.

Her first freelance project came soon after, serendipitously. The owner of a martial arts studio in her city, Tucson, called because Pat had written an award-winning martial arts-themed novel for youth years earlier, called *A Bundle of Sticks*. In the conversation, he mentioned he really needed to do a fundraiser –

the perfect opportunity for Pat to use her new copywriting skills.

Pat shared her fundraising appeal with AWAI, which then hired her to write a promotion for Bootcamp, one that authentically detailed her own Bootcamp experience. What happened next surprised Pat most of all. Her promo was the most successful of that year, leading AWAI to name her the winner of its \$10K Challenge. Every year, AWAI tests numerous promotions written by members, and based on results, selects one person to receive additional contracted assignments from AWAI valued at \$10,000.

"Winning the \$10K Challenge was my Cinderella moment," Pat said. "But confidence plus a number of clients who came my way after the win proved to be the true value over time."

Occasionally on a random Tuesday, she'll see a promotion she's written land in her inbox and feel the thrill of success again.

## A Virtual Mastermind Group

Like many writers, Pat relishes quiet time spent writing, but she soon realized she had to make a mental shift. She wanted, and needed, camaraderie with other copywriters.

While taking an AWAI program, Pat took a chance and reached out to a half dozen other writers. She invited them to join her in starting a virtual mastermind group to talk about the goals, challenges and successes.

The group met regularly on Skype and exchanged copywriting samples for feedback.

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Everyone finally met in person at Bootcamp and the following year, they came together for a retreat in Tucson.

“Because of that early mastermind group, I have never once felt isolated as a copywriter, and that has made all the difference,” she said.

### *Freedom to Take on Projects, or Not*

Over the years, Pat has found copywriting to be her trusty Plan B, a reliable complement to unpredictable book deals and royalties.

Copywriting also provides space in her life for other needs. When her son was ill last year, she was grateful for the time her career gave her to help him get better – to take projects as she was able. And whenever she’s on a trip, for fun or book research, she brings along her copywriting.

“Many people have another life. Mine is writing books. Copywriting is something I can rev up and rev down as I need to fit my other life,” she said.

### *Pat’s Tips For Copywriters*

- **Reach out to other writers** – Connect with others to share ideas, goals and even feedback on each other’s copywriting. You can exchange referrals when one of you is too busy or you find an opportunity outside your writing niche.
- **Talk about what you do** – Tell everyone you encounter that you’re a copywriter, and freely hand out cards. Someone will need your services, or know someone who does.
- **Stay patient and persistent** – “I wasn’t good at this, at first,” Pat says. But she diligently worked on the programs and her writing.
- **Collect and critique samples** – Early on, Pat collected a pile of direct mail letters to analyze. Now she studies emails. If she sees a promo run more than once, she knows it’s working.

## *Ready to pursue your own definition of success?*

Learn more about the program that kicked off Pat’s career, [\*The FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp and Job Fair.\*](#)

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