



Do you know the cost of everything and the value of nothing?

"Andy, I have no doubt that you would improve my copy. In fact, I think you would almost certainly transform it. But, I can't afford you. I don't have the budget."

That was something said to me by a prospective client, only two weeks ago.

He runs a medium to large company that is treading water. He is massively frustrated about that - and wants, as everyone does, to increase sales and be more successful.

All his copy is written in-house, by a 21-year old graduate.

She has no real copy credentials and has received no copy training of any kind. She proudly states that she hasn't read any notable book on the subject.

She believes, that as she can write, she can write copy. Or 'content' as it is referred to these days, for some inexplicable reason.

He agrees.

They are both very wrong.

She wrote the website, she writes emails, social media posts and, believe it or not, an occasional direct mail campaign.

But, as he mentioned to me, *"we don't do as much of that as we used to, because I think it's too expensive"*.

I reminded him that it isn't what it costs that's important. It's what it *delivers*. And DM that's created and written well, delivers. Period.

It always has - and it's still outperforming most media in ROI terms. (But he still won't even test it).

This senior director is, in my view, pretty typical of today's marketing folk. He knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing.

He will not get to where he wants to be. Not even debatable, but a certain fact.

Because, if you continue to do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got.

And, if you use a copywriter that doesn't really understand how copy works, then your results will not match your ambition.

He has clearly under-performed for years and will continue to do so. Plus, of course, after the last 18-months of the Covid nightmare, he is facing a tougher challenge now, than the one he was facing before it started.

He will probably be fired in the next six months. He'll join an ever-increasing bunch of losers. There's a lot of them about.

Latest figures show, that in the UK, Marketing Managers and Directors only last, on average, for 11 months, before they are shown the door - and in a recent report by [Media Post](#) in the US, Chief Marketing Officers are being kicked out at a faster rate than at any time in our history.

Not surprising really when you think about it. This 'cheapo, cheapo' mindset, is lunacy. It has never made sense - and never will.

We all discover this, early in our lives.

Just cast your mind back a few years. Perhaps decades for those of you with a few miles on the clock.

You were setting up home on a limited budget, with the first baby on the way.

You needed a new carpet for the living room. You went and looked at the options and settled for a cheap carpet that you convinced yourself "really looked good" and was within your limited budget.

In just over a year and a half, you were back in the shop to buy a replacement, as your "really good" carpet had fallen apart.

This time you did it right and spent whatever you had to - even though it was more than you could really afford - to get the result you wanted.

And your new carpet lasted you for a decade or more.

It's called *experience*. Recognising a mistake and making sure you don't make it again.

We all found out at an early age, that when you buy cheap - you buy twice.

Marketers know this, but choose to ignore it, as they are obsessed with costs at the expense of value. Cost-cutting is being used as a driver by today's advertising and marketing professionals - and it's a big mistake.

Saving your way to success is a flawed strategy. Knowledge is the key to success. To sell more, you have to **know** more.

It's not rocket science. It has always been this way.

When you know what works and why it works - you give yourself such a massive advantage over your competitors.

Copy is central to this.

Most copywriters these days - and the people that employ them - haven't got a clue about what it is that makes people take notice, read and respond.

They don't know about the power of words.

They can't structure an effective selling message, by mail, email, FB Ad, Google Ad, Web Page or anything else for that matter - because they don't know how to. They have never studied the art.

Drayton commented on this in a recent article:

"Every one of the great copywriters I have known - and I have known many - had one thing in common. They studied the past.

Every bad copywriter - and I have known far more than good - didn't study the past.

Most today, imagine if it isn't digital, it's irrelevant".

For today's marketers that want to be brave, the rewards are out there right now.

Let's face it, because of the recession, competition is reduced, as a lot of people have either given up, cut their marketing activity - or become a penny-pincher like our friend I talked about earlier.

That means there are attractive advantages to be had out there. But, you have to speculate.

Be brave. And invest.

If you are serious about your business, then be serious about your approach. Don't accept second best. Especially when it comes to the art of selling.

Employ people who know how it's done.

Someone "who has tasted blood" as David Ogilvy once said.

Someone who can see the veins of gold where others can only see bare stones.

Not people who play at it.

Don't be like our brainless friend I mentioned earlier, who believes that if someone can write copy, they can write effective selling messages.

They can't. It's not possible.

Employing people like that will see you going broke, or getting fired.

There is NO substitute for experience. Credentials and knowledge are *everything*...

But you know that, don't you? You apply that to decisions you make in your personal life.

You wouldn't consider a tradesman to work on your home that had no credentials.

You wouldn't go to a young trainee dentist for that new crown, instead of a proven professional.

And when you want financial guidance for a potential investment, you want someone advising you, that's been around the block a few times.

So, why, when it comes to your marketing do you ignore that thinking - and try and do it on the cheap?

As I mentioned earlier, saving your way to success is a flawed strategy and will not give you what you crave.

I'll leave you with a little story that is very relevant to what I've been talking about today.

One day, Pablo Picasso was sitting in a Paris cafe and sketching something on a small napkin.

He was being watched by an admirer.

Once Picasso was done, he put the napkin down. Almost immediately, the admirer approached him and asked whether he could have the napkin.

"Sure," Picasso answered. "20,000 francs and it's yours."

"20,000 francs?" said the admirer. "You must be crazy to expect me to pay that!"

I was watching you and it only took you five minutes to draw it".

Picasso smiled, then looked up at him.

"No, my friend, it took me more than 40 years."

Keep the faith



ABOUT YOUR AUTHOR

Andy Owen is MD of **Andy Owen Copy & Creative Ltd**, one of the most respected and experienced International direct marketing consultancies, specialising in all aspects of creative, copy and strategy for direct and digital marketing.

Andy has been writing selling copy for over 33 years. He writes traditional and digital marketing campaigns, including direct mail, sales letters, emails, SMS's, PPC and FB ads, media ads, websites, landing pages, brochures, radio scripts and much more.

He works with clients in three continents and was inducted into the **Direct Marketing Hall of Fame** in February 2015, one of only two copywriters in Europe with that honour.

Visit www.andyowencopyandcreative.com

Andy launched an innovative new copywriting service late in 2019, called **Copy Chief** - which guarantees professionally written copy every time - for a fraction of the normal rate card cost.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of copywriting and creative for direct marketing, please contact Andy personally at andyowen@aol.com

All Andy's **previous Copycat articles** are available to download and enjoy

Don't forget to visit Andy's **personal website** where you will find many interesting tales, amazing yarns and wonderful stories - completely devoid of any corporate claptrap.