

Audience

In-house marketing manager or marcomm of a medium-sized, English-speaking company located in the U.S., Canada, Australia, or the U.K. They have a staff of in-house writers and a budget for training. They are split roughly 54% male and 46% female, and generally aged 40-45 years old. Most are college educated with the most popular degrees in Business Administration or Marketing.

Business Purpose

To generate leads for a new corporate training division within American Writers and Artists, Inc. (AWAI). To bring prospects into the funnel by educating them on the importance of training their in-house writers and the criteria by which they should judge training programs.

Flavor

Problem/Solution (Chocolate)

Word Count

3269 words

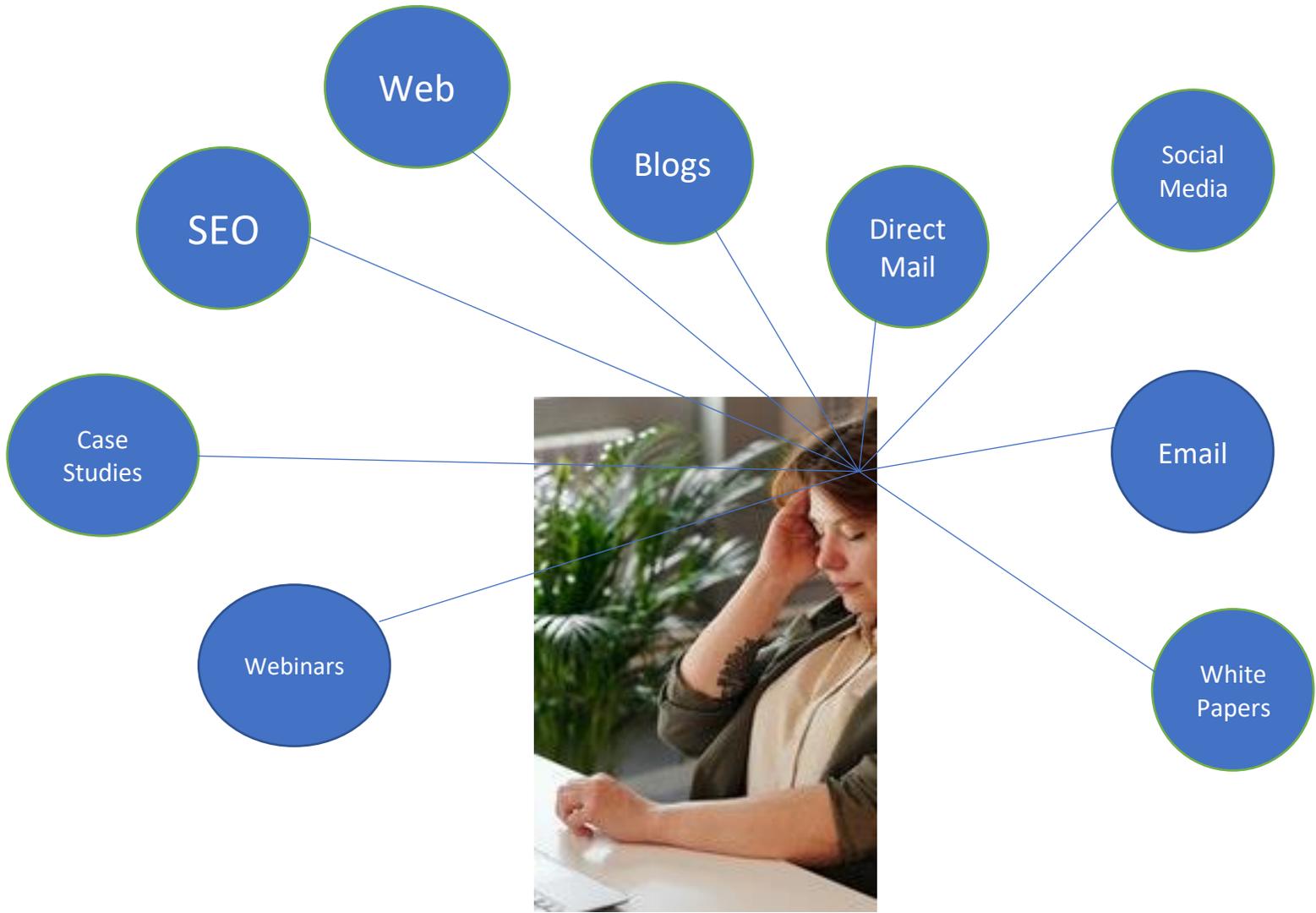
Readability

Table 1: Readability Metrics, Target and Actual

METRIC	TARGET	ACTUAL
Flesch Reading Ease	higher than 50	56.2
Grade Level	lower than 12	8.1
Passive Voice	lower than 20%	6.4%

How to Train Writers to Produce Powerful Marketing Copy

A Special Report for Marketing Managers



Executive Summary

You need traffic and leads like you need food and water to survive – because you know 90% of buyers start their buying process online.

Content Marketing Institute reports that B2B marketers cite higher quality and more efficient content creation as the most important factor for improving their marketing strategy.

So, you evaluate your writers' readability and SEO optimization scores. You look at the amount of organic, referral, and direct traffic you get each month. You're doing OK. But you have to do better. Your company depends on it.

How?

All marketing channels require copy. Lots of clear, concise, persuasive copy that drives people to act.

You could hire more seasoned writers or an outside agency but these options are costly and risky, and it takes time to yield results. Worst of all, they can demotivate your existing in-house writers.

However, a small investment in copy and content training for your in-house writers can yield big improvements in your marketing results.

Many traditional training options exist, such as:

- Online courses
- Webinars
- Conferences
- Instructor-led classroom training
- Books

Unfortunately, none are comprehensive. You need one-stop shopping for company-specific training across all marketing channels.

What should you look for in a training provider?

- Long track record of success
- Recognized leader in copywriter training
- Faculty of practicing and recognized experts
- Curriculum that can be generic or company-specific
- Program conducted online, on-site, or both
- Staff that offers personal interaction and feedback
- Company that offers comprehensive training in all marketing channels
- Firm that offers a money-back guarantee

An ideal provider trains your writers to create copy that's persuasive and customer focused, and with a strong call to action. Across all marketing channels, online or in person. **Training that is tailored to your company.**

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Marketing's Critical Challenge

"Master the topic, the message, and the delivery." – Steve Jobs, Co-Founder of Apple

Sounds simple, doesn't it? But you know better.

As a Marketing Manager, you're responsible for developing brand awareness, educating customers, establishing credibility and trust, generating leads, nurturing subscribers, and building brand loyalty.

And, like a head chef who has many recipe books to craft a succulent meal, you have many tools to develop a brilliant marketing campaign. Social media, email, SEO, and other marketing channels are in your tool box. What is the common denominator?

They each require copy. Yes, the written word. Lots of clear, concise, benefits-focused, persuasive copy that drives people to act. And, it must be written for multiple audiences. A recent study shows that B2B marketers create copy for an average of four audiences.¹ That's four different campaigns going on at one time!

According to Bill Gates, content is king.² And, the content experts agree. Content Marketing Institute reports that B2B marketers cite higher quality and more efficient content creation as the most important factor for improving their marketing strategy.³ Copy is the peppercorn sauce on your steak. The hot fudge and whipped cream on your sundae. Strong copy makes content tasty.

So, you evaluate your writer's readability and SEO optimization scores. You look at email opens, clicks, and downloads. You analyze website effectiveness through time spent, bounce rates, and form completions. But that's not all.

You assess the organic traffic you receive through social media each month. You want to know shares, followers, views, likes. You realize 91% of B2B marketers use social media as a distribution channel,⁴ and your campaigns must rise above the noise.

But most importantly, you evaluate traffic and leads. You crave leads. You need these like you need food and water to survive. You're not alone. A HubSpot survey found that 61% of companies surveyed listed generating leads and traffic as a top marketing challenge.⁵ Why is this so important?

Because, site traffic is a key predictor of success. Out of companies meeting revenue goals, 70% attract 10,000 visitors or more per month to their site.⁶ This is primarily due to two reasons. One, 90% of buyers start their buying process online. And two, on average, they will make 12 searches before engaging a brand's site.⁷ Before buyers contact a company, they are well educated.

You feel you're doing OK. But you have to do better. Each campaign must be better than the previous.

Surprisingly, a Content Marketing Institute survey showed that 74% of B2B marketers rated their organizations' overall level of content marketing success as moderately successful or worse.⁸ Moderately successful (or worse) is not an acceptable option for you. That's serving hamburgers when your ideal prospects want beef bourguignon. You demand more of yourself. Your company, boss, and family depend on your success.

Tackling the Challenge

If your copy is not generating the results you hunger for, then it must be improved.

But how?

Well, one option is to hire more seasoned writers. This could work if you have approval for additional headcount. They likely won't know the ins and outs of your company or industry. It would take some time for them to become proficient.

A *Harvard Business Review* article estimates that it takes six months to a year before an employee is fully productive.⁹ Six months to a year is a long time in the marketing world. You'll lose out on potential value for up to a year. You need marketing results now.

What else could you do?

Hire an outside agency? You would have to identify agencies that might fit your requirements, interview them, select one, and train them in your business. This would be very costly and risky, and it would take time to produce results. You have no control over the speed with which they get things done.

But, worst of all, using either of these two options would demotivate your existing in-house staff. They would see money being poured into outsiders instead of into developing their skills. Their level of engagement and productivity could very well spiral downward.

Training and development influence an employee's decision to remain with a company. For the 9th consecutive year, lack of career development is the number one reason employees leave a company.¹⁰ Since 2010, voluntary departures due to poor training have increased 46.9 percent.¹¹ According to the Center for American Progress, replacing an employee costs about 20% of their salary.¹² Ouch!

You need results quickly - and to not disrupt your current in-house team. It's time to better train your in-house writers.

The Power of Training Your Writers

You're not training your writers out of the goodness of your heart. Training has a significant economic impact. It improves employee engagement and skill sets, leading to better performance. A small investment in copy and content training can yield a big improvement in marketing results.

Think of your favorite restaurant. The kind you go to for anniversaries, birthdays, etc. It has a highly trained head chef. That's why you like it. The food is succulent. But head chefs are not born; they are made. It takes years of training to reach this level of expertise.

Likewise, great copywriters are not born. They are made. Fortunately, it doesn't take nearly as long to bring your writers' skills up to the level you need. What does better training accomplish for you? Let's take a look.

Training writers is cheaper than hiring new ones

It's much less expensive to train a current writer than it is to hire a new one. Staff turnover has a negative financial impact due to the cost of recruiting, hiring, and training a new employee.

However, training an existing writer in modern marketing copy techniques can cost significantly less.

Training writers reduces turnover

Untrained employees can feel that they are being underused. Frustration sets in and they become less engaged in their job. At best, they are marginally productive. At worst, they make more mistakes and fail to meet minimum standards.

An IBM study found that employees who feel they cannot develop within the company and fulfill their career goals are 12 times more likely to leave.¹³

Training writers increases productivity

Proper training improves skills. This reduces the time it takes to write that landing page, produce that blog post, or create other marketing copy. The right tools allow writers to create effective copy more quickly. Less time and money are spent to correct mistakes.

Proper training makes your employee feel more valued and empowered. As company loyalty and personal engagement rocket skyward, so does productivity.

A study by EQW found that a 10% increase in educational development produced an 8.6% gain in productivity.¹⁴

Training writers increases profitability

Not only does training writers reduce turnover and increase productivity, it increases profitability, as well. Forbes cites a Gallup report that found highly engaged teams show a 21% increase in profitability. Why? Teams with a high level of engagement produce a 41% reduction in absenteeism and 59% less turnover. Engaged employees show up every day with passion and purpose.¹⁵

Furthermore, high-performing companies spend more on training. The American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) found that companies who offer thorough training programs see 218% higher income per employee than companies without formalized training. And, the same study showed that companies who invest in training have 24% higher profit margins than companies that spend less on training.¹⁶

Shaving costs, reducing turnover, and increasing productivity and profitability. All accomplished by doing more of what you are probably already doing... training your employees.

Sizing Up Traditional Training Methods

With technological advancements, many types of training options are available. Options that consist of digital tools such as online courses and webinars. And, the more traditional methods such as classroom training, conferences, and books.

Each has advantages and disadvantages. So, let's take a detailed look at four traditional training methods. A table summary is also provided at the end of this section.

Online Courses – The advantage of online courses is that they can be easily scaled with any number of people taking the course at one time. So, if you are training 100 employees, this can be economical. Each can stop and start the course at their own pace.

A disadvantage is that courses are unmonitored. You don't know how engaged each employee is with the material. So, it's hard to know if the employee grasped the material and can put it to immediate use. Online courses also lack personal interaction with the trainer. Questions can go unanswered resulting in your writers receiving no instructor feedback.

Another disadvantage is that the material can be accessed anytime from anywhere. Trainees are on their own schedule. But that's a good thing, right? Not necessarily. Employees don't develop a sense of teamwork. Not only is there no bonding between trainees but they can't help each other understand the concepts presented during the course.

Perhaps the biggest disadvantage, however, is that most online courses are generic and topic-specific. They may teach how to write effective blogs but not with respect to your company or industry. Trainees must take this generic content and massage it to fit your needs.

Also, it is rare that an online course covers more than one type of copy. Not much good when you need to produce multiple copy types for multiple channels.

Instructor-led classroom training – The big advantage is personal interaction with both the instructor and other students. Students can ask questions and get answers. Also, trainees can learn and grow together.

However, if each trainee begins at a different knowledge level, keeping everyone engaged becomes difficult. Faster learners can become bored and feel unchallenged. Slower learners can feel like a drag on the class. Both can lead to disengaged trainees.

A more significant disadvantage is that the instructor is probably not a practicing expert in the subject matter. They could be an English teacher who's teaching a copywriting course. They may know something about writing a blog or case study. But do they make a living writing this copy? Probably not. They're an instructor. Not an A-list practicing writer.

Conferences – Most companies operate in an industry with annual conferences conducted by industry associations. Many times, these conferences will conduct training programs on topics of huge interest to members.

This training can occur over several days and be quite intense.

Trainees can ask questions during the presentations or during breaks and usually get them answered. They can develop interpersonal relationships with the instructor and other attendees.

Despite the intensity, conferences typically don't last any longer than four days. In those four short days a lot of topics are covered and can lead to information overload. Students struggle to retain information. They return to the office slightly more prepared to write strong copy but there is no follow-through to help them develop new habits.

Also, you never know if the content will be above or below their ability to comprehend. You spend a lot of money in travel, conference fees, and employee time to be uncertain how beneficial this training might be.

Books – Books are written on every topic known to man. Look at the number of listings for digital marketing books on Amazon. There are over 6,000. Some of these might be appropriate. But which ones?

The author could go into great detail on how to write an effective blog, case study, or white paper. Some people can easily learn by reading a book. And moving forward, it can always be accessed as a reference manual.

However, many people don't learn by reading. Readers can become disengaged. They have trouble applying the concepts to their business or industry. A high percentage of individuals learn best by performing a task and receiving immediate feedback.

More importantly, books become outdated. What worked in 2010 doesn't work in 2020.

Each of these methods falls short of an ideal training program. The advantages and disadvantages of each are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Online courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access anytime, anywhere • Easily scaled to large groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmonitored • Generic content • One copy type only • Lacks personal interaction • No feedback provided • No teamwork development
Instructor-led classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disparity in skills can lead to disengaged students • Instructor not a practicing expert • Offsite
Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry specific 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short at 3-4 days • Lost employee productivity • Limited personal interaction & feedback • Training may not be applicable • Training may not match employee skill level • Information overload • Lack of retention
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible • Provides detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No personal feedback • Generic • Copy type specific • Unmonitored • Reader engagement is variable • Difficult to apply concepts to individual situation • Quickly outdated

Fortunately, there is a better way. What might that be?

You Need a Comprehensive Method

Multiple channels are typically used in a marketing campaign. You need your writers to have expertise in each.

A comprehensive training provider offers all-inclusive, one-stop shopping for company/industry specific training. Instruction across all marketing channels using multiple methods. Not like a la carte dining but more like a buffet. However, that's not enough. You need your steak to sizzle.

How?

You should require that your training provider be stocked with a team of A-list copywriters in all copy and channels. Instructors that can train online or on-site and offer personal interaction with priceless feedback.

Picture this. Within your building, you have an industry recognized instructor that currently provides million-dollar copy, teaching your writers how to create brilliant content that will produce immediate results.

A head chef goes to his pastry chef for desserts and breads, his sauce chef for sauces, gravies, and soups, and his pantry chef for salads and hors d'oeuvres. Similarly, after a comprehensive training program, you will be able to go to a web expert for web copy, email expert for email copy, and white paper expert for white papers. This may be the same employee or one of multiple employees. You have developed copy experts in all channels within your organization.

One provider with multiple experts, allows this to happen. Why is this so important?

Because your organization probably uses five or more marketing channels per campaign. You can hire five different training providers or you can hire one.

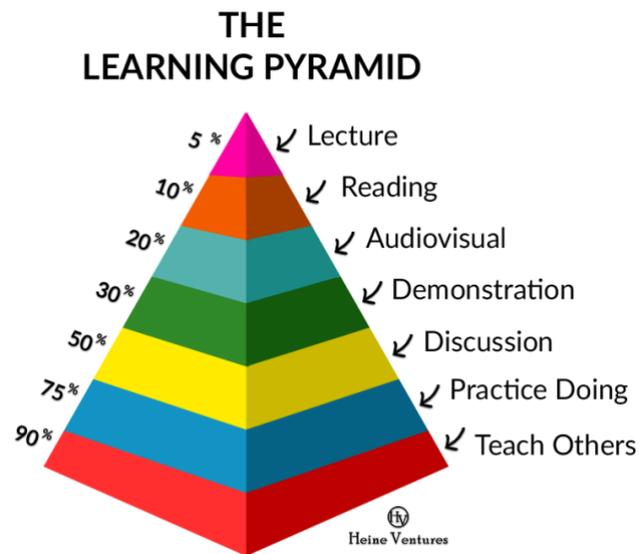
Also, a comprehensive training provider will engage and motivate your writers by offering an active, hands on learning experience. Why is this important?

- It better demonstrates theoretical copywriting concepts.
- It increases student engagement and enjoyment.
- It improves knowledge retention and enhances teamwork skills.
- It gives you a method to assess the skills and thinking of your writers.

“For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.” Aristotle

As shown in the diagram below, listening, reading, and observing are the least effective methods of learning. The highest retention rate is only 20%. That's not learning. That's exposure.

The most effective learning methods include group discussions, as well as practice by doing, and practice by teaching others, with retention rates of 50%, 75%, and 90%, respectively. Now, that's learning.



(The Learning Pyramid, Heine Ventures)

With a comprehensive training program, employees benefit from increased flexibility, greater engagement, and improved knowledge retention.

Delivering the right training, from the right experts, produces the strongest writers. In turn, this results in more clicks, opens, leads and sales.

Turn Your Writers into Michelin Starred Marketers

... *“People have a tremendous capacity to improve their performance, as long as they train in the right way.”* Anders Ericsson, *Peak: How all of us can achieve extraordinary things*

The term "Michelin Star" is a mark of fine dining quality with restaurants around the world proudly promoting their Michelin Star status. The reviewers focus on the value and quality of the food, consistency, and the technique and personality of the chef in making their reviews. You'll have to select another

rating service to include other criteria such as inside décor, table settings, or service quality. Make no mistake—food is the content being judged.

In your world, words are the content being judged. It's through the use of well-written words that your marketing campaigns earn Michelin Star status. Your writers can be trained to achieve this level of success, no matter their current skillset.

At one time, even the world-renowned chef, Gordon Ramsay, was a beginner. Yet, he currently has four stars associated with his name and has had as many as eight. Writers can become as highly skilled with the ideal comprehensive training provider.

What you should be looking for in a training provider?

- ✓ **A long track record of success.** How long have they been teaching? Do they have an excellent track record of developing effective writers? You want a provider that has achieved profitable results over a large number of years.
- ✓ **A recognized leader in the copywriting training field.** A recognized leader will be well known within the training field. You need a provider that only trains writers. They are specialists. They do not offer other training.
- ✓ **A faculty of practicing and recognized experts in their discipline.** Does each faculty member practice and make a living in their specialty? You want trainers who can speak from experience. Trainers who can provide a detailed perspective and convey the nuances of writing effective copy. Generalities will not accelerate your writers' growth.
- ✓ **A curriculum that can be tailored to be company/industry specific.** Ineffective training programs result in attendees being unable to apply what they learned. Good schools use copywriting exercises. The best schools tailor these exercises to your company.
- ✓ **A program that can be conducted both online or at the company's site.** Together, online and in-classroom training can have a strong synergistic effect. The best providers use all methods to maximize the effect of the advantages and eliminate the disadvantages.
- ✓ **A staff that offers personal interaction and feedback.** No one learns as well in a vacuum as with personal interaction. Personal interaction is necessary to answer each student's questions and provide further clarity for difficult writing concepts. After producing marketing copy during the class, the writer requires detailed, supportive feedback for improvement.
- ✓ **A company that offers comprehensive training in all marketing channels.** Most training providers teach one type of marketing copy. It may be SEO optimization. Or, it may be blogs. It could be email campaigns. However, few trainers teach all the marketing copy you may use in your campaigns.

- ✓ **A firm that offers a money back guarantee.** Let's face it, a guarantee eases your anxiety level. You need a guarantee. This proves that the training provider is confident in their abilities and will stand behind their services.

Traditional providers will not meet these requirements.

Conclusion

Michelin starred head chefs take you on a journey. One that, with each passing course, your dinner conversation devolves further into celebrations of its deliciousness.

Similarly, a skilled copywriter can take your prospects on a journey. A journey that uses email, web copy, case studies, white papers, and other channels to drive your customers through the sales funnel.

The skills required to accomplish this can only be obtained from a comprehensive training provider whose faculty consists of A-list copywriters. These instructors earn their living writing persuasive marketing campaigns. Consequently, they can train your writers to create copy that presents a compelling case and enticing offer, and punctuate it with a strong call to action.

Most importantly, they'll provide training across all marketing channels, online or in person. Training that can be tailored to your company and industry, using multiple methods to ensure retention, and that offers a money back guarantee. And, that will improve employee retention and increase productivity and profitability.

Improving your writer's skills can help to overcome the #1 challenge you face today: generating traffic and leads in an increasingly noisy and competitive market.

To find out how your copywriters measure up against industry best practices with our 10-point copywriting evaluation tool, [click here](#). (insert URL).

About AWAI

ABOUT AWAI



American Writers & Artists Institute (AWAI) is the world's leading provider of training programs for marketing writers. Founded in 1997 by several world-renowned copywriters, AWAI now offers a complete range of programs on everything from writing B2B lead-generation campaigns to writing B2C sales campaigns.

Whether your firm employs copywriters who need to get results, or content writers who need to build audiences, AWAI can help. E-mail, sales letters or web pages; case studies, video scripts, or white papers — AWAI offers “proven best practice” training programs taught by world experts in each domain.

AWAI's programs engage all types of learners with multimedia content: online “books,” video, audio, transcripts, exercises, personal feedback, quizzes/tests, and online groups. Students benefit from a multi-modal approach with live lectures, Q&A, project work, self-paced learning, and spec challenges. While AWAI has sold its programs mainly to individuals in the past, the growing need to train in-house writers led us to create a division for corporate and ad agency staff training.

To find out more, visit [URL still under discussion, just leave a placeholder like this...]

Endnotes

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