



The Copywriting Business

Words that sell, billed like the asset they are. AI made cheap copy free, and quietly made copy that converts worth more than ever.

\$115-735

START LEAN

14-30 days

FIRST DOLLAR

85-95%

TYPICAL MARGIN

Is this your business?

Every dollar a business earns online passes through words someone wrote: the headline, the sales page, the welcome email, the offer. Copywriting turns that dependency into a project business with almost no overhead and rates that climb with proof instead of hours. The gurus sell it as a typing job. It is a research job with a writing deliverable, and the businesses that have already bought cheap words pay real rates the second time.

\$115-735

LEAN STARTUP COST

\$1,000-2,500

STANDARD BUILD

14-30 days

TIME TO FIRST DOLLAR

85-95%

TYPICAL GROSS MARGIN

Yes, fully

SOLO-FRIENDLY

Yes, entirely

HOME-BASED

BUILT FOR THESE FOUNDER TYPES

THE STORYTELLER

THE ADVISOR

3/5 difficulty

THE HONEST FIT TEST

You will spend more hours reading customer reviews and interview transcripts than writing clever lines, and clients will gut your favorite paragraph without apology. If you need applause for your prose, write essays. If you like figuring out why people buy, and quoting \$3,000 for a page does not make your voice shake, this pays better than almost any laptop skill.

Who pays, and why now.

Copy is the one input every online business buys repeatedly. Launch a product, you need a sales page. Build a list, you need a welcome sequence. Run ads, you need landing pages that stop the bleed. The work is invisible until it is measured, and then it is the highest-leverage line item in the budget, because the same traffic with a stronger page is pure profit. A store doing \$40,000 a month that lifts conversion by a quarter just hired the cheapest employee it will ever have.

Here is the honest read on AI: it made generic copy free, and in doing so it repriced the entire market. The \$50-per-page writers competing on volume are gone or going. What remains, and what clients now pay more for, is the work the tools cannot fake: interviewing customers, mining reviews for the exact words buyers use, structuring an argument around one offer, and taking responsibility for a conversion number. Use AI for drafts and variations. Sell the research and the judgment.

This niche is wallpapered with course-sellers promising six-figure copywriting in 90 days, which is exactly why a professional stands out. Most self-titled copywriters have never run a discovery call, never asked for baseline conversion data, and never sent a contract with a kill fee in it. Show up with a process: a research sprint, a structured brief, two scheduled revision rounds, and a results follow-up, and you are competing with a far smaller field than the hashtag suggests.

The honest constraint: this is a project business by default, which means feast and famine unless you build against it. The solo writers who clear six figures all do two things. They niche to one industry and one or two deliverables, so every project compounds their authority and their swipe file. And they convert their best project clients into monthly retainers. A generalist re-sells themselves every month. A specialist raises rates every two projects.

WHO BUYS	WHAT THEY PAY	WHAT THEY ACTUALLY WANT
Ecommerce brands	\$1,000-3,000 per email sequence	Revenue per send, carts recovered, launch emails that move inventory
Course creators and coaches	\$1,500-5,000 per sales page	A launch page that holds up under paid traffic
SaaS and B2B services	\$1,500-4,000 for site copy, \$2,000-4,000/mo retained	Sharper positioning, demos booked, onboarding emails that stick
Agencies (white-label)	\$500-1,500 per overflow project	Reliable turnaround under their brand, zero client contact

ONE MID-MARKET SALES PAGE

\$3,000

Two sales pages a month at mid-market rates is a \$72,000 year from a laptop, with no inventory and no commute. The constraint was never demand. It is proof, process, and the nerve to quote the number out loud.

Every dollar, before you spend it.

This business runs on equipment you already own. The startup money goes to the legal foundation and a thin research stack; everything else is discipline. What you are really investing is the two unpaid weeks it takes to manufacture your first proof.

THE LEAN BUILD · START HERE	WHY IT EARNS ITS PLACE	COST
Laptop you already own	Your office, your studio, your entire production line	\$0
Docs + spreadsheet stack (Google)	Drafts, briefs, and revision tracking; clients live in comments	\$0
Interview + transcription tool	Customer calls are the raw ore; record and mine every one	\$0-30/mo
AI assistant subscription	A drafting accelerant and variation machine, never the strategist	\$20-40/mo
LLC + business license	Your liability wall. See the legal page	\$50-500
Professional liability (E&O) insurance	You write claims that sell; cover yourself before you publish	\$25-50/mo
One-page portfolio site + domain	Three case studies, one button. Done	\$20-100
Business bank account + bookkeeping app	Separate money from day one; future-you says thanks	\$0-15/mo
Lean total		\$115-735 all-in

THE STANDARD BUILD · ADD AFTER FIRST REVENUE	WHAT IT UNLOCKS	COST
Proposal + contract software	E-sign and deposits in one link; faster yes, fewer ghosts	\$20-40/mo
Niche swipe file and research library	Twenty winning pages in YOUR industry, annotated; time more than money	\$0-100
Decent mic + headset	Discovery and customer interviews are your product; sound like it	\$80-150
One craft program or community	One, chosen carefully, after revenue exists. Not five	\$200-500

THE RULE

Do not buy the \$2,000 copywriting accelerator before your first client. The course-sellers monetize hesitation. A library card, a swipe file, and ten real discovery calls teach more than any module, and the calls pay you.

Clean from day one.

Copywriting is unregulated, which fools new writers into skipping the paperwork. The risks here are specific: scope creep, unpaid invoices, and claims on pages with your fingerprints on them.

The contract is the business.

- Form your LLC:** File in your home state, get the EIN free at irs.gov, open the business bank account. THE LAUNCHPAD Module Three walks every step.
- Service agreement with hard scope:** Named deliverables, word-count ranges, two revision rounds, response-time expectations, and a kill fee of 25-50% if the project dies mid-stream. Scope creep is how a \$3,000 page becomes a \$900 month.
- 50% upfront, always:** Half before research begins, half on delivery, in the contract. A client who balks at a deposit is showing you the collections call in advance.
- IP transfer on final payment:** Copyright in the copy transfers when the invoice clears, not when the draft sends. You keep portfolio rights and the right to share anonymized results. This single clause collects more invoices than any lawyer.
- Claims and substantiation clause:** The client warrants that product claims, testimonials, and income or health statements are true and substantiated. You write persuasion; they own the facts. The FTC fines fake claims, and you do not want to be the cheapest defendant.
- Confidentiality and no-poach:** You will see launch numbers, customer lists, and pricing strategy. A one-page mutual confidentiality clause makes serious clients trust you faster.

INSURANCE, SPECIFICALLY

Professional liability (E&O) is the core policy at \$25-50 a month: it answers when a client claims your copy misrepresented their product or cost them a launch. General liability barely applies to a laptop business; add cyber coverage only if you start holding customer data for email work.

WATCH FOR

The regulated-claims trap. Supplements, weight loss, finance, and income-opportunity copy carry FTC and FDA exposure that most new writers cannot price or carry. Either decline those niches early or learn their rules properly. One 'lose 30 pounds in 30 days' page written casually can follow you into a deposition.

Requirements vary by state and city. Verify with your state, city clerk, and a licensed professional. Education, not legal advice.

Three doors. Real numbers.

Price the asset, never the hour. A sales page that runs for two years is not a 25-hour job; it is a conversion asset, and clients compare it to the revenue it touches. Anchor with the middle door, hold a hard floor, and collect half before the research starts.

	RECOMMEND	
<p>DOOR ONE</p> <h2>The Single Asset</h2> <p>\$1,000–1,500 starter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ One landing page or a 5-7 email welcome sequence◆ Mini research sprint: review mining + brand voice notes◆ Two revision rounds, 10-day delivery◆ Conversion notes for the designer or builder	<p>DOOR TWO</p> <h2>The Sales Page</h2> <p>\$2,500–3,500 most-booked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Full research sprint: 2-3 customer interviews + review mining◆ Long-form sales page with wireframe and layout notes◆ Two revision rounds with scheduled dates◆ Headline and lead variants for testing◆ 30-day results follow-up call	<p>DOOR THREE</p> <h2>The Launch Suite</h2> <p>\$5,000–7,500 premium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Everything in The Sales Page◆ Full launch email sequence (8-12 emails)◆ Ad and landing page variants for paid traffic◆ Priority delivery and launch-week standby◆ Post-launch debrief with numbers

PRICING NOTES FOR THIS BUSINESS

- Floor: nothing custom leaves your desk for under \$500. Small jobs still cost discovery, drafting, and revisions.
- Retainers (\$2,000-4,000 a month for two to three assets) are the cure for feast and famine: offer one after the second successful project, never on the first call.
- Performance deals (royalties or revenue share) only ever sit on top of a base fee, with the attribution method agreed in writing before you type a word.
- Raise rates 15-20% every two or three projects until someone says no slowly. Most writers are two raises behind their own proof.

THE UPSELL THAT PAYS THE RENT

The retainer. At the results follow-up, while the before-and-after numbers are on screen, offer to own one channel monthly: emails, landing pages, or launches. Three retained clients is a salary with a quarter of the selling, and the research you did on project one keeps paying you every month after.

Names, not strategies.

The portfolio paradox hits writers hardest: everyone wants samples, and you have none. Do not wait and do not fake it. Manufacture proof in 30 days with founding projects priced for case-study rights and spec work so specific it embarrasses the generic noise.

1 Three founding projects at half rate

Pick three businesses in your chosen niche and offer a real project at 50% in exchange for before-and-after numbers, a testimonial, and a published case study. You are buying a portfolio with discounted excellence, not free desperation.

2 The teardown that does the selling

Rewrite one real business's homepage hero and first email, free, no strings, built from their own reviews. Five hours of spec work that proves the craft beats five hundred cold DMs that describe it.

3 Agencies with overflow

Design, ads, and web shops sell copy they hate writing. Three agency relationships can fill a calendar quietly while your public proof builds. White-label rates are lower; the volume and deadlines are training pay.

4 The niche watering hole

One community where your niche actually talks: an ecom Slack, a SaaS forum, a founder group. Answer copy questions generously for a month before pitching anything. Rooms full of owners produce clients in clusters.

5 Businesses you already buy from

You already know their product, their emails, and their gaps. Warm familiarity plus a specific rewrite converts at rates cold outreach never touches.

THE EXACT ASK

"Hi [name], I'm a conversion copywriter working with [niche] businesses. I went through the [product] page this week and rewrote the headline and opening section the way I would for a paying client. It's attached, free, use it either way. I'm taking three founding clients this quarter at half my normal project rate while I build my public case studies, in exchange for before-and-after numbers and a testimonial. If the rewrite reads like money to you, can we talk for fifteen minutes?"

THE FOUNDING-CUSTOMER DEAL

Three founding clients at 50% off, in exchange for baseline numbers before launch, results after, a testimonial, and a published case study. Retire the deal publicly when the third signs: founding rates ended, posted rates live. Real scarcity, honestly retired, converts better than discounts that never die.

Owned, earned, then paid.

You sell persuasion, so everything you publish is the audition. The engine is public teardowns, one warm niche room, and case studies with numbers in them. In a guru-soaked market, specificity is the whole brand. Paid ads are unnecessary, possibly forever.

CHANNEL, RANKED	WHY IT WORKS HERE	THE FIRST MOVE
LinkedIn or X teardowns	Prospects judge a writer by writing; teardowns prove process in public	One annotated rewrite of a real page per week, named niche, every week
Your own newsletter	The shoemaker's shoes: a writer with no list is a confessing amateur	Weekly teardown or swipe-file note; every client and prospect gets subscribed
Agency partnerships	Agencies buy copy monthly and pay on time; one relationship is a pipeline	Pitch three local or niche agencies a white-label test project at a fixed rate
Case studies with numbers	One documented lift outsells a hundred promises in this niche	Publish a numbers-included case study every quarter; baseline screenshots from day one
One niche community	Owners hire the writer who already answered their question	Show up weekly, answer generously, pitch never; let the profile link work

FIVE CONTENT PIECES THAT WIN THIS NICHE

- We changed one headline and signups rose 31%: the before, the after, and why it worked
- What a sales page actually costs in 2026, and when you should not buy one
- The review-mining method: how your customers write your copy for you
- Teardown: rewriting a real [niche] homepage line by line
- Five subject lines from my own inbox this week, and why each one got opened

THE REVIEW MACHINE

Ask at the results follow-up, while the lift is on screen: 'That bump came from the work we did together. Would you put that in a testimonial or a LinkedIn recommendation? I'll draft two sentences you can edit.' Drafting it yourself doubles the yes rate, and ten specific testimonials with numbers beat any portfolio site ever built.

One unit, one month, no fog.

Two honest snapshots: what one mid-market sales page actually nets, and what a steady solo month of mixed work looks like. These use the middle door at \$3,000 and real tool costs. No guru math, no 'one client away' slides.

ONE UNIT: ONE SALES PAGE AT \$3,000	AMOUNT	A WORKING MONTH: SOLO, 2 PROJECTS + 1 RETAINER	AMOUNT
Revenue	\$3,000	Revenue (mixed projects + retainer)	\$8,500
Software share (research, AI, docs)	-\$40	Software stack (research, AI, proposals)	-\$160
Payment processing (2.9%)	-\$87	Insurance, phone, internet share	-\$170
Insurance + overhead share	-\$45	Marketing (newsletter, community, cards)	-\$140
Gross profit (25-30 hrs incl. research)	\$2,828	Pre-tax profit	\$8,030
Tax reserve (27%)	-\$764	Tax reserve (27%)	-\$2,168
Yours, per project	\$2,064	Owner take-home	\$5,862

BREAK-EVEN

1 project

A single founding project at half rate covers the entire lean startup cost with room to spare. The barrier to entry here was never capital. It is the willingness to do unpaid research for two weeks to manufacture the proof everyone else only talks about.

Illustrative figures at typical market rates; your market, prices, and costs will differ. Run YOUR numbers in the One-Page P&L from THE LAUNCHPAD, Module Six. Remember the 25-30% tax reserve on every dollar of profit.

Pre-decided, so motivation is never consulted.

WEEK ONE: FOUNDATIONS

- LLC filed, EIN issued, business bank account open
- E&O insurance bound; certificate saved
- Niche chosen: one industry, two deliverables, written down
- Contract template finalized: scope, kill fee, 50% deposit
- One-page portfolio site live, even with zero case studies

WEEK TWO: DOORS OPEN

- Swipe file built: 20 winning pages in your niche, annotated
- Two spec teardowns written and sent to real businesses
- Founding offer pitched to 5 warm contacts
- First weekly teardown published on LinkedIn or X
- Newsletter opened with issue one, even to 12 subscribers

WEEK THREE: MOMENTUM

- First founding client signed; deposit collected
- Research sprint run: interviews recorded, reviews mined
- Second founding project closed or pipeline at 10 warm
- Three agencies pitched a white-label test project
- Baseline conversion numbers screenshotted for the case study

WEEK FOUR: THE SYSTEM

- First project delivered with conversion notes and variants
- Results follow-up scheduled; testimonial asked in advance
- Weekly cadence locked: teardown Tuesday, outreach Thursday
- Founding offer publicly retired or final spot announced
- Month-one P&L done; pick one growth lever for month two

DAY 30 VERDICT

Green light: 2+ paid projects, one case study in motion, and 5+ warm conversations in the pipeline. Yellow: interest but no closes: your offer is vague, so pick one niche and one deliverable and re-run week two with a sharper teardown. Red: zero projects despite 25+ real asks: stop pitching, write one flagship spec rewrite for a real business with permission to publish, then return with proof instead of promises.

How this business fails, and how it grows.

THE FIVE KILLERS

- ✗ **Selling words instead of outcomes**
Clients do not buy paragraphs; they buy conversions, replies, and revenue. Every pitch, invoice, and case study should speak in their numbers, not your word counts.

- ✗ **Drafting before researching**
Copy written from imagination reads like everyone else's. The research sprint is the product; the page is the receipt. Skip the interviews and you are competing with a free chatbot.

- ✗ **No contract, infinite revisions**
Round three, round four, the committee weighs in, the scope dies. Two rounds in writing, extra rounds billed, kill fee for dead projects. The fence makes the friendship.

- ✗ **Competing with AI on price**
If your pitch is 'I write copy,' the robot wins on price every time. Your moat is discovery calls, customer interviews, and accountability for a number. Sell what the tools cannot do.

- ✗ **The generalist treadmill**
A bakery, a SaaS, and a law firm means three research sprints for three checks and zero compounding. One niche means one swipe file, referrals that travel, and rates that climb.

THREE SCALE PATHS

- 1 **The retainer book**
Convert your best project clients into monthly channel ownership: emails, landing pages, launches. Four retainers at \$2,500-3,500 is a six-figure run rate with one week of selling per quarter.

- 2 **The niche authority**
Own one industry loudly: the launch copywriter for course creators, the email writer for supplement brands. Productized offers, posted prices, a waitlist. Authority compresses every sales cycle.

- 3 **The copy studio**
Hire junior writers for research and first drafts; you keep strategy, client calls, and the final pass. Two juniors triple throughput while the case studies stay yours. The agency, in miniature.

YOUR FIRST HIRE

A research assistant or junior writer once you are booked four weeks out: they mine reviews, transcribe interviews, and build first-draft skeletons from your brief template. They free the third of your week that is collection, not judgment, and they are your systems test: if your brief cannot guide a stranger to a usable draft, you have a talent, not a business.

THE STAIRCASE CONTINUES

The playbook is the map. The machine is waiting.

Everything this playbook describes, Epic Advisory Group can build with you: the brand, the cinematic website, the entity, the engine. Describe your idea to the Launch Engine and see your business real in about sixty seconds, free.

- The Launch Engine: your idea, built free, in about a minute
- THE ASCENT: Founder Edition: the eight-module course
- Launch-in-a-Box: entity, brand, site, and first campaign, one flat price
- Growth, capital readiness, and the path to the public markets

"There is no right age. There is only the decision."



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