

Copywriting UNIVERSITY

Michael Senoff Copywriting Interview Series



How To Jump-start Your Copywriting Business To Get Clients Fast

Michael Senoff Interviews Copywriting Student

Dear Student,

I'm Michael Senoff, founder and CEO of HardToFindSeminars.com.

For the last five years, I've interviewed the world's best business and marketing minds.

And along the way, I've created a successful home-based publishing business all from my two-car garage.

When my first child was born, he was very sick, and it was then that I knew I had to have a business that I could operate from home.

Now, my challenge is to build the world's largest free resource for online, downloadable audio business interviews.

I knew that I needed a site that contained strategies, solutions, and inside information to help you operate more efficiently

I've learned a lot in the last five years, and today I'm going to show you the skills that you need to survive.

It is my mission, to assist those that are very busy with their careers

And to really make my site different from every other audio content site on the web, I have decided to give you access to this information in a downloadable format.

Now, let's get going.

Michael Senoff

Michael Senoff

Founder & CEO: www.hardtofindseminars.com

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"How To Jump-start Your Copywriting Business To Get Clients Fast."

This is a consultation that I did with a gentleman named Mark who needed some advice in "kick starting" is copywriting business. This short recording is packed with great information for new and veteran copywriters! You may get some ideas for business avenues that you haven't thought of before.

At the beginning of our conversation, Mark was mainly concerned about what the name of his copywriting business should be. His first thought was to use his surname. However, he believed that his surname might be too unusual for someone to pronounce. You'll hear how we discuss sole proprietorships and the option of incorporating after getting started, obtaining customers, and making some money. Find out what Mark finally decides to use as his business name.

Listen as I give Mark an idea about obtaining copywriting work by researching eBay. Look for closed auctions for big ticket items where the item did not sell. Look at the eBay ad to see what could have made the item sell. Sometimes it is simply because there was no research done on the item and thus, there was not a good description of the item or its features.

Contact the seller by email and negotiate to re-write the ad and re-run the auction. If the item sells, you would get a negotiated percentage of the sales price. Of course, you would need an option agreement and some sort of non-disclosure agreement as well as software that would prohibit the seller from printing or copying your ad – but you'll hear me explain the details of everything you would need to accomplish this. Listen as I give example of a generic email that could be modified for any auction and sent to sellers.

I advise Mark to research unsuccessful closed auctions for boats, houses, machinery, and other high priced items. And don't just stay with eBay. Look into the real estate market for beautiful homes that just aren't selling. Most of the time, real estate ads just don't do a good enough job of explaining the real advantages of owning that particular home. The very best way to advertise a home is to

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interview the current homeowner about the home itself, the neighborhood, the schools, etc. – important things that real families are interested in.

Listen to my own experience with using written copy in conjunction with audio for both a product and for real estate.

Mark certainly loved that idea and was going to start researching completed auctions for big ticket items on eBay right away! The key is to identify poor ads for great products. You must also learn to negotiate well and then you will have a great niche market!

Near the end of this audio, listen as I describe a Bonus Resource on my web site, www.hardtfindseminars.com. It's more than 15 hours of copywriting audios from my best interviews with copywriting experts such as Brian Keith Voiles, Eugene Schwartz, and many others. This is a "must have" set of materials for both new and existing copywriters that will reveal copywriting secrets and make your business more successful. Enjoy!

Michael: If I were you, I would focus on large ticket items. I wouldn't work on a project that you couldn't make at least a thousand, two thousand, five thousand, ten thousand. Just think big. It's all the same work. It's just bigger numbers, and there's stuff all day. There are people trying to sell stuff everywhere.

Music

Hi, this is Michael Senoff with HardtoFindSeminars.com. Here's a short twenty minute recording with a gentleman named Mark. If you're interested in learning how to kick start your copywriting business, you'll want to pay close attention. Mark had called me looking for some ideas on how to get going in his copywriting business, and had some specific questions in regards to what he should name it. This is my best advice to Mark on the subject and I hope you enjoy.

Michael: Hello, this is Mike.

Mark: Hey, Mike. This is Mark.

Michael: Hey, Mark. How are you?

Mark: Doing all right.

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Michael: Well, I have some time now, if you've got some time. Is this going to work out for you?

Mark: Yes.

Michael: "Hi Michael, first I want you to know that I thoroughly enjoy the mp3s I'm getting. I'm devouring the interviews with Brian Keith Voyles, and a number of different ones related to copywriting, such a wealth of experience and knowledge that I aim to put to use real soon.

I need your advice. I am in planning stages of opening a copywriting business. I can relate to a lot of the interviews you've had with the guy from Minnesota. Incidentally, I am also from Minnesota, but I live in Chicago area.

I'm teetering between using my own name for the business, and using a name like 'Copy Adventure' or 'Copy Advisor'. My last name is rather unusual and I'm wondering if pronouncing it will turn a customer off. The advantage I see to using my own name though is I won't have to register an assumed name.

I want to be able to encompass what I plan to do for customers either in my business name or maybe a mission statement. I'm going to be targeting small business owners, perhaps more specifically new business owner, and offer a better value for their budget.

I'm studying whatever I can get my hands on from you and so many other pros including Voyles' material. I'm awaiting the arrival of Killer Copywriting by Jeff Paul.

I want to have an online presence, but I'll be targeting local businesses, too. One of my plans is to send businesses a survey to ask them what they would like to see their advertising companies do differently – something like that – and see how I can fill the need, and create a recipe to sell them on.

I am creating sales letters and business cards that will encompass those needs and show people that can benefit and motivate them to buy. Am I on the right track?

This letter is longer than I had planned, but I'm trying to put things in place as soon as possible. I hope to be up and running by October 1st, and I'm having difficulty getting going while still putting food on the table and paying the bills. I hope this isn't taking too much of your time. Any help on your part would be appreciated."

All right, as far as your name – I would just use your name. One of the best pieces of advice I got from one of my customers, and you know when you fill out the form for the free CD on my site, did you ever get the free CD on my site?

Mark: Not yet, but I just took the tour today. I had never done it before.

Michael: Sure, well, there's a section called "Free CD", and you've got to fill out a boat load of information, but to get the CD, I require somebody to give me advice on how to better the site.

A long time ago, one of the recommendations was instead of just saying, "[HardToFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardToFindSeminars.com)", he told me to use my name, "Michael Senoff's [HardtoFindSeminars.com](http://www.HardtoFindSeminars.com)", and that was one of the best little pieces of advice because no matter what you're doing – if you're copywriting or promoting or talking, you own your name. Do you know what I'm saying?

Mark: Right.

Michael: I would just use your name. What you could do is, on all your letterhead and on your business card, you could just spell it D-O-L-L, just for your business. So, you don't have to keep saying, "pronounced doll." Do you know what I mean?

Mark: I see.

Michael: That's one idea. Or just spell it the way it is. Let people mispronounce it. Don't worry about it.

Mark: Yeah, maybe it's more trivial than I make it.

Michael: I wouldn't worry about it. Your name isn't going to stop anyone who's serious about wanting to grow their business. It's just irrelevant, but you can operate under your name at first as a sole proprietor until you get your business going, and you don't have to mess with any of the stuff. Get your business going, and then worry about all the details. That would be my recommendation. Make some money first. Get some clients. Make some money.

As a sole proprietor, you're going to have business expenses getting it going, anything you make you may want to put a lot of it back into the business. Once you start getting going and then you're making some good money and you want to protect any kind of assets that you have, liability wise, then you'll maybe want to incorporate and protect that.

Now, are you married with kids?

Mark: I am married, yes.

Michael: No kids?

Mark: No kids.

Michael: Okay, and do you own a house?

Mark: No, we're renting.

Michael: God forbid you got sued. Do you have assets that they can take away from you?

Mark: Not much, no.

Michael: Then, you have nothing to worry about. You want to set yourself up and protect yourself when you have stuff you can lose. If you don't have anything to lose, you don't have anything to lose. So, I would just start as a sole proprietor.

Mark: Yeah, that's what I was going to do anyway, but I was a little iffy on whether or not to use a D/B/A.

Michael: Ah, D/B/A, that's if you want to call it something different and you may believe that you need some fancy business name to make yourself more professional so people will do business with you, but that's irrelevant.

They're doing business with you not because of your name. They're doing business with you because your copywriting is going to make them more money, period.

Mark: Yeah, I'm discovering that. That seems to be a common thread in all the interviews that I listened to.

Michael: They don't care about you. They want what you can do because they want what you can do to make them more money so they can have a better life and make more money and have more time. That is the bottom line. They want to use you.

So, I wouldn't get caught up on that.

Mark: Okay. All right, that's a load off my mind.

Michael: All right, good. Do you feel like you have a knack for the copywriting?

Mark: Yeah, I'm not going to say I have it down pat. Obviously, I have a lot to learn, but I am trying to use what I learn. If I have something to sell on eBay, I'll try to use some of those same principles when I list something. I've had some success with that, and also, I had a couple small copywriting jobs.

One of them was a sales letter to promote a new e-book that a guy wrote, and it's an assignment through another outsourcing company. I've been trying to get the guy to give me a testimonial because I don't even know what the guy thought of the letter. So, I was trying to get some feedback and use that for backing for testimonials for my services as well.

Michael: That's fine. It's always nice to have testimonials. Here's an idea for you that you could keep yourself so busy doing copywriting and it relates to eBay.

You can look for items that are selling on eBay, more expensive items in different categories, and look for people who are selling the same item over and over again, and look for poor copywritten products – products that are selling for maybe \$400 or \$500 or \$300 or \$200, and then you can contact that seller through eBay.

What you could do is first, you could just do his eBay ad. You know how to use an HTML letter and all that?

Mark: Kind of. I've been looking at that a little bit, but I'm not real savvy with it.

Michael: Look for eBay ads of things that are selling over and over again, but look for ones that are very poorly written, and use your copywriting skills to rewrite the ad, and then you can contact that seller and then just simply say, "I've been looking at your eBay ad for the last couple of weeks or the last couple of months, and although you have a good ad, there's a lot of things that you can do to make this auction sell better and sell at a higher price and sell more often. What I've done is I've taken the liberty of rewriting your ad, and I'd like to get your opinion on it."

Then, what you can do is you can put it up on a webpage, and you can let him know in that initial email that this is copy written information. What you can maybe even do is have him sign a simple Non-Disclosure that he can't use what you're about to show him. So, he doesn't steal it. Just show him a little Non-Disclosure form. Put it up on your website, and then you can get some simple software that will allow you to protect the page, meaning he can't copy and paste or print the page so it's just view only.

Do you know how to use Adobe PDF?

Mark: You mean the reader?

Michael: The actual software.

Mark: I have somewhere a free program that will convert.

Michael: You'd have to get the original Adobe PDF software. But, what you can do is you could create the ad for them and convert it into Adobe PDF as a 'view only' where they can't print it and they can't copy and paste it. So, it's all on image.

You want to show him your work, but you don't want him to be able to copy and paste it, you see? Just to protect yourself. And, then you can get his opinion and you can sell that to him, or you could negotiate. You could say, "I'll let you use my sales letter to sell your product. Why don't you test it on one or two of your auctions? And, then you pay me a percentage on everything you sell for using my sales letter."

There's so many eBay ads. You could look for boats and homes that are selling for tens of thousands of dollars, twenty, thirty, forty thousand dollars, and contact the seller. You could look at the completed auctions for a subject, and you may as well look for the stuff that sells for ten, fifteen, twenty thousand dollars. Then, you can contact the seller of that completed auction and say, "Hey, did you ever sell that boat?" It may be a beautiful boat, but maybe the guy put no copy at all and just put the title and the boat.

Let's say he had great pictures, but he had no copy, no benefits, no descriptions. Say, "Did you ever sell the boat?" "Nah, I never sold it. It's still sitting here." You call him a week after the auction ends, and make sure that he didn't relist it.

You could negotiate with these people and say, "Let me help you sell your boat. I'll write an ad to sell the boat, and if we sell the boat, you split it with me. You pay me \$2,000 or \$3,000 or \$4,000, whatever."

Mark: That's a great idea.

Michael: You will never run out of potential things you can sell. I'll tell you. I had this idea. Me and a buddy of mine, a copywriter – I was searching completed auctions, and I was looking for businesses that were for sale.

There was this one guy had this auction, terrible copywriting. He had a patented product. It was called a Scooter, and what this was, it was a little plastic thing that was like a kickstand for the Razor scooters that the kids ride around on, you know, the little wheel. It's like a roller blade wheel. You could

park this scooter so it stands up without having to lay it down on the ground.
Are you with me?

Mark: Sure.

Michael: The guy wanted \$20,000 for the mold and for the business. He had some accounts and everything. We wrote a fifteen page copywritten letter. I did an intensive interview on audio with him, and then we relisted the auction at \$75,000. We only had about sixty days to try and sell it. We were producing some pretty good qualified leads, and I really believe if we had more time, we would've sold it. We could've made \$50,000 on the deal.

So, what does it matter if you're selling a one dollar widget or a house that sells for two million? I mean, you may as well go for the real expensive stuff. So, if you search different categories of eBay and you search it by the highest price, look for the stuff for a lot of money. Look for an item or a piece of property or a piece of machinery for the industrial industry.

Each project's going to be a research project on its own, but if it's something that can make you ten or fifteen or twenty thousand bucks if you sell it with your letter. Let's say it's a piece of machinery for injection molders or something. You research the market, and then you can write your sales copy and send it out in the mail and try to sell it.

But, you've got to find people who want to sell stuff, and eBay is the perfect place to do that.

Now, you've got to make an agreement with them that you get an option to sell it, and there's an agreement I'll send you. It's the Option Agreement which you can fill out with your potential seller that gives you the option to try and sell his item for a number of days. You can fill it in.

He signs it and he's giving you title to the item for a certain amount of time. So, it legally keeps you safe and it says you have 120 days to sell this item. You also have the right to renew the option, and you outline the whole agreement. So, it's a legal document that protects you while your putting your effort and work into it.

Mark: It keeps them from bailing out.

Michael: Yeah, that's right. So, it's just an agreement. It's an option for you to take title and sell the item. It gives you the specific amount of time. If you don't sell it, everything reverts back to him. If you do sell it, then you agree on the commission.

Mark: Brilliant.

Michael: Yeah, it's real simple. If you've got the skill to write, and you're willing to take the time to write and really research the benefits and the features, that's not hard to do. Any item out there – you can find someone who's already done the work, just search the keyword. You'll find people who are selling the item pretty good already and you just modify it.

Mark: That's a fantastic idea. I'm going to explore that.

Michael: Yeah, you should try that. So, if I were you, I would focus on large ticket items. I wouldn't work on a project that you can't make at least a thousand, two thousand, five thousand, ten thousand. Just think big. It's all the same work. It's just bigger numbers, and there's stuff all day. There's people trying to sell stuff everywhere.

I've got a real estate buddy who sells million dollar homes here in San Diego, and we drop our kids off at the same school. He was telling me how he's working his butt off and he's got no time. He needs to leverage himself. I said, "Why don't you do this? You give me the million dollar home that the seller is still living in and they've lived there for a couple of years, and then tell them that you want your partner to interview them because we're going to help you sell your house faster."

So, I'm doing the same thing with my audio that you would with copywriting. You see? I'd just talk a sales letter. So, I'm going to interview the existing owner of the home about all the details about their house and what it's like living there, and the restaurants they went to, and why they liked it so much why they're moving, how the schools were – all the things that new home buyer would want to know.

Wouldn't a new home buyer want to hear it directly from someone who's lived in the area, in the house for three years rather than someone real estate agent just showing them the walls and the kitchen and the bathroom? Then, you're talking a six percent commission on a million dollar house, and then I'm just going to negotiate a percentage of the commission with him.

So, you can do this stuff, too with homes. You could sell homes through sales letters.

Mark: It's a gold mine.

Michael: It is. There's people who have been trying to sell their house for so long that they don't know how to sell it. All they have is a real estate agent, all these unprofessional sales people. They're not even sales people. They're just

showers. They just take the people by and show them the house. They're not selling the house because they don't know anything about the house.

The person to sell the house is the person who was living there previously. I've got specific examples in my family. My father's trying to sell a beautiful log cabin up in the north Georgia mountains, but he's got it listed with agents. It's only been shown three or four time. He could sell that house if he really wanted to.

My brother moved to the United Kingdom. He's got a gorgeous house in Atlanta, Georgia that's been on the market, and it's perfect for anyone with kids. It's a great neighborhood. There's so many great things about that area, but that's sitting unsold.

You may want to focus on the real estate industry. Try and sell homes through long copy direct mail letters, but interview the sellers first, and then just create your copy around the interview.

Mark: Yeah, it makes sense.

Michael: Don't think small. Think big. Big numbers so you can make some good money. So, if you worked on one project a month, and you can make ten or fifteen grand on a project. That would be a nice living.

Mark: Yeah, definitely, there's good potential there.

Michael: I team up with some copywriters who love it. I don't like it. I like talking. It's easier for me. I like to talk my letters. Have you listened to the Eugene Schwartz recording?

Mark: No, I haven't come across that one, yet.

Michael: That's on my copywriting page. I'll email you the link. You've got to listen to Eugene Schwartz. This guy is the master. You've got to listen to all these recordings on copywriting, but Eugene Schwartz is probably the best one.

I've given you some ideas to get going. You should never be hurting for business. That's for sure.

Mark: I'm really glad that I had an opportunity to talk to you because I have had a real tight spot with one income, and it's hard to break away and take a day off and focus on business things.

Michael: What's your job right now?

Mark: I do a lot of computer work in data entry. I work with about three or four different programs to abstract data and create delivery reports. I have one of the bigger accounts that this company has. A lot of computer work.

Michael: You don't like it that much?

Mark: Well, I like certain aspects of it, but the job as a whole is rather tedious after a while. It's not real exciting. It just helps pay the bills.

Michael: You've got to cover your bread and butter. Unfortunately, you've got to keep the rent going. I would encourage you, when you get home go onto eBay, and go search the auctions with some high dollar stuff, but more importantly search for the completed auctions. And, eBay is just one place. With your skill of copywriting, you can sell anything.

Mark: Yeah, I've always believed that. I tell you. I've been in a lot of jobs, too. I've never been real settled into many things except creating things, and I wish I had come across copywriting long ago. I would probably be still doing it now.

Michael: Send me some samples of some of the stuff you've done, and we'll keep in touch because I don't love copywriting, but I love to work with copywriters who love copywriting. The combination of creating copy from audio – from some of my audio recordings, you can create entire products. I have stuff that's not even on the site that you haven't seen.

The way I've been working with this other copywriter is I'll create an audio recording. Then, he'll create a sales letter around it selling it. You can create a whole product around that, but it makes your job easier because when I'm interviewing someone, I'm doing the research right there. I have it all transcribed. So, you build your letter around the transcripts.

The guy I'm interviewing really writes your letter for you. You've just got to format a good headline, good sub, intro, and all the other important elements.

I'll send you this recording, and I'll also send you that option agreement, and I'll also send you the link to the Eugene Schwartz recording, all right?

Mark: That sounds great.

Michael: Any other questions you can think of while you've got me on the phone?

Mark: Yeah, it sounds like I could be, like you said, quite busy with this one little – I'll call it experiment for now with the eBay. Do you think that could be plenty as a niche market?

Michael: There are millions of auctions going on, absolutely. EBay is just a simple way for you to do the research, and it's people trying to sell stuff. Do you know how to search completed auctions?

Mark: Yeah, I think so. I haven't done it, but I'm sure I could find my way around it.

Michael: Along the left, it will say, "Completed Auctions". So, a completed auction is an auction that completed, but I guarantee you 98 percent of them never sell their item, and you can see. Go look at the completed auctions, and you'll see if it sold. Just search the completed auctions, and then sort it by price.

Look at some of the really expensive stuff. Now, there's people selling ideas, patents and stuff for millions of dollars. That's ridiculous. You've got to know that the price they're offering matches what they have to sell, you see? You've got to look at their price. It's got to be realistic, but as long as the price is realistic and you can look at the ad, the eBay auction, and look at elements in that auction that are obvious to you why the thing never sold – like they didn't give any description, they didn't answer all the questions. You can identify a poor ad, can't you?

Mark: Sure.

Michael: So, you might see a poor ad, but a great product, and then what you're going to need is the confidence in negotiating. That will come as you get going, and don't fall in love with anything because there's hundreds and hundreds of people you can work with. So, you need to design just a standard letter when you're emailing these people that says, "My name is Mark. I was on eBay last night. I saw your item did not sell. I'd like to know are you going to be relisting it or would you like me to help you sell the item? I may be able to help you out. If so, here's my proposal."

You can write all this out in an email, and you can explain that, "My expertise is in writing and designing and selling items off of eBay. Here's how it works. We agree that you'll give me 90 days to sell your item. So, you give me control over the item. You can't list it within that time. I will create a sales letter around the item, and put my efforts into selling it."

You just outline it all for them, and just have a cookie cutter letter that outlines all the benefits and all the terms and everything you're going to do, and if you find five or ten a night and you email each one of those people, you'll have people saying, "Let's do it."

The one I did with that scooter port, he was the first person I contacted and he said yes. It was no problem.

That should keep you busy.

Mark: Yeah, it seems like that should be an ongoing market, too. I probably wouldn't have to do anything else for a good long time.

Michael: No, you wouldn't.

Mark: Well, I'm definitely going to try that.

Michael: All right, well, give it a go, and keep in touch, and let me know how it goes. Have a nice weekend.

Mark: You too Mike. Thanks for your time.

Michael: No problem at all, goodbye.

Here is another bonus resource for you, and it's about a section on my site that has about fifteen hours of audio interviews with copywriting experts including Brian Keith Voyles, including Carl Galletti, including Eugene Schwartz. You will not find this content anywhere. It will take you to an entire collection of audio recordings, mp3 downloads and transcripts of some of my best interviews on the subject of copywriting. You'll be able to play them, download them, print the transcripts, and it's a collection you will not find anywhere else. If you want an education on copywriting, you will not find anything better than this.

That's the end of my consult with Mark on how to get his copywriting business going. I hope this has been helpful for you. Please check back to the site often for new recordings on HardtoFindSeminars.com, and if you need to get in touch with anyone we interview, please email me at Michael@MichaelSenoff.com.