

Copywriting UNIVERSITY

Michael Senoff Copywriting Interview Series



John Carlton On Copywriting

Seminar Transcript From The Bill Myers Direct Mail Bootcamp

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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Copywriting Expert John Carlton On How To Make Your Copy Sell Better Than Ever

Here is a rare recording of John Carlton from the early 1990s at a Bill Myers seminar. John had over 10 years of copywriting experience before this recording. He was a freelance writer who agencies hired to do the work their own writers couldn't do. He has written for Jay Abraham, Dan Kennedy, and Gary Halbert. John made big money as a writer for some of the largest direct mailers in the world, including Rodale Books and Boardroom. His writing brings in millions for his clients. This is a rare recording from the information marketing book camp in Hot Springs, Arkansas. This recording is 17 minutes long. Check out his course, "Kick-Ass Copywriting Secrets Of A Marketing Rebel -- An insider shortcut guide to creating sensational ads that will supercharge your business, your wealth, and your life even if you flunked English!"

- John: Let them get so hot and bothered that before they put the piece down they're on the phone and they're dialing, and we've got people – these current piece I've got out now is getting a six to one return. People are calling before they're finishing the piece...
- Speaker: John's got an attitude, and he's going to talk about selling with an attitude. John Carlton.
- John: My name's John Carlton and I'm a night owl. I freely admit this. I'm not ashamed of it. The reason I say this is because as a night owl I had to be my own boss. I couldn't work for other people because I just couldn't get myself up in the morning and get to work on time and do all the things that they wanted me to do. That's how I wound up as an advertising copywriter. When I go to work, I travel all ten feet to the front of my ocean view beach house where I have everything I need spread out on a couple of tables. I use a computer, a fax, phone. It's a great lifestyle able to make a very, very good living. Over the last ten years as a freelancer, I've worked with some of the top L.A. agencies. For the last four or five years, I've worked with Gary Halbert. He and I were a writing team. We generated many millions of dollars during that period of time. I did all the work late at night, and Gary took all the credit during the day. It was a perfect partnership. I've written for Jay Abraham. I'm working with him right now, and a few other people. Currently, I have some letters in the mail bringing my new clients about six dollars for every one dollar that they invest. So, I have been able to

hold on to my talent over the years, and I am very happy for that. What I'm going to talk about very briefly is I'm going to give you an inside glimpse as to how a writer like myself structures the appeal of an offer, and I know you can't see it very well, but this is a chart I have made. I call this the "Appeal-o-Meter". On this side, we have cold, hard reality, if you're writing this down. Over on the other side, we have magic. This is the height of the graph. Down here at zero, almost nobody will respond. At the very top is almost everybody. And, I'm going to give you about five examples, and these examples are all going to follow more or less this curve. From cold hard reality being almost nobody all the way up to almost everybody when you include magic. This will become clear as I begin to deliver this. I'm going to give you five different markets that I've worked in and examples of the two different kinds of offers from the reality side and from the magic side. On the diet market, for example, if you were trying to sell a piece either in the mail or in print, on TV, in a video – if you were going to deliver cold, hard reality for a diet product, you would say something like "You must eat less, exercise til you drop, be patient, and lose your couch potato lifestyle." I think everybody will agree you get a pretty negative appeal. I think almost nobody will respond to that. On the magic side, the offer would be something like you eat a pill, you go to bed, and you wake-up skinny. Now, Gary will attest to this – there are actual offers that crop-up from time to time in the National Enquirer saying just that. "Lose Weight While You Sleep" things like that. So, I'm not making this up. A middle ground, in the middle of this might be something like Richard Simmons' video. You're all familiar with that where it's sort of you work hard, but the pounds come off like magic. To be a little more clear on this, the way I like to write is I try to get as close to the side of presenting a magic solution to the people that I'm trying to get to buy the product I'm selling without being absurd. As long as I can rationally present my argument and put as much of the magical appeal into it, and getting as far away from the cold, hard reality, that's where I like to be. Another example is the financial field. I've written for a lot of the financial newsletters. The cold, hard reality of the financial markets is that you would have to study the financial markets until your eyes bleed, you risk everything you own, and you sweat bullets constantly. I think everyone would agree that's a very, very low appeal. On the magic side, if I was going to have the perfect product, it would be take simplistic, no-risk investment advice for a few spare bucks, go to bed, wake-up rich. That has big-time appeal, and I've seen appeals like that in the mail. The middle ground would be I would present a trustworthy proven plan by a

well-known financial advisor, and those are the types that I have written for. Another market is the opportunity market. The cold, hard reality of the opportunity market, sometimes called the "get rich quick market", the reality is you would find a viable market niche through tedious trial and error, you'd work like a dog and take ridiculous risks with your future, and this has a low to moderate appeal. Actually people like Jay Abraham and Robert Allen are able to sell very high-priced products using that very appeal. On the magic side, the perfect product - you would buy a how-to book and it's not necessary to actually read it, you go to bed, and you'd wake-up rich. The other market is the popularity market, everything from on "How-To Pick-Up Girls" to the Dale Carnegie "How to Win Friends and Influence People". The cold, hard reality of the popularity market you would have to actually listen, learn to listen to other people, you would have to purge yourself of all disgusting habits, and you'd have to risk your ego constantly. This is an okay appeal. Dale Carnegie did pretty well with this. On the magic side, however, you listen to a subliminal tape, you go to bed, and you wake-up with a gorgeous blonde laying next to you. That would have monster appeal. You can see how that would. There are actually products out there selling that type of product in exactly that way. I've tried them all. The market I'm currently involved in is the what we call the "muscle market". It's marketing product to bodybuilders. Now, it's a very interesting market. The cold, hard reality of the muscle market is that you would have to work out like hell, hurt all the time, and have no life outside of the gym. This actually has a moderate response which tells you something about that market. Even so, there is a magic appeal to that market and that would be you drink some goop, you work out once, and you wake-up looking like Arnold Schwarzenegger, and there are appeals out there just like that. In the muscle market, twenty percent responses is very, very common. In fact, I have two pieces working right now, and twenty percent response is just phenomenal in any kind of market, and these guys that I'm working for, if they get less than twenty percent, they're very, very disappointed. They're so spoiled by the - to bring this out a little bit - a personal experience I had recently was I went to buy a new computer. I was working on a ten year old computer doing word processing with ten year old software. Finally, it broke down and I had to go out into the computer market and buy a new one. I am computer illiterate. Anyway, so I live in Los Angeles, within a ten mile radius of my home in Los Angeles there must be a hundred stores just selling computers. However, I choose to buy my computer from a company in South Dakota. I never met the people I talked to. I did

it all over the phone, and they shipped it to me through the mail. The reason was because they offered me a magical solution to what I wanted to do. I don't know a lot about computers. They had a package already set-up that would come to me with the software loaded. I just gave them my credit card number. Two days later, there was a knock at the door. There's UPS with five big boxes. I open up the boxes, didn't have to put anything together, stacked it up on my table, plugged it in, and I had a working fully-loaded computer blinking back at me. It was high quality. It was custom made just for writers like me who needed a certain amount of memory and power to the computer, but I don't need a lot. I use it mostly as word processing, and they just appealed directly to every that I had. They had a major guarantee. It was a wonderful experience. One little collorary to this with I call this, we can use this same chart here, I'm going to change some of the wording. This is what I call the "move-your-butt-o-meter". This is how to get people to react. Down here on the end where almost nobody will react, the way you finish up your piece is you say, "There's lots of time" "We've got plenty" "I'm going to be here, call when you feel like it". The high end of this would be, "The deal's over tonight", and "You'll rue your lose forever". The chart is just about the same. It's a simple way to – it's sort of reiterating what David Deutsch was talking about. You have to imagine your customers who you're writing to or going over TV or through print or however you're marketing to them, imagine a huge somnambulant sloth like creature sitting on the couch completely unwilling to move a muscle for anything. You have to motivate them to actually move across the couch and pick the phone, what, eleven digits or something to call. That's really the way I think of my customers. Not to put them down, well, yeah to put them down, but it's – I think the writers who have experience in writing for the various markets will attest to my experience. It's really all I've got. I wanted to give you a little inside look at the way copywriters think, and excuses to try to get the person to move. You'll see better examples of that as we go through the seminar and we actually use it. But, if you just try to make them feel like if they don't act right now, that they will miss out somehow because the farther you get from the actual reading of the piece – the person has the piece in front of them, they read it. If they wait five minutes before they go to the phone, you have a chance of losing that customer. If they put it aside to go do anything, you want them to get so hot and bothered that before they put the piece down, they're on the phone and they're dialing. We have people – this current piece I've got out now is getting a six to one return. People are calling before they're finishing the piece.

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They aren't able to give the department number because that's on the last page, and people on the phone have to take reference to that.

Speaker: Do you have any general rules about the length of the piece that you're going to mail?

John: I like very, very long copy. The shortest letter I think I've written in the last five years has probably been eight pages, and I have one out right now of eighteen pages, that's packed wall-to-wall copy. It starts talking and you say everything you need to say and then you finish and you see how long it is. There's a, kind of a joke anecdote that was circulating around for a while. What's your name? Ralph? Somebody asked a famous copywriter why he liked long copy, and the guy says, "I can guarantee – I'll bet you a hundred dollars I can make you read a 99 page document through the mail." And, the guy says, "Okay, you're on." And made the bet, and the guy says, "Okay, all I'll do is I'll give you the headline, and the headline is 'Follow Me through All the Details of Ralph's Sex Life' ". Well, it would sell to you though. So, that's an absurd – that's taking it to an absurd length, but by detailing it, by giving all the hot buttons. If I said all the details of Presbyterians in Hot Springs, Arkansas, you'd get a high Presbyterian readership. If I included Presbyterian in the United States, you get a high readership among that...

Michael: I have the reprint rights to this seminar. It's a 24 audio tape seminar or you can get it in a digital format. If you're interested in a product to resell, this would be a fantastic start. Not only that, you can learn an incredible amount of information from this man. I want to thank you for listening. This is Michael Senoff with www.hardtofindseminars.com. You can reach me by phone at 1-800-982-6487, or 858-274-7851, that's 1-800-982-6487 or 858-274-7851.

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