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7 Deadly Freelance Writer Crimes

By Joshua Boswell

The dreadful law of cause and effect is alive and kicking in the freelance writing world.

And just like an airplane pilot who miscalculates the laws of gravity, breaking any one of the 7 fundamental rules of freelance writing is a crime that can be punishable by death... at least the death of your income.

On the other hand, if you know, live and master these essential rules, the effect will be a career that soars.

That's right... Just as every crime has a punishment, every law has its reward if it's obeyed.

Here are the 7 deadly crimes and the tools to avoid them ...

1. Alter Ego Overinflation - In reality, far too many of us believe that we are much, much better writers than we really are. This inflated ego prevents us from learning from other writers. Always... Be Humble.

2. Sub-Prime Personal Appraisal - At other times, we simply are not confident enough. Yes, you may not be the best, but your personal best (more often than not) is good enough to create awesome returns and command reasonable fees. Always... Be Confident.

3. Complacent Capitulating - Indecision and hesitation always result in failure. Assignments, happiness and prosperity will not burst into your office while you're idly

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staring at the computer and phone. Action is the genius of wealth. Always... Be Proactive (aggressively proactive, that is).

4. Postproduction Amnesia - Ahhhh... The final draft is approved and it's time to move on. But hold on! Did you remember the two most important words of your project? "Thank You!" Not showing appreciation to your clients is like slapping the hand that feeds you. Always... Be Grateful.

5. Superficial Dredging - You'll never be a master with casual research. Writing that exceeds all expectations stems from knowing your audience and the product/service better than your client does. Always... Do Intense, Deep Research

6. Hypervernacular - Unless you're a college student working on your English thesis, the point is not to dazzle people with your astonishing vocabulary. Copywriting at its best is a one-on-one conversation. And that means choosing easy-to-understand words that emotionally charge your audience, not like the silly teasers I've used for my "7 Deadly Crimes"! Always... Speak (Write) Naturally.

7. Random Access - Topic hopping will only confuse and bore your audience. Ideally, the focus stays on one big idea or one big benefit. And if you have to engage lots of ideas, keep them orderly, smooth, and easy to follow. Always... Be Organized.

So, are you guilty? I think all of us are at times. Here's my challenge: Pick one of the pointers I've outlined here - one that you need to buff up on - and use it on your next assignment.

Let me leave you with 3 final ideas. First, I have a worksheet of 13 essential elements (I've given you 7 of them here) that I include in almost all of my writing assignments. At the onset of each assignment I print out this list and check it off as I get each task finished. It's old hat now, but I do it just the same.

Second, read, read, and then read some more. In the copywriting arena, I consider Bob Bly not only a good friend, but also an invaluable mentor. If he writes it, I read it.

Finally, learn to be ultra-productive. David Allen's book, [Getting Things Done](#) is the foundation for my daily workflow, and you should read it too. It can be summarized like this: Each day create a list of next action items; not projects, but the very next physical action you to take to get a project done. I keep a list of 10-20 action items on my desk

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at all times so that when I get tired of one thing or finish it, I can move on to the next without thought or interruption.

What's the result of all this effort? Your copy will be stronger, your returns better and you'll have more clients.

About the author: Joshua Boswell, also known as "The Spellbinder," is a freelance copywriter. His persuasive sales copy has earned him the accolades of companies such as Corel, Sony, Easter Seals and Christian Children's Fund. At the same time, companies like General Motors, Microsoft, Verizon and Google have heavily relied on his PR copy to bring critical issues to the public's attention. Joshua can be contacted at (801) 794-4960, joshua@earn-more.org, or online at <http://www.earnmorecopy.com>.

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