The 6 Psycho-Traits of the World's Most Successful Clientless Copywriters

By Ben Settle



Recently, I spoke with a freelance copywriter fed up with her clients always changing her copy behind her back, running it, then blaming her for it not working. She was desperate to know how to create a "clientless" copywriting business like mine — where she's her own client and uses her copywriting skills to sell her own products.

"I don't know if I can help you with that," I said.

"Why not?"

"Because there's an inner-game required that most freelancers either don't have, or aren't willing to adopt. Without this tight inner-game, you'll just end up frustrated and confused, wasting a lot of money and time."

Curious, she asked what the psychological traits (or "psycho-traits") of the world's most successful clientless copywriters are, and how to get them.

Here's what I told her:

1. Thermostat Jackers

Everyone has an internal "money thermostat." And, we are comfortable at that level. If your thermostat is at, for example, $35K per year, you will become uncomfortable the farther away you get from that number. If you make $25K, you will (subconsciously) do whatever you have to do to get back to $35K. Or, if you suddenly make $100K, you will almost certainly (again, subconsciously) sabotage yourself to get back to making $35K where you're safe and comfy again.

There is no right or wrong number for this.

But, if you do things correctly in your business, you'll likely start seeing giant leaps in your income. And, if you're not prepped for it, if you aren't aware of this and aren't always raising your money thermostat … and if you let people around you (who are comfy with their low thermostats, and want to keep you down with them), you'll do things to put yourself out of business altogether.

2. "A-Word" Users

Not that *that* a-word.

I'm talking about attitude, which is everything. And in this age of social media whiners, constant negative media reports, and where the masses despair every time they check their Facebook, you have to constantly protect your attitude. It's insidiously easy to succumb to the attitudes of others. And, let's face it, most peoples' attitudes are rooted in a poverty mindset, victim mindset, and, yes, a loser mindset — where everyone is playing to not lose, instead of playing to win.

There's a principle in the social sciences that says:

"You are the sum total of the five people you spend the most time with."

What this means is, if you spend most of your time around friends, family, and even other copywriters (Internet forums and social media groups count) constantly venting about how much their clients suck, how they don't get paid enough, and how life is such a struggle, etc., you will automatically start adopting their sad-sack attitudes (and incomes).

It's like a disease people who catch it don't even realize they have.

On the other hand, if you spend your time with and around successful people, who have a Mission in life, and are always working towards it … and who keep their attitudes positive, and eager, and on track even during the setbacks and dark times … you'll adopt their attitudes.

To paraphrase the late, great Earl Nightingale:

Your mind is like soil and will grow anything you plant in it — whether it's corn or deadly nightshade. It doesn't care what you plant, and doesn't discriminate. If you plant successful attitudes in your mind, those attitudes will grow. But if you plant nothing

but thoughts of being a victim, how much you hate everything, and how you only have cheap clients/customers in your mind, those will grow, too.

Successful clientless copywriters plant healthy seeds, not nightshade, in their minds.

3. Diamond Diggers

Speaking of Earl Nightingale:

He was a big fan of Russell Cromwell's "Acres of Diamonds" story. It's bout an African farmer who hears stories about people becoming rich discovering diamonds in the area. So he sells his farm to pay for his venture, and spend his time seeking out diamonds.

Unfortunately, he never finds any diamonds.

And, he ends up jumping in a river to kill himself.

But, the guy who bought his farm ended up finding diamonds on the land — they were there the whole time. In fact, he found so many diamonds, he had the biggest diamond mine — in his own backyard — in the world!

Here's an example of how this applies to clientless copywriters:

Currently, I am helping a customer launch her own clientless copywriting business. She sells programs teaching business owners how to "personality type" their customers and clients so they can write better ads, negotiate higher fees, get more clients, hire more compatible employees, and the list goes on.

One day, she was having trouble thinking up email ideas for her upcoming launch. So I started asking her questions about her background and experience. Turns out, she used to work for a personal injury attorney. And, in an offhand remark, she said, "I once used this skill to talk a man off a ledge who wanted to kill himself."

I said, "STOP! You've been sitting on this and not using it?"

That one story was not only an email, but it adds a thick layer of proof and credibility to all her marketing, and gives her a story to tell. She had it the whole time — a big fat diamond in her yard that she will profit from forever.

Most people never bother to mine their own diamonds.

But successful clientless copywriters not only seek them out, but have trained their brains to always be on the lookout for them, even in the most unlikely places.

4. Failure Embracers

There are two types of people:

Those afraid of failure, and those who aren't.

Fear of failure keeps you from ever doing anything to stand out. It keeps you from seizing opportunities that fall in your lap. And, it keeps you scared of going for your dreams and goals and, when needed, bucking the "experts." All of which can keep you broke, frustrated, and confused, living a life of regret and "I wish I would have …"

Successful clientless copywriters don't worry about failures.

We even embrace them.

Why?

Because, like my friend and colleague Doberman Dan Gallapoo says:

"It's not that you personally failed, it's simply a result."

When a launch makes you no sales, a product idea turns out to be a dud, or all that sparkling copy bombs … you're not a failure as a person. It is simply marketing data. The only way you can "fail" is to do nothing and not try.

Successful clientless copywriters don't worry about failure, we profit from it.

5. Criticism Seekers

I was recently listening to a training by the great Dan Kennedy where he told the story about the late Dr. Atkins — who was vilified, mocked, and condemned for his weight loss ideas by everyone from doctors and the media, to even Larry King who is probably the most "softball" interviewer on the planet.

But he had an unnatural immunity to being criticized.

It didn't faze him at all.

The result is a company worth over $100 million per year, with all his broke critics still mocking him.

Listen up, listen good, and never forget:

Yes, criticism sucks at first.

And I can also guarantee you that, as a clientless copywriter, you will be criticized. Your peers (who are afraid to even try to break out of freelancing) will criticize you. Your family will criticize you (until a few years ago, my mom still wanted me to get a secure job). Your friends will criticize you (like in nature, put a bunch of crabs in a bucket, and when one tries to climb out, the others will pull it back in). And, if you do it right, your competition will criticize you.

When that happens, good!

One, it means you are almost certainly doing something right. And secondly, they're handing you (free of charge) fodder for your marketing, emails, and ads.

6. Willpower Warriors

Best-selling author F. J. Shark once said:

"The key to success in any endeavor is not to work when you are motivated; it is to work when you are Unmotivated."

This is even more true for clientless copywriters.

The clientless copywriting business means writing emails when you don't feel like writing. It means doing hours of tedious market research when you don't feel like doing research. It means doing boring administrative tasks when you don't feel like doing those tasks.

Take Dan Kennedy's "No BS Time Management," for example.

The book has a chapter just on personal discipline.

And, he begins the chapter talking about how he was writing that chapter (in "real time") shortly before his mother's funeral that morning. Not because he's got a cold heart or because he wanted to, but because he set a goal to write every day, without fail, no matter what. If you read any of Dan's old NO BS Marketing newsletters, he talked a lot about how it's a daily struggle for him to write each day. He'd much rather be doing other things.

As a clientless copywriter, you can't get around this.

You either build up your willpower muscle or you don't.

There are plenty of "success" coaches, diet coaches, and even (sadly) copywriting and marketing coaches who tell you the futility of willpower, and even mock the idea. But if you want to do extraordinary things (and being a successful clientless copywriter *is* extraordinary, it makes you one of the rarest kinds of people in business), you have to work on building your willpower every day.

This doesn't mean the business is hard.

Nor does it mean it won't be fun most of the time.

Frankly, if you pick the right market to sell to, the right kind of products to sell, and have the right kind of business set up so your workday is over fast, and anything else you do is optional, it can be a lot of fun, and give you the kind of freedom 99% of mankind has dreamed of since the dawn of time.

But, there will still be days where you don't want to write that daily email.

Where you don't want to create that content.

And, where you don't want to log in to your shopping cart and deal with refunds, cancellations, or some nitwit's fraudulent chargeback.

Like any muscle, willpower can be strengthened and built. And, like building muscle in the gym, it takes time, work, and discipline.

Bottom line?

If you're interested in the clientless copywriting lifestyle, realize it's not about what you know or the mechanics of copywriting and marketing.

It's about how you think — the mental side of the game.

And without these six psycho-traits, your business will die on the vine.

Good news is, anyone can develop them and it doesn't have to take long. It's mostly just you making a decision — right now, as you read this — to apply what you've read in this article.

After that, it's just a matter of doing the work.

The rest will take care of itself.

My *10-Minute Workday* program has the step-by-step details on how to create and be successful with a clientless copywriting business. Check it out here.

Do you have what it takes to be a clientless copywriter? Let us know how we can help you get going by posting a comment below.

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