

You too can copy these writing success stories

Copywriting is the art of writing television and radio commercials, newspaper ads, brochures, direct mail and all sorts of advertising material. It is well-paid, great fun and you can work from home.

It is quite difficult to get into the industry because it is so competitive and everyone wants to work in a fun and creative environment. But there are ways you can get a foot in the door.

Melbourne University Student Union run a short course in copywriting called "Copywriting — Writing For Profit". It is an eight-session, intensive, hands-on, practical course that gives people the chance to learn the basics of how to write copy.

Course co-ordinator, Bernadette Schwerdt, says: "There's only one way to learn how to be a copywriter — and that's by writing copy. The course has been so successful because the focus is on getting students writing real ads for real businesses. You can teach theory for years but until the student comes face to face with a client and has to produce work to a deadline, then really, it's just academic.

"This course combines the theory, which is essential, with practical sessions with award-winning copywriters. Clients have often then paid the student for that work and have hired them to work for them — and they've barely

finished the course." Kate Fennesy, who finished the course last November, says: "When I applied for the course, I had just graduated with an arts degree, and my baby girl was only five-months old. It was the perfect opportunity for me to squeeze in some practical skills to give myself the freedom and flexibility to work from home in the future.

"As part of the assessment, I was introduced to a mortgage broker who had been advertising in the paper, and my task was to re-do his ad and show him other ways that a copywriter could help his business. I tried really hard, used all my notes — and the client loved my presentation!

"Two days later he called me to organise a meeting to discuss payment for my work. I ended up doing a few paid jobs for him that week, which more than covered for the cost of the course. The risk had paid off, and it made me realise — if my work impressed this client, there must be other clients just like him out there too. "It gave me confidence and experience all in one go."

Jaike Clemens, another recent graduate, says: "When I enrolled in the course, I was really hopeful that it would be practically useful to me in terms of giving me information and helpful hints for setting up a business.

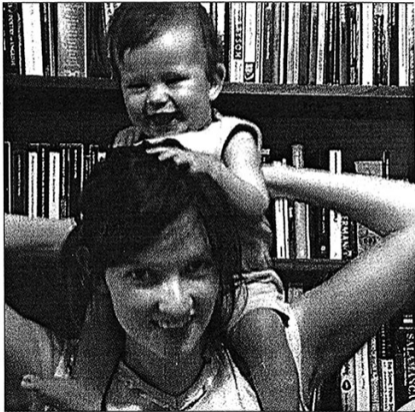
"I was thrilled with the course content and the tutors because I was able to finish the course and virtually set-up my business the next day with almost no overheads! I have already have my first client — only weeks after finishing the course.

"They introduced me to a client that needed some work done. On my first job, I made \$1650 — it paid for the course three times over!"

There are no pre-requisites to enrol and no experience is needed.

"We've had people as young as 18 enrol, right through to those aged 65 and over looking to find a new outlet for their creative skills. All sorts of people do the course — retrenched senior executives looking for a new career, full-time mothers returning to the work force, actors and musicians needing an extra source of income as they pursue their artistic pursuits, school-leavers wanting to get a foot in the door of the advertising industry," says Bernadette Schwerdt.

The first course for 2004 starts on January 24. You can ring 8344 3674 for more information, or email shortcourses@union.unimelb.edu.au or log on www.union.unimelb.edu.au. Places are strictly limited to ensure personal attention.



Kate Fennesy, a graduate who successfully balances babyhood and copywriting