

# 04

## Chapter

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# How To Set Up Your Freelance Copywriting Business

In this section, we'll cover:

- How to establish your own personal goals for your business
- How to position yourself as a copywriter
- The tools you need to set up your business
- Choosing a name for your business
- How to apply for an ABN
- Personal qualities needed to be a successful copywriter
- How to get 100 business cards for free

## What do you need to set up your business?\*

The first thing you need to do is establish some personal goals.

Without a goal, you won't know if you're succeeding or failing.

You need to ask yourself:

- How much money do I want to earn from copywriting per week?
- How many hours do I want to spend copywriting per week?
- Do I want to work for myself or as a freelancer for an advertising agency?

Once you've answered these basic questions, you'll know what to aim for, and you can then proceed to set up some strategies and structures to achieve your goals.

But first, let's look at the basics of establishing your business.

\*If you want to work as a copywriter in an advertising agency, turn to the chapter *How To Find Work In An Advertising Agency*.

## How will you position yourself?

Some copywriters position themselves as generalists, offering all kinds of copywriting.

Others position themselves as a website copywriter.

A third type may decide to concentrate on newsletters only.

You might also offer a complete marketing service, including design, by linking up with a local graphic designer or printer.

Or you could be a niche copywriter, working specifically on financial services or health care products.

You don't have to decide now, but start thinking about what sort of advertising appeals to you.

## A place to work

Most copywriters start out working from home so be sure to set up a space where you can leave materials out so that you're not constantly packing up.

Alternatively, move to a proper office where you won't be distracted by domestic affairs. You have the choice of a serviced office or your own office. A serviced office will cost more in monthly charges, but will provide a phone answering and reception service. It may also have meeting rooms, a fax service and so on.

Just to be on the safe side, we suggest you start out working from home before investing in serviced offices and expensive equipment.

## The tools you need

Every writer needs their 'tool kit'. The essentials are:

1. Mobile phone/Answering Machine
2. Business cards
3. Letterhead
4. Fax machine

5. Computer and printer – including email and internet access
6. Photocopier (or access to)
7. Hard cover notebooks
8. Reference books
9. Trade journals
10. Transport

### 1. Mobile Phone/Answering Machine

Copywriters tend to visit clients so they need to be on call and readily available at most times.

Some jobs also require a very fast turnaround, so you need to be reachable or else the job could go to someone else who was more contactable than you.

Invest in a phone that has a service whereby people can leave a voice message, not just an SMS message.

### 2. Business cards

If you're serious about becoming a paid copywriter, you need to have business cards.

This will be your *most* important form of advertising so you need to get lots of business cards printed to give out to prospective clients.

If you want to get a personalised design and get going now, contact your local Snap Printer or instant print shop and they can print about 500 cards for under \$150.

Think of it this way – you only have to get one job to pay for the entire run of business cards.

If you don't have the money to pay for business cards yet and you aren't sure about what business name you'll use, why not get 100 free business cards from [www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com) in the interim so you have something to give new clients?

- See the Assignment at the end of this chapter for instructions on how to take advantage of this free offer.

### 3. Letterhead

When you submit copy to your client, you'll need to send it on your letterhead.

Cheap copy paper doesn't lend authority, so use a paper that is heavier than normal.

100gsm paper feels professional, and is heavier than the usual 80gsm copy paper.

You need not buy expensive brands of paper by the ream. Just trot on down to your local stationery store and buy 100 sheets of high quality paper. Start using that and see how you go.

When you get home, type up your details on your word processor, print it out on the stationery, and bingo, instant letterhead!

Here's what your letterhead might look like:



GSM is a measure of weight, and is short for grams per square metre. Toss in a few sentences about GSM and you'll impress your clients no end.

# Katie Smith

## *Copywriter*

PO Box 123  
Armadale  
VIC 3183

Mobile: 0412 555 555

Fax: (03) 9387 6678

Email: [katies@hotmail.com](mailto:katies@hotmail.com)

Web: [www.kateskopy.com.au](http://www.kateskopy.com.au)

ABN 89 107 286 700

Alternatively, you can pay a printer to produce letterheads, 'with compliments' slips and business cards. This will be more expensive, and you have to pay for a quantity at a time, but it will enhance your professional image.

#### 4. Fax

These may seem outdated, but not in advertising. Invest in a cheap fax machine (\$150 from your local office supplies store) so you can accept proofs and layouts via fax. It's okay to receive proofs via email but 'gremlins' can get into the system and move things around. This can render your layout inaccurate and can be risky if you have to approve it before it goes to print.

Most printers have got a fax facility on them now so look out for these multipurpose machines.

#### 5. Computer and Printer – (email and internet)

This is vital if you are to be seen as a professional copywriter. A simple Mac or basic PC with a word processor will be sufficient.

You definitely need to be hooked up to the Internet so you can do research, and you must have an email account.

#### 6. Photocopier

This is not vital but having access to one nearby is helpful. You may be called upon to present your copy to a group of people and you will be expected to provide copies for everyone.

#### 7. Hard-cover Notebook

You will need a notebook for taking notes at client briefings. Buy a hard-cover notebook so that it looks professional and lasts. Don't use loose-leaf notes as you could easily lose them.

## 8. Reference Books

You need to own:

- a dictionary and a thesaurus
- a dictionary of sayings/phrases/famous speeches
- an encyclopædia, an atlas and other reference books eg. *Guinness Book of Records*

You can get most of these online now, but there's still no substitute for having a proper dictionary and thesaurus at hand, as the computer versions are nowhere near as comprehensive as you need them to be.

## 9. Trade Journals

You need to keep up-to-date with what's happening in the advertising industry. Subscribe to trade journals like *B & T* and *AdNews*, and keep up-to-date with the industry news and learn about different aspects of the business. Your main local library may stock some of them. The magazines also carry job ads, among which are positions for copywriters

THE AMBIENT MEDIA EXPLOSION P11 NEED A JOB? RECRUITMENT P28

**B&T**

TV Rates  
Asian marketers  
band together to  
fight back **8**

**\$4.50**  
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# GREEN LIGHT WPP

Mega agency group gets the go-ahead for Grey takeover

AMANDA SWINBURN

**T**he ACCC has found that WPP Group's acquisition of Grey Global would not be in breach of the Trades Practices Act.

WPP Group's proposed purchase, worth US\$1.3bn equally divided in cash and shares, would put it on a par with Omnicom, the world's largest advertising company.

The merged entity will dominate the Australian advertising market. WPP's interests here

already include Young & Rubicam, The Campaign Palace, Batey Red Cell, J Walter Thompson, a 30% shareholding in George Patterson Partners and part of Singleton Ogilvy & Mather.

Grey owns holdings in Aus-  
> Story continues on PAGE 3

## Nothing stock standard

Real Australians will be the big trend in stock photography this year.

page 20



### New business

Where are the bucks going in 2005? **9**



### Adam Ferrier

Knowing your art from your elbow **13**



### Careers

Account staff in career crisis **15**

## Consultants will be big winners in 2005

DANIELLE VELDRE

Advertising: Media spending in Australia is likely to tip the \$10bn mark and while it will again be a strong year for the media players, what about the creative agencies?

According to tracking done by The Agency Register's managing director, Peter McDonald, 2005 is likely to provide minimal growth in new business, after a year which

saw the Federal election boosting many agencies' coffers.

Tom Moul, CEO of The Moul Agency, which experienced 38% growth last year, anticipates the real winners will be the third-party consultant marketers using during account pitches and reviews.

"I was speaking to [Havas chairman] Alain de Puzilhac and he said something like 80% of US business by dollar value is

going through these intermediaries now.

"[New business] always seems to be pretty consistent to me but the cycle of business is speeding up. I'm expecting this year to be the same as last year which was the same as the year before."

Advertising Federation of Australia chairman, Russell Howcroft, hopes the new year brings with it more "professionalism" in agency pitches.

Advertise to over 500,000 students on their turf. On Campus.

PRINT RADIO SAMPLING 40+ CAMPUSES NATIONALLY  
SPECIAL EVENTS CAMPAIGN COORDINATION STALLS

If you want to reach students, talk to us.

Call (03) 9419 8044 email: info@oncampuspromotions.com.au

www.oncampuspromotions.com.au

on campus promotions



Check the back pages for copywriting jobs.

## 10. Transport

You have to be mobile, so having a car or access to a car is important. Otherwise, you need good public transport to get you to and from your client's premises.

## What are you going to call your business?

When it comes to naming your business, you have three options.

You can use:

1. Your own name
2. A registered business name
3. A company name

### Your own name

You can work under your own name. This means you can get started right away. Simply order your business cards with your name on them from [vistaprint.com](http://vistaprint.com) or a quick printer and you're off.

You'll need the following information to complete your card:

- Name – Katie Smith
- Position/Title – Copywriter
- Contact Details – Mobile 0412 555 555, Fax: (03) 9387 5432
- Email – [katies@hotmail.com](mailto:katies@hotmail.com)
- Website – [www.kateskopy.com.au](http://www.kateskopy.com.au)

### A business name

If you want to have a snappy business name, you'll need to register a business name with the government.

It could be:

- Word Power
  - The Write Stuff
  - The Word Factory
  - Kate's Copy
- ...or whatever you'd like.

But you'll need to register this name with the relevant authority in your state. It's normally Consumer Affairs.

## How do I register a business name?

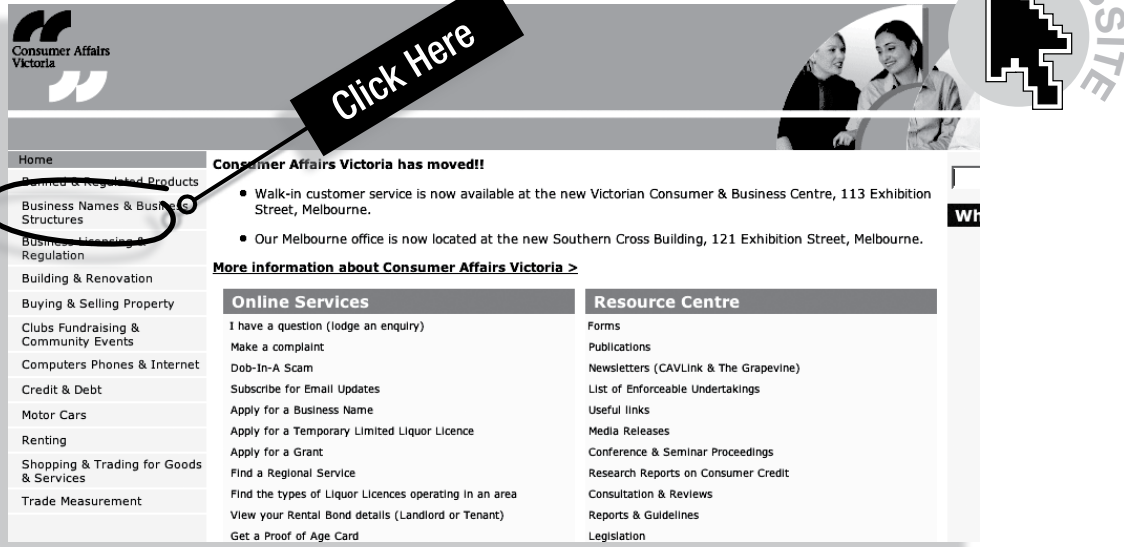
It's very simple and can be done online or in person at the Consumer Affairs office.

### Step 1:

You'll need to find out if the name you've chosen is available.

The Department of Consumer Affairs in your state can tell you.

For example, in Victoria, the website is [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au)



### Step 2:

To register a business name, you can do it online or you can go in and do it in person at the office.

It costs about \$70-\$80 to register a business name and you have the right to use that name exclusively in your state for as long as you want.

You'll need to re-register the name every few years so keep track of when the name expires, as you'll want to make sure you pay your fees to retain the name.

### Step 3:

Once you've established that the name is available and you've paid your money, you will receive a Certificate of Registration in the mail (or in person if you go into the Department).

You can frame this and hang it on your wall or place it in your portfolio to show clients that you take this business seriously.

### A company name

If you want to register as a company, speak to your accountant, as there are more complex issues at play such as compliance and tax rulings that you must abide by.

### What else do I need to set up my business?

You definitely need an Australian Business Number (ABN). Irrespective of what name you trade under, you need an ABN.

### How do I apply for an ABN?

It's simple.

### Step 1:

Get online and find the Australian Tax Office's website – type in [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).



### Step 2:

Click on the relevant link (see sample) and apply for an ABN.

Make sure you record that 11-digit number in a safe place, as you will need to quote it all the time.

### Step 3:

When you invoice your client, you will need to feature this number on your invoice.

If you don't list it, you can still do business (although you will look amateurish and unprofessional) but your client will be obliged to withhold 48.5% of the invoice amount until the end of the tax year.

Cut to the chase and get your ABN. It's free, easy to get and will let you get on with the business of making money from copywriting.

### Is the ABN the same as GST?

No, it's not.

It is a completely separate matter. See your accountant to discuss GST if you think you are going to earn over \$50,000 from your copywriting business in this financial year.

You don't need to register for the GST to get started as a copywriter.

But you do need to get an ABN to get started as a copywriter.

### What qualities do you need to succeed as a copywriter?

We've looked at the technical requirements of setting up as a copywriter, but what about the personal qualities you need to succeed in this business?

Copywriters come in all shapes and sizes, but what they do have in common are the following qualities. You need to be:



There is a direct correlation between the students who get their ABN quickly, and the students who get paid work quickly.

Don't let this simple procedure hold you back.

Get on line and get it now. It doesn't cost anything to get and you will need it eventually, so get it now.

### 1. Responsive

You must respond quickly to a client's call, and you must deliver copy within the deadline. You should be prepared to work through the night if necessary to give the client his work.

### 2. Constant marketer

A copywriter's income could cease tomorrow, so you need to be regularly looking for work.

### 3. Mobile

You need to be capable of getting to a client at short notice. Clients expect their copywriters to drop everything and come when they call.

### 4. Orderly

Copywriters must keep proper client records and timesheets. Keeping control over the diary and deadlines is essential.

### 5. Calm

Don't throw creative tantrums. Accept it when a client rejects work, or when a client fails to do what he promised.

### 6. Be clear about your values

Don't work on clients that conflict with your values. Accept that capitalism is the basis of advertising. Not-for-profit organisations also benefit from advertising.

### 7. Flexible

You must be able to handle several different jobs at once.

### 8. Adaptable

You must be able to write about what you don't know. There are ways to come up to speed quickly with products and services. Here's what you can do to learn more about a product or service quickly.

- a) Visit stores and competitors
- b) Send for more information
- c) Get online
- d) Talk to customers, staff, suppliers
- e) Read other ads
- f) Research before you begin writing – it'll save you hours in the long run.

Checklist: What you need, and how essential it is.		
	Must have	Must have access to
Mobile Phone / Answering Machine	✓	
Place to work	✓	
Notebook and pens	✓	
Quality paper	✓	
Files	✓	
Computer & Printer – Email/Internet		✓
Fax		✓
Photocopier		✓
Reference books		✓
Transport		✓

## Reference tools for setting up a small business

Here are some excellent small business websites that can give you advice on how to set up your business.

### **www.business.gov.au**

Business Entry Point – everything you need to know on setting up your business.

### **www.abr.gov.au**

Australian Business Register – where you can register your ABN.

### **www.ato.gov.au**

Australian Taxation Office – provides great tax advice (including seminars) for small business.

### **www.ipaustralia.gov.au**

IP Australia is the federal government agency responsible for granting rights in patents, trade marks and designs.

### **www.australiansmallbusiness.net**

Australian Small Business Network – an online venue where you can toot your horn about your new business, product or event.

### **www.homeoffice.net.au**

The Home Office Network – an online resource for people operating an office from home.

### **http://www.ozsmallbiz.net/**

The Small Business Support Network – provides people with correct information about doing business online, and gives a facility to network with other online small and micro business operators.

## Insurance: Do you need it?

This is something best discussed with your accountant as everyone's situation would be different.

Most copywriters don't have Public Liability insurance because they visit the client at the client's premises. If you plan on having a home office where you will invite clients for meetings etc, then you may want to consider it.

## What happens if a client sues me? Should I have insurance to cover that?

Most copywriters don't have this type of insurance either. This is because any copy that's written for the client should be signed off and approved by the client. If you don't get the copy approved by the client and it goes to print/air and it's wrong, then you could quite possibly be liable for damages so it's definitely in your interest to make sure that all copy you write gets approved by the client before it goes to print/air. But again, you should speak to your accountant to discuss in further detail.

# Assignment 03

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Chapter Four:  
How To Set Up Your Freelance  
Copywriting Business

**Task: Get 100 Business Cards  
For Free**

## ASSIGNMENT 3

**Step 1:**

Open a web browser on your computer.

**Step 2:**

Type in [www.vistaprint.com](http://www.vistaprint.com)

This screen should come up.

**VistaPrint**  
BEST PRINTING. BEST PRICE.

Home | Specials | Select a Country | En Español | Help | Log In | My Account | Cart

Heard us on the radio?  
[Click here!](#)

**The Easy Design and Print**  
Chosen by more people worldwide

**FREE Business Cards!**

- 250 full-color business cards
- 42 designs to choose from

**3 Easy Steps!** [Get Started](#)

**Browse Our Products**

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  - Free E-Cards
- Business Cards**
  - Free Business Cards
  - Premium Business Cards
  - Personal Business Cards
- Postcards**
  - Postcards
  - Oversized Postcards
- Marketing & Promotion**
  - Postcards
  - Brochures
  - Magnets
  - Flyers
  - More...

Free Business Cards  
FREE

Premium Business Cards  
starting at \$19.99

Postcards  
starting at \$24.99

Brochures  
starting at \$39.99

Follow the prompts where you see 'Free Business Cards' and fill in all your details.

**Step 3:**

Nominate how quickly you would like to receive the business cards – express or slow mail – and then pay the required amount by credit card.

*(Okay, so they're not completely free, but a postage fee for 100 professional-looking business cards is pretty cheap.)*

**Step 4:**

Wait by the mailbox until they arrive.



Get your business cards printed. This is the key to success.

It's so easy.

Do it now!

# Assignment 04

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Chapter Four:  
How To Set Up Your Freelance  
Copywriting Business

**Task:**

- 1. Establishing Your Personal Goals**
- 2. Setting Up Your Home Office**

## ASSIGNMENT 4

**Step 1:**

How much do you want to earn as a copywriter?

Per week? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Per month? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Per year? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

By when must you reach this goal?

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What's stopping you from getting started?

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What can you do to overcome these obstacles?

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**Step 2:**

How will you position yourself as a copywriter? Full time? Part time? Newsletter specialist? Web writer? Will you do everything that comes your way?

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**Step 3:**

Where will you work?

Home

What room will you use? \_\_\_\_\_

Serviced office

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4:**

Have you got the tools you need?

Place a tick next to the tools you have and a cross besides those you need.

Mobile Phone / Answering Machine

Letterhead

Fax

Files

Computer and Printer – email / internet

Photocopier

Reference Books

Trade Journals

Transport

**Step 5:**

Have you got the right personal qualities to succeed?

Are you prepared to step up to the plate to take on these qualities?

Tick the skills you have and place a cross next to the skills you need to develop.

Responsive

Constant marketer

Mobile

Orderly

Calm

Flexible

Adaptable

**Step 6:**

Have you purchased your hard-cover note book?

- Yes  
 No

**Step 7:**

Have you bought or got access to these books?

- Dictionary and a thesaurus  
 Dictionary of sayings/phrases/famous speeches  
 Encyclopedia, an atlas, *Guinness Book of Records*

**Step 8:**

Have you sourced trade magazines like *B & T* and *AdNews*?

- Yes  
 No

**Step 9:**

Have you decided what clients/accounts you wouldn't work on?

- Yes, I wouldn't work on \_\_\_\_\_  
 No

The more organised you are with regards to setting goals, establishing your home office, sourcing equipment and resources, the more likely you are to start making money quickly from copywriting.

## ASSIGNMENT 4



Don't get too bogged down in the mechanics of setting up a business at this stage.

Get some clients on board, and that'll motivate you to keep going.

If you get bogged down in the adminstrivia of it all, you'll never get started and you won't have a business to worry about administering.