

# How Writing in Someone Else's Voice Lets You Discover Your Own

## *By Cara Flett for AWAI*

When I first agreed to write in the voice of a client, I didn't know whether to laugh ... or cry.

So I did a bit of both.

Actually, I did *a lot of both* as I contemplated writing in the voice of my client.

As a new copywriter, I was still learning the different project types. Writing in the voice of a client seemed harder than writing an original Shakespearean play.

But then I realized I *had* written in the voice of others before. In fact, I'd done it a lot.

Like most beginning copywriters, I studied — and wrote out — winning promotions of Master Copywriters to learn the ins and outs of successful persuasive writing.

I marinated in the [conversational tones of Gary Halbert](#) as I wrote out his high-converting headlines, newsletters, and advertorials.

I marveled at the subdued voice of [David Ogilvy's famous 1963 ad](#) as it describes how a Rolls Royce's electric clock is the loudest noise you hear when driving 60 miles an hour.

And I was amazed at the way John Carlton writes in the voice of Dr. Michael O'Leary to describe how the techniques of a one-legged golfer can add 50 yards to your drive.

I already knew the *three-step process* that helps me — and you — write like Master Copywriters.

Or like any client whose writing style and voice you need to model ...



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**Cara Flett describes her 3-step process for writing in your client's voice.**

# Learn EVERYTHING possible about the product you're writing about.

It's hard enough to write in someone else's voice without writing blind about the product. The first thing you need to do is *learn the product inside and out*.

Ask to see the product. Beta test it if you can. Read it several times if it's a book.

Talk to its creators ... ask for the minutes of in-house meetings ... and study competitors' products. Determine your product's Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

When you've lived, breathed — and dreamed about — the product, you're ready to ...

- Compile a list of ALL the ***product's benefits***.
- Catalog ALL the ***problems the product solves*** (better than its competitors).
- Write pages of ***sample headlines*** and ***leads*** for it.

Once you've assembled a comprehensive product profile, it's time for you to translate your golden nuggets into the writing voice of the person whose voice you're assuming.

How?

## Study EVERY sample of your client's writing you can find to learn his voice.

Luckily for me, finding examples of my client's copy wasn't a problem. I had tons of promotions to study to determine my client's voice. In fact, I was spoiled for choice.

So I picked 10-20 pieces of my client's writing and spent several days studying ...

- The structure of the sentences. (The ***when*** and ***why*** of different lengths.)
- The distinctive words and phrases used. (And ***never used***.)
- The energy and pacing of the copy. (***In general***, and ***by project type***.)

As I studied, I built a three-page spreadsheet of my client's writing features — or *client-speak*. Below are some examples I compiled as I studied this client's *distinctive tells*:

	SENTENCE TYPES: Sprinters and Scintillators
Short:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uses short sentences, followed by ellipses or exclamation marks to transition from one amazing benefit to the next. (<i>"And get this ... " "And that's not all ... " "You keep it all!"</i>)</li></ul>
Long:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writes tight copy that's maximum 2 lines in length. Except when presenting 5-line series of benefits separated by ellipses ( ... ).</li></ul>
Mixed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Qualifies tantalizing promises with personalized lead-ins. (<i>"Like I said, that's a very brief overview ... "</i>)</li></ul>

To determine my client's frequent and infrequent word usage, I pasted samples of long-form sales letters, email autoresponders, and articles into Word documents.

Then I searched each document, using Ctrl + F, to determine the types of words that were used the *most*, the *least* — and *not at all*.

	WORDS THAT DO — AND DO NOT — APPEAR
Favorites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capitalizes words to draw reader attention to amazing benefits. (<i>"MUCH more," "keep for FREE," "the BEST," "is happening LIVE"</i>)</li></ul>

<b>Never uses:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COMPLEX VERB TENSES! Uses mostly active and future tenses to paint an irresistible picture of what <i>"you'll learn"</i> ... QUICKLY. (<i>"Write," "Dominate," "Transform," "You'll craft/master/pitch"</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Transitions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses transitions to address possible objections and to clarify. (<i>"Why?" "But you may be wondering ... " "I'm talking about ... "</i>)</li> </ul>

As you can tell, my client writes in a high-octane voice. To model his voice, I had to produce muscular, enthusiastic copy that's benefit-driven and opportunity-focused.

	<b>ENERGY: When The Copy Rises – and Falls</b>
<b>Lead:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opens with a one-two punch of short intriguing paragraph followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> short, even MORE intriguing paragraph. (<i>"Wow." "When I read that note, I get goose bumps."</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Body:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes ALL you get — <i>"step-by-step"</i> — at a breakneck pace. (<i>"everything, A to Z," "most comprehensive," "hands-on"</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Close:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ties short closing to the product — and to future benefits. (<i>"To your success," "To your copywriting success"</i>)</li> </ul>

You get the picture.

Read and re-read examples of your client's writing, cataloging the specific sentence types, words and phrases, and tone your client uses again and again.

Once you've compiled a comprehensive list of writing characteristics, you're ready to ...

## Channel YOUR INNER method actor to speak in someone else's writing voice.

For this final step, you don't need to wear stage makeup or change your wardrobe.

And you don't need to adopt mannerisms.

Although I did want to pump my fist a lot after I'd watched multiple webinars my client gave and then read his copy aloud.

All you need to do is study the person's *method of writing* until you're able to channel it, unconsciously.

To do this ...

- Read this person's copy out loud. Read it aloud while looking in a mirror.
- Copy short- and long-form promotions this person has written. Every day.
- Free write in this person's voice, again and again, until you can mimic it.

Train your brain to recognize how this person would, or would not, write.

Eventually, you'll internalize this person's unique writing voice and be able to channel it on demand.

So there you have it.

Learning to write like Gary Halbert, David Ogilvy, John Carlton, or whoever your current client is, is still work. But following your version of these three steps will simplify the process.

What's more, as you marinate in the winning writing techniques of others, you'll discover copy elements you like and can personalize to suit your own style.

In short, the benefits of learning to write in the voice of others are twofold. Having this ability lands you clients — and keeps them happy. And it helps you find — and develop — your writing voice.

Which *sounds* like a win-win all around.

Editor's note: Cara Flett is an AWAI-trained content writer and marketer who creates engaging, keyword-rich copy that ranks high in Google searches and reader interest. View her [LinkedIn](#) profile.

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