



## California Copywriter Carves Out New Career – by Taking on, and Winning, “Copy Challenges”

After the heady days of the late-'90s dot-com bubble, the “bust” that followed understandably threw Elizabeth Blessing for a loop. One day, she was an in-demand tech writer, and the next a desperate job seeker.

During one of several layoffs, her boss made a comment that would set Elizabeth's career in a new direction: “He said, ‘Well Elizabeth, you're not a profit center. You're a writer.’ It hit me that I needed to find a way to be a writer – *and* a profit center.”

### *The Missing Piece*

After almost 20 years in the business, tech writing was all Elizabeth knew. She wrote instruction manuals and software user guides to help people learn technology *after* they purchased it. Persuasion and emotion were simply not allowed.

After several layoffs, a stint in residential property development, and time off to care for her ailing father, Elizabeth explored starting her own business. First, she parlayed video production experience into teaching others how to use videos for marketing. To get her business going, she discovered the program, *How to Write Your Own Money Making Websites*, offered by American Writers and Artists Inc. (AWAI).

But her second program with AWAI kicked off her journey back to writing: *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*, a self-paced online program. “All the pieces of

#### **CASE STUDY:**

### *Elizabeth Blessing*

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#### **MEMBER:**

Elizabeth Blessing

#### **LOCATION:**

Eureka, California

#### **OTHER JOBS:**

Technical writer

#### **HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:**

As part of AWAI's “Secrets of Writing for the Health Market” program, she wrote a Copy Challenge for the Healthy Back Institute – and won.

#### **TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:**

- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*
- *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp and Job Fair
- *Circle of Success*

the puzzle began to fall into place when I heard about direct response copywriting,” she said. “I thought, ‘I can do this. I can be a profit center for my clients and a writer.’”

Despite two decades as a writer, Elizabeth felt daunted. Direct-response writing was nothing like tech writing. But the *Accelerated Program* guided her step by step in how to write in a conversational tone that connects with the reader.

After meticulously going through the *Accelerated Program*, Elizabeth joined AWAI’s *Circle of Success*, giving her lifetime access to all programs. In her next program, *Secrets of Writing for the Health Market*, Elizabeth hit upon the approach that would ultimately get her business off and running: Copy Challenges. In Copy Challenges, writers craft copy to show potential clients their skills.

Elizabeth took on a Copy Challenge to promote a pain relief cream for The Healthy Back Institute. Pulling tips from the *Accelerated Program*, and feedback from her *Circle of Success* Peer Review group, Elizabeth perfected her copy and submitted it, with fingers crossed.

“Within a couple of days of submitting my Copy Challenge, I got an email from the company co-founder,” she says. “He liked what I wrote and asked if I could develop it into an email sales letter. Now I’m a big fan of Copy Challenges!”

### **A \$13K-Plus Bootcamp Bounty**

At her first AWAI *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp and Job Fair, she submitted for two Copy Challenges. For AWAI, she wrote a headline and lead about the *Accelerated Program*. She also meticulously crafted a 24-page direct response sales letter for a Copy Challenge for AWAI instructor and direct response copywriter, Clayton Makepeace. This

one would be for Clayton’s client, financial publisher, Weiss Research. Though new to financial writing, Elizabeth found guidance in a webinar from Clayton on exactly how to prepare for Copy Challenges.

*Bootcamp 2014* might as well have been the Year of Elizabeth. Twice, she heard her name called as a Copy Challenge winner. AWAI awarded her \$1000 for her work on the *Accelerated Program* copy. Then, she scored a \$12,500 contract, plus royalties, to write for Weiss Research – and be mentored by Clayton himself.

“I was very surprised to win Clayton’s Copy Challenge,” she says. “The opportunity to be mentored by arguably one of the best copywriters in the business was priceless to me. And what made it even better was to have my Peer Review group there sharing it with me.”

Bootcamp lit the fire on Elizabeth’s copywriting career. Out of the blue, marketing directors – hearing about her work with Weiss Research – reached out.

Recently, she completed another Copy Challenge, which she learned about through AWAI’s Direct Response Jobs board, this time for Nightingale-Conant. For the challenge, she revised one of the company’s email promotions by writing a new email traffic driver, and a headline and lead for the landing page.

Since that first program, Elizabeth has gone on to take a number of others as part of *Circle of Success* – with each one moving her career forward after re-entering the work force.

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### *Writer, and Profit Center*

Today, Elizabeth keeps a full calendar of projects, writing long-form sales promotions for

the financial and health markets. She runs her growing freelance business from her home on the Pacific Coast, in Eureka, California. More than paying the bills, her new career affords her the ability to fit in both work and care for her mother and two disabled brothers.

“Success for me is the freedom that this new lifestyle provides me,” she says. “I can make a living in a satisfying career and still be there for my family.”

### *Elizabeth’s Tips for Copywriters*

- **Take on Copy Challenges!** – Elizabeth won a Copy Challenge the first time she had ever written direct-response copy, and several others after that. The key: diligent work on the *Accelerated Program*. “I made Copy Challenges a tactic for getting work,” she says.
- **Attend Bootcamp** – At *Bootcamp*, she found a community of writers and prospective clients looking to hire. “It was really an eye-opener to walk into a room full of marketers that really wanted to talk to copywriters,” she says. “That’s when I knew that ‘OK, this investment that I’ve made in my career will pay off.’”
- **Join LinkedIn** – Elizabeth built her LinkedIn profile, and credits the site with bringing in at least three new clients.

## Ready to pursue *the Writer’s Life*?

Learn more about the event that launched Elizabeth’s career,  
[\*\*The FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp and Job Fair.\*\*](#)

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