

WHAT REALLY MAKES MONEY

An Independent Review of Business Opportunities & Money-Making Enterprises

HOW TO SAVE THE PLANET & MAKE A GREAT INCOME

INSIDE: The Hottest Eco-Friendly Business Ideas & Products to Sell Online

Dear Fellow Dweller of Planet Earth!

Last December, a 92-year-old man walked onto a stage in Poland.

He was a little stooped and at times a little shaky...

But there was fire in his eyes, and passion quivering in his voice as he spoke to the audience.

“If we don’t take action,” he said, “the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world is on the horizon.”

The man was David Attenborough – the highly-respected broadcaster who has made it his life’s work to tell people about the natural world.

In his speech, at the United Nations Climate Talks, he warned that climate change was the biggest threat to the future of humanity.

As you know, Attenborough is no scaremonger. No conspiracy theorist. No left-wing radical nor right-wing agitator. He’s not a mad voice shrieking hellfire and damnation on the fringes of society.

His programmes are known for their gentleness, optimism and balance.

If anything, he has been criticised recently for not addressing the causes of climate change more directly.

Yet standing in front of the United Nations, his words were starkly apocalyptic.

“Time is running out,” he said.

And he is right.

We live in a time of acute global crisis. Humanity is facing multiple threats to its health, well-being and security... threats that could destroy our environment,

economies and personal freedoms.

Our very existence, in fact,

These threats will impact you directly, make no mistake... and not in a few generations’ time, but soon...

Sooner than many people imagine.

I’m talking about floods, storms and droughts that could destroy property, infrastructure and businesses on an unimaginable scale...

- » Crop failures and food supply breakdowns caused by abnormally hot temperatures that could see prices escalate, desperate queues for food, emergency stockpiling and business bankruptcies.
- » Mass immigration from countries around the world that are stricken by war, famine, drought, floods and epidemics.
- » Oceans, rivers, lakes and reefs devastated by pollution and the effects of warming. This could mean illnesses we cannot cure, devastated fish stocks, lack of drinking water for people and businesses.
- » ...Mass extinctions in animal species, including crucial insects like bees, destroying the world’s biodiversity, lowering the nutritional value of the food you eat.
- » Civil unrest – from street protests and strikes to mob violence and terrorist attacks.
- » Bankruptcies, failing businesses and economic slowdowns as energy and water supply problems hit industries from China to the USA.

These sound like devastating worst-case scenarios from Hollywood disaster flicks – but these are precisely what

please turn over...

Attenborough is referring to when he says “the collapse of our civilisations and the extinction of much of the natural world.”

Attenborough is not alone in his fears. An estimated 97% of the world’s scientific community agree that climate change is happening at a catastrophic rate and human activity is partly responsible.

This might make you angry if you’re a climate change sceptic, or frightened if you’re not.

I don’t mean to scare you, but this really needs to be said and I’m not afraid to nail my colours to the mast here. Sorry (not sorry) if that offends anyone.

What’s more, global warming is only one of the threats...

Our reliance on single-use plastics is filling the oceans with non-biodegradable trash, destroying precious coral reefs and damaging the delicate ecosystem.

Our life-sustaining oceans, rivers, lakes and reefs are being devastated by toxins in our food packaging, sanitary products and cleaning products.

Even climate change sceptics are aware that the cleanliness of our air, water and food supply is important.

The upshot is, there has never been a greater need to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, plastics and chemicals.

More importantly, the public are increasingly aware of this and are starting to choose sustainable products.

An Opportunity to Tap into an Important Trend, Help Save the Planet and Make Money!

According to research in January 2019, 70% of the British public want urgent action to tackle climate change and protect the environment. And this is why one of Theresa May’s final acts as prime minister was to make a law committing us to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The media is catching on. News articles and documentaries have driven home the truth about rising sea levels, declining air quality and rising extinctions. Last year, fashion magazine *Elle* dedicated their September issue to sustainable fashion. While the BBC series *Blue Planet II* showed the stark horror of plastics

in our oceans.

This increased mainstream awareness is fuelling a boom in low carbon products, recycled goods and other eco-friendly products and services.

People want to become greener, and they’re willing to spend money on products that minimise their impact on the environment.

So today I want to share with you a business opportunity that not only taps into one of the biggest consumer trends of our times, but could help make the planet a better place for the next generation. In fact, the survival of the human species might rely on it – and that’s not something you can say about most business ideas.

What’s more, there are many different ways you can make money from this trend:

- » Small-scale online products like eBooks and used books.
- » Information products that cost very little to create and sell.
- » Physical services and products you create yourself
- » Products to sell on Amazon, eBay.
- » Products you sell in your local area, either yourself or through local businesses.

It is even possible to start with a very basic online product like an eBook and build up this business into something with multiple income streams.

So whatever your levels of free time and investment budget, there is probably something you can do to make money from this opportunity.

Let’s first look at this trend in a bit more detail.

Why the Trend for Eco-Friendly Products Will Only Get Bigger

The push towards more eco-friendly products and services is known as ‘green consumerism’.

According to the 2018 Ethical Consumer Markets Report, the UK spent over £83bn on ethical goods in 2017, driven by a rise in environmental concerns, with the average household spending £1,238 on ethical goods that year.

The same 2018 report showed that in 2017 the market for second-hand clothes grew 22.5%, because of the

It is my intention to be as accurate in fact, detail and comment as possible. However, the publishers and their representatives cannot be held responsible for any error in detail, accuracy or judgement whatsoever. What Really Makes Money is sold on this understanding. ISSN: 1741 9018

All subscription correspondence to: What Really Makes Money, Subscription Office, Unit 5, Hurricane Way, North Weald, Epping CM16 6AA Tel: 01992 618045 Fax: 01992 524542. Registered office: Canonbury Publishing Ltd. Curzon House, 24 High Street, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 2LJ.

Registered in England No. 4765425 Vat Reg No. 811 5700 64 © Copyright What Really Makes Money 2019

climate impacts of ‘fast fashion’.

This is therefore a growing trend that businesses are increasingly tapping into.

Here are some more examples:

- » Thanks to plastic straw bans and campaigns to ‘bring your own cup’ to events and festivals, the reusable bottle industry is now worth £5.5bn and expected to expand at 3.6% per year.
- » In May 2019, Morrisons announced that they will offer up to 127 types of fruit and vegetables plastic-free or in recyclable paper bags.
- » Renewable energy supplier, Bulb, increased their customer base to 870,000 since its launch in 2015 with a 1,700% increase in revenue from £10m to £183m in 2018.
- » According to market research organisation Mintel, 71% of care product customers think that using recovered ocean plastic in packaging is a good idea.
- » Mintel also predict that the UK meat-free market is estimated to grow to £658m in 2021 from £559m in 2017, a lot of which is driven by concerns over the environmental impact of meat farming. A 2018 Greenpeace report said that: “If left unchecked, agriculture is projected to produce 52% of global greenhouse gas emissions in the coming decades, 70% of which will come from meat and dairy.”

The upshot is, energy-saving products, reusable goods, recycled materials and meat-free foods are becoming big business.

And this is only going to grow as the mMillennial generation (aged 22-35) get older and more affluent. That age group is the one that says they will happily pay extra for eco-friendly or sustainable products that help protect their future.

The Benefits of Starting a Green Business

If you want to start a business, or create a product, there are some really strong benefits to selling an eco-friendly product:

- » **People will pay more money for something sustainable, ethical and healthy.** A recent SurveyMonkey poll found that 35% of people are willing to spend more on products that are better for the environment while 56% were moderately likely to consider a higher price point for eco-friendly products.
- » **Your business will have a strong ethical stance**

and positive mission that will appeal to many customers. Having a clear ‘cause’ allows you to build a community around that cause, from Facebook Groups to Twitter Hashtags. You’ll find that people will support your business more – and more publicly – if they believe you are contributing to a greater social good.

- » **Marketing is more powerful with an eco-friendly message.** You’ll get more shares on social media from internet users wanting to make a difference, and more word of mouth advertising. You’re also more likely to get press coverage if you are seen as a positive force.
- » **You’ll have great sales copy and compelling online content.** Setting up a green home business allows you to tap into strong emotions and deep passions. You can talk about huge news items that are trending worldwide. Your packaging and promotions can be filled with wonderful statistics and feel-good stories. In this niche it is far easier to create sales messages that get noticed and shared.
- » **The marketplace for eco-products is growing every month, every year, as awareness grows,** so you’ll be able to reach more and more potential customers as time passes.
- » **You will be contributing to a healthier, cleaner world, making this a fulfilling business that you can be proud of.** You’re more likely to continue to feel motivated, as will any staff or business partners you work with, when there is an outcome you are striving for.

Ultimately, starting an eco-friendly green business means you’ll be riding the wave of a massive trend that people are passionate about, with a constantly evolving story behind it.

How to Tap Into the Green Consumer Boom

There are some basic ways that I recommend you can tap into the green consumerism trend:

- » **Create your own information product** – put together information, advice and knowledge that helps other people live in a more eco-friendly way. An example being ‘how to make your own toxin-free cleaning products’ eBook. Another being a ‘zero waste’ course aimed at small good businesses.
- » **Create your own eco-friendly product** – you could make a product that has low or no environmental impact, for example making

jewellery out of recycled materials, or designing your own cloth shopping bags.

- » **Set up an eco-friendly service** – you could offer a service that helps others recycle or reuse products, for instance offering to upcycle old clothes or furniture, or creating vegan cakes for local restaurants. Or – you could start a business selling used goods, which stops products going to landfill, for instance used books, clothes or toys.
- » **Sell eco-friendly products online** – you could sell other people's products on Amazon and eBay, anything from energy-saving bulbs to organic vegetable growing kits.

Okay, so let's drill down into some of those specific opportunities, with some examples and ideas.

1. Create Your Own Information Product

This is a great option for starting an eco-business without needing to create physical products and deal with complicated, investment manufacture and stock. Information publishing is relatively cheap to set up (web hosting, domain name and the cost of your time is all it takes). It can include one or all of the following:

Free eReport/Video – a PDF or video containing basic useful information that you offer for free in the hope it gets widely downloaded and shared. This should be in return for email addresses, so that you build a list to which you can promote paid info products (books, courses, membership) or physical products you create or sell via a shop.

eBook – an electronically-published book or guide, containing useful information, for which you charge a small fee, around £5-£20. You could even offer it for free and use it to then upsell via hyperlinks to your website. Here are some examples of eco-friendly bestsellers on Amazon that do precisely that to give you some inspiration:

- » **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: An Easy Household Guide** (Green Books Guides) by Nicky Scott and Axel Scheffler.
- » **Zero Waste Home: The Ultimate Guide to Simplifying Your Life** by Bea Johnson.
- » **No. More. Plastic.: What you can do to make a difference – the #2minutesolution** by Martin Dorey and Chris Packham.

- » **It's Not Easy Being Green: One Family's Journey Towards Eco-friendly Living** by Dick Strawbridge.
- » **12 Small Acts to Save Our World: Simple, Everyday Ways You Can Make a Difference** by WWF and Ben Fogle.
- » **101 Ways to Live Cleaner and Greener for Free** by Anna Pitt and Toni Lebusque.
- » **How to Maximize Small Space Storage: Getting the most out of your storage by eliminating, re-using and recycling** by Laura Deon.
- » **My Zero-Waste Kitchen: Easy Ways to Eat Waste Free** by Kate Turner.

Email Newsletter – A regular e-letter with helpful information, through which you can promote paid information products and physical products.

Course – You can create a course in which you help customers achieve a specific goal or solve a problem, step by step, using modules that you can publish on a website, using written content or videos.

Free website with blog – Updated information once or twice every week, for free, but constantly pushing readers to join the email list, follow social media and visit your sales page.

Membership website – Customers pay a subscription to access the information, which should then be 'ad-free', useful and valuable. You can combine free and paid by having a basic blog, with more useful and specific info behind the paywall.

Both the free or membership website can also host webinars, PDF reports, videos email consultations.

An event – You could hold a workshop, seminar or demonstration to which you sell tickets in advance.

Physical books – A quick look on Amazon and you'll see that there is a huge demand for information from the rising number of people who want to live a more eco-friendly existence.

Here are some topics you can consider for your information product...

Going Vegan

At the moment around 1% of the population is vegan, which is around 700,000 people.

However, a poll in January 2019 predicted that over the next year, 2.2m people will become vegan, increasing that population to 2.9m. That's 327% rise by 2020. By any standards that's a major trend, with huge growth potential.

On top of that, you have to factor in another huge number of people who have decided to cut down on meat, and now regularly enjoy vegetarian or vegan meals instead of meat ones.

An information product could look at one or more of these areas:

- » Recipes for delicious vegan meals.
- » How to create your own version of meat, fish and dairy dishes.
- » Vegan cakes, desserts and treats.
- » Meal planning and budgeting.
- » Health and nutrition advice for vegans.
- » Setting up a vegan food business.

For your research:

PlantBasedNews.org – An up-to-the minute stream of all the vegan and plant-based news, vegan recipes, opinion pieces, reviews and headlines in chronological order on the platform.

VRG.org – The Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to educating the public on vegetarianism and the interrelated issues of health, nutrition, ecology, ethics, and world hunger.

VegetarianTimes.com

Growing Your Own Organic Fruit and Veg

Modern farming techniques select crops that are ‘resistant’ or ‘fast growing’ over those that are more nutritious. A study of the nutritional content of food in 1940-2002 showed that the mineral content of vegetables, fruits, meat and milk had fallen by as much as 70%. These depleted nutrients include calcium, iron and magnesium, all vital for health.

On top of that, the widespread use of fertilisers and pesticides means that food is rarely untainted by chemicals.

On top of that, there’s the issue with carbon emissions from flying, shipping and driving food all over the world.

An awareness of this has led to a trend for both organic food and also locally-grown food. The fewer the air miles the better. So what could be a more eco-friendly approach than to grow your own food?

Subject areas might include...

- » Advice on a specific type of crop (e.g. tomatoes, or courgettes).
- » Greenhouse gardening.
- » Vertical gardening.

- » Growing in restricted spaces (e.g. balconies).
- » Health and safety (how to stop getting knee and back pain).
- » Using specialist equipment.
- » Compostin.
- » How to manage an allotment.
- » How to set up an organic food business.
- » Amateur beekeeping.
- » Rearing chickens.
- » Soil nutrition.

Further Inspiration

SoilAssociation.org – the UK’s leading membership charity campaigning for healthy, humane and sustainable food, farming and land use.

MotherEarthNews.com – The most popular and longest-running sustainable-lifestyle magazine, *Mother Earth News* provides wide-ranging, expert editorial coverage of organic foods, country living, green transportation, renewable energy, natural health, and green building.

GardenOrganic.org.uk – A charity that ‘brings together thousands of people who share a common belief – that organic growing is essential for a healthy and sustainable world’.

How to Upcycle

The term ‘upcycling’ was coined in 1994 by Reiner Pilz, and describes a process where you take something that’s old, shabby, broken or out of fashion, and give it a new lease of life.

That could mean simply giving something a lick of paint, fixing it up, reupholstering or adding a new element. For instance, you might add new coverings to out-of-date 1980s armchairs to give them a hip and trendy design, or you might take an old vintage dress and embellish it with new materials.

Or it could mean turning one object into something with a different use entirely. An example might be turning an old ladder into a bookshelf, turning old fruit crates into a storage unit for a shed, or making coffee tables out of vintage suitcases.

Upcycling is similar to recycling in that it reduces the amount of stuff that ends up in landfill, but it differs in the sense that it’s a creative process that makes something new, unique and exciting.

There are other strong benefits on top of its green credentials:

- » **It saves money** – you can create clothes, furniture

and artworks for almost zero cost.

- » **It's trendy** – upcycling is a hot term right now, and having upcycled goods in your house is seen as cool rather than mean and thrifty.
- » **It's personal** – upcycling allows you to create items that are personal to you, and unique.

Lee Brown from Hackney reuse business, The Loop says: “It's eco-friendly, it's a craft, it's about slowing down and being mindful, it saves you money, and it shows your individuality in a world full of copycats.”

You could focus on helping people upcycle the following:

- » Furniture
- » Clothes
- » Bikes
- » Accessories
- » Tools
- » Garden features

On top of that you could also show people how to:

- » Turn upcycling into a business
- » Sell their products online

More info:

UpcycleThat.com – A great curated site containing ‘the best upcycling ideas and upcycling projects’.

UpcycledWorld.com – A social enterprise, who aim to deliver fun and creative upcycling classes, parties and demos in Scotland.

HomemadeHomeIdeas.com

UpcycleMagazine.com – A magazine about upcycling! :-)

Sustainable Child Rearing

Having children is the most destructive thing a person can do to the environment, according to a rather gloomy Swedish study in 2017.

Researchers from Lund University found that if you had one child less, it would save an average of 58.6 tonnes of CO₂-equivalent emissions per year.

Of course, society would collapse if we all gave up having kids. But there is now such a thing as ‘green parenting’.

Being a green parent means that instead of unthinkingly buying the mainstream products available, they look for alternatives that are often organic, natural, and low in environmental toxins, which will minimise the impact of raising a family. This could mean everything from clothes and food to toys.

Your information product could look at one or more of the following subjects:

- » Alternatives to nappies and trainer nappies.
- » Make your own lotions and creams for the baby from natural products.
- » Breastfeeding (this reduces packaging, transportation, and manufacturing waste).
- » Food product reviews and awareness – choosing products with low carbon footprint, no additives or chemicals.
- » Recipes and tips for homemade food that delivers the essential nutrients without nasty additives or packaging.
- » Upcycling and reusing materials to make toys and furniture for your baby and child.
- » Keeping a green home – how to avoid using chemicals or plastics in the home, so your child is not exposed to toxins.

Making Your Own Natural Cleaning Products

Chemicals in household products can be harmful to your health and the environment.

Detergents interfere with your body's hormone balance. Some boost oestrogen levels, increasing breast cancer risk in women and lowering fertility in men. Then, after you've washed your clothes, those detergents sluice down the drain and into the water table, entering river systems and lakes where they mess with the balance of bacteria and chemicals, damaging wildlife.

You could create an information product that helps people reduce their reliance on big-brand cleaning products. Subject areas could include:

- » How to make your own soap and skin creams.
- » How to make your own cleaning products.
- » How to freshen air naturally.
- » Recommended eco products for laundry and home cleaning.
- » Eco friendly Accessories, tools and equipment for the home.
- » How to keep a healthy house (minimising washing, airing, cleaning techniques and tips).

Energy-Saving Tips

You could show people how to reduce their carbon footprint through clever use of energy while also cutting their bills.

- » Washing tips.
- » Energy saving devices.
- » Insulating your house.
- » Lifestyle tips.
- » Food and drink.
- » Recycling and composting.
- » Renewable energy – turbines, solar panels.

How to Set Up an Eco Enterprise

If you have some experience in this area, or you've made money from an eco-friendly product, you might opt to start a consultancy that helps businesses or individuals reduce their waste, or offer advice on how they could create their own eco-friendly businesses.

Subjects can include:

- » How to sell used goods online.
- » How to set up your own eco-friendly rubbish removal/house clearance business.
- » How to create an upcycling business.
- » How to create a zero waste / reduced waste business.

2. Create Your Own Eco-Friendly Product or Service

As well as an information product, or instead of one, you could create your own physical product to sell online, either on your own shop or through Amazon. Alternatively, you can make a product to sell locally or supply to local businesses.

Plastic-Free Items

Plastic is in so many products today, from teabags to glitter to cosmetics. In November 2018, a report from Friends of the Earth revealed that synthetic clothing releases fibres as they spin in washing machines and tumble-dryers making them a leading cause of UK household plastic pollution.

Examples of successful products include BioGlitter.com, a biodegradable glitter and SimplyGum.com a plastic-free chewing gum that biodegrades instead of ruining the pavement.

You could look at creating:

- » Non-plastic straws.
- » Synthetic fibre-free clothes.

- » Reusable bags.
- » Biodegradable packaging.
- » Non-plastic toothbrushes.
- » Natural clothing.

Recycled Items

You could create and then sell items that you make from existing materials.

- » Make your own recycled products like jewellery, clothes, toys, bikes, tools and furniture.
- » Upcycle old, tatty, broken products into something new.

Upcycling Clothes, Furniture, Toys

You could upcycle goods for people as a business. An example is StaceysShabbyChicShack.co.uk, something that Stacey Meikle set up and runs from home. She says: "I find old and unloved furniture and upcycle them to create beautiful one-off pieces. I also offer a bespoke service; I can source something you have been unable to find and update it to match the design of your home."

Repair Service

You could do the same as above, but rather than repurposing items into something creative and new, you simply fix things, a skill that has been largely lost over the years in our disposable culture. You could specialise in bicycles, clothes, computers, musical instruments or cars.

Used Goods

You could set up an eBay shop, your own eCommerce site or a local store selling used books, clothes and toys. By reselling second-hand items you prevent them going into landfill.

Toxin-Free Cleaning Service

Instead of a regular cleaning service, you could make yours plastic free, low allergen, non-toxic and natural.

TheHappyHouseCleaning.co.uk is a good UK example.

They say: "All the products we use are natural and non-toxic, which makes them healthier for your home and safer for the local London environment. Our staff personally research all our house cleaning products to ensure they are non-toxic, biodegradable and not tested on animals."

Recycling

The government and the EU are encouraging recycling and waste minimisation. Along with rising landfill taxes this has seen the business of recycling grow massively in recent years.

You could form your own local freecycling organisation, helping people get rid of items without them ending up in landfill, while others get free goods that they need.

Or you could set up an ethical rubbish collection company like Harsha Rathnayake who started JunkHunters.co.uk in 2009 with his only remaining £160. It became a successful 'two-men-and-a-van' rubbish collection service. Now he has franchised his business and it's spreading across the country.

There is a strong green message to his business. The website declares: "Our goal at Junk Hunters is to become the UK's industry standard bearer in waste management by providing an efficient and environmentally-friendly service that is affordable to everyone. Recycling and reusing waste has always been important to us, and we are delighted to say that presently we recycle more than 70% of all materials we collect, and reuse any intact items we gather by offering them to charities."

However, because of the range of materials you may encounter (glass, confidential material, fabrics) the rules surrounding waste can be complex, so look into these before setting up.

Vegan Café, Restaurant, Juice Bar, Pop Up

According to an article in the *Independent* in 2018: 'Vegan food startups are taking over London as entrepreneurs and investors see profit in wellness.'

The article cites some great examples:

- » In 2016 frozen-food service AllPlants.com was born from a kitchen in Stoke Newington. The brothers deliver plant-based meals in from £6.75 for one portion or £9.98 for two. Last year they bagged £800,000 of investment.
- » Grace Regan started a vegan food business called SpiceBox in 2015 delivering boxes of curry. The business now has a pitch at one of the KERB street food markets in London and has secured investment worth £450,000.

You can start your business as a pop up, or from the back of a van or trailer. Or you could create food in

your home kitchen and then sell it online, or through local businesses.

Zero-Waste Business

If you already have a business, then you can improve your marketing and sales by going green. Make sure that the packaging and contents are recyclable or biodegradable, then use that to promote your business as eco-friendly.

Examples:

- » **WasteNot.shop** – Brighton's original zero waste shop selling bulk produce and household items to help reduce your waste and your impact on the planet.
- » **SiloBrighton.com** is a zero-waste restaurant, all products that are delivered to the restaurant come in re-useable crates, food grade jerry cans, pails, urns or containers.

3. Sell Eco-Friendly Products Online

If you don't want to set up a business or create your own product, you can still tap into the green consumer boom.

You could use Amazon and eBay to make money selling other people's green products, or your own branded, white label products.

Here are some of the top green products you should look into. **TIP:** Go to Amazon.co.uk to check out what's available and selling well:

Energy-Saving Lightbulbs

LED lightbulbs save energy and also money, which make them highly in-demand.

Rechargeable Batteries

Batteries contain chemicals, some of which are toxic and these can end up in the water table after they are thrown away. Rechargeable ones are eco-friendlier and cheaper.

Safety Razors

We throw away an estimated 2bn razors a year.

However, you could sell steel safety razors where only the blade is chucked away. Consider products made from sustainable materials like Bamboo Safety Razors (do a search on Amazon.co.uk for examples).

For more great money-making ideas, reviews and blueprints go to www.WhatReallyMakesMoney.co.uk

Eco-Friendly Toothbrushes

It's advised that we change toothbrushes every three months, which creates a lot of non-recyclable plastic waste. To counter this problem you could sell toothbrushes made of wood, bamboo, or other biodegradable materials.

Eco-Friendly Nappies

Nappies end up in landfills, where they release the greenhouse gas methane and then take over 500 years to decompose. You can offer cloth nappies or hybrids which combine biodegradable and compostable materials.

Make-up Remover

Make-up remover pads and cotton buds also end up in landfill, taking a long time to degrade. However, there are washable and reusable alternatives.

Reusable Bottles

Single-use plastic is on its way out, with constant campaigns in the media to end this wasteful behaviour. Instead, we are encouraged to use our own bottles, which we can wash and refill.

Straws

Straws are being banned or phased out across the world, creating a need for alternatives – either non-plastic biodegradable materials, or reusable ones made from sustainable materials like bamboo.

Many people are now turning to **stainless steel straws**.

Natural Suntan Lotion/Sunscreen

The chemicals in sunscreen are dangerous for the aquatic ecosystems, in particular they contribute to the destruction of coral reefs. Consider selling 'reef friendly' and 'marine life friendly' products.

Also ones that are:

- » Biodegradable.
- » Hypoallergenic.
- » Non allergen.
- » Good for sensitive skin.
- » Free from perfume and additives.
- » Recyclable.
- » Free from animal testing.

Eco Storage

To combat wasteful packaging, and also plastic food storage items like sandwich bags, foil and cling film,

there are a lot of alternatives like reusable mesh bags or reusable silicon food bags. Also look for cloth or cotton shopping bags and shopping trolleys.

Also consider storage for waste and compost that helps gardeners recycle.

Eco-Friendly Children's Toys

Green children's toys are another option. It means toys that can easily decompose when buried in the ground.

Eco Laundry

Washing detergents damage the water ecosystem, upsetting the natural balance of bacteria and chemicals. For many people they can also be irritating to the skin.

- » **GuppyFriend.com** is a new washing bag that aims to catch some of the microplastic that escapes clothes during a wash.
- » **SoapNuts.co.uk** is a natural laundry product that is environmentally-friendly, chemical free and cultivated through sustainable agriculture. The shells contain saponins that release mild suds and have been used as a washing detergent for centuries in India and Nepal.
- » **TerraWash.co.uk** uses a bag full of magnesium to wash clothes without the need for any detergent, and the bag is reusable for a year
- » Or you can use **EcoEgg.com**.

Eco-Friendly Cloths

Microfibre cloths contain non-recyclable microplastics. These literally come out in the wash. There are now alternatives on the market, for instance bamboo-fibre cloths, made from the fast-growing bamboo plant, but also long-lasting and safe to wash. Also check out bamboo dish rags.

Stainless Steel Metal Straws

As I mentioned earlier, plastic straws are on their way out, but the non-plastic alternatives are very much in.

Bottom Line

The demand for eco-friendly products and information about sustainable living will continue to grow as the effects of climate change are felt. Take advantage now - do your bit for the environment AND make money. Use this article as your starting point and go online and start researching areas you are most drawn to.

COPYWRITING IS HARD...

MY ADVICE: CHEAT!

Here is How Anyone Can Create Highly Persuasive Sales Copy Quickly and Without Any Previous Experience

I was recently asked to make an hour-long presentation about copywriting to more than 80 top financial marketing professionals from around the world at The British Museum.

I spent days creating notes, then turned them into a slide presentation. But at 2am the night before I was due to present, I had an existential crisis!

I was convinced my presentation was awful – too technical, disjointed and would have had the audience looking at their watches praying for me to shut up.

I went to bed exhausted, and convinced that my presentation would be a flop. In the morning as I walked Belle – my daughter – to school I continued to try and figure out why my approach was flawed...

And then it hit me:

Copywriting Really is Bloody Difficult!

If I still find it difficult after 25 years, what hope is there for these marketers and publishers who needed to get results fast? What could I tell them in 60 minutes that they could actually use in their own business?

The only conclusion was to abandon all the usual techniques and copy rules I was planning to teach and come up with a far more radical solution:

So I decided to show them HOW TO CHEAT!

I had a few hours to go before I went on stage, so rewrote my whole presentation in a manic frenzy.

What follows is a version of my presentation (thankfully it turned out to be one of the best I had ever given and ended up with at least £10,000 worth of consulting jobs!).

The Best Copywriting Cheat in the World – Ever!

Whether you run a business or fancy yourself as a copywriter, the ability to use words to connect, engage and ultimately trigger a specific action is one of the most valuable skills you can learn.

But reaching a level of competence can take years of hard work, setbacks, and trial and error.

Most people never even try because they don't think they are 'good at writing'. And to be honest, most people just don't have the time or the patience it takes to master these skills.

But I've come up with a devastatingly simple solution that could help ANYONE to write copy fast that engages and sells...

I Made My Discovery as I Was Shopping for a Silk Night Gown in a High-End Lingerie Boutique!

The gown was for Heloise – my wife – whose birthday was approaching.



I knew that she'd always wanted a silk gown – the sort old Hollywood stars like Veronika Lake or Lana Turner would wear as the femme fatale in some film noir.

So I went to her favourite local boutique lingerie store.

I got talking to the store owner about what might be right for Heloise.

This is when the owner became enthused about a particular gown they stocked...

She owned one herself, she said, and it was wonderful.

But she didn't stop at that...

She told me about the reaction of her husband the first day she wore it; The way the silk felt against her skin; How comfortable it was to wear around the house; How attractive she felt in it.

Then she explained the source of this particularly fine silk, the uniqueness of the design and manufacturing process... and pointed out that this was an exclusive



item. In fact, she was the only stockist in the UK.

She loved her products, and it showed. Her passion, knowledge and enthusiasm for this silk gown tumbled out of her in a naturally compelling way.

Within a few minutes I was sold.

While she was gift-wrapping the gown, we got talking about her business and I asked if she wrote any copy about her products for her website or sales materials.

"Oh I can't write..." she said. *"I wouldn't know where to start... I mean what would I write about?"*

And that's when it hit me...

Of course she could write copy! She had just given me a lengthy and persuasive sales pitch. If it had been recorded and transcribed, she would have done the job as well as me, with my 25 years' experience as a copywriter.

Actually, her version would have been better!

Why? Because here was a woman who was passionate about her products and her customers in a way that would be impossible for me to replicate.

She had intimate, detailed and instinctive knowledge of her business. Day after day, she lived and breathed lingerie. It was her mission to seek out the very best garments from around the world and tell her best customers about it.

Nobody was better placed than her to sell her products. And the silk gown was only one of many products in her store, each with its own story.

I'm sure that when different customers came in with their own tastes and preferences, she could instantly pick the item that was perfect for them and match the benefits to their particular needs.

So I said to her...

"You CAN write great copy... you just don't know it!"

And I gave her this advice...

"Get someone to record you talking about that gown like you just did to me... then transcribe what you said and you're 80% there."

Once the words are in a document, really it was a matter of editing and structuring it to make it easy to read.

Her eyes lit up as the realisation hit her! She really COULD do this.

I too walked away from the shop with a realisation...

One of the problems with most sales copy is that it reads like it's coming from a copywriter or marketer.

The knowledge, passion, and 'voice' of the business owner rarely gets into the marketing material, sales

copy or online content.

Sure, it ticks the right boxes. It sounds 'snappy'. But it lacks voice, credibility, depth... that authentic feel you only get from someone who's truly passionate about their own product.

How the Copy Cheat Technique Works

The 'copy cheat' technique I have developed can be used by copywriters, marketers, AND business owners to quickly create highly persuasive sales copy and super engaging content.

It can be used in product descriptions or listings, direct response letters, blogs, web copy, brochures, catalogues, free reports... in fact ANY contact point between a business and customer can benefit from the copy created using this method.

Ultimately, it means you can write winning sales copy, even if you lack skills, training and confidence.

First Find Your Business Champion

Whether you're writing copy for someone else or doing it for your own business, you want to find the most qualified person to talk about the product or service.

Now this might be you or any of the following:

- » CEO or MD.
- » Founder or business owner.
- » Product creator.
- » Marketing or sales director.
- » Shop sales staff.

Whatever their role, they will meet many or all of the following characteristics.

- ✓ **They live and breathe the business**, thinking about it every day.
- ✓ **They know their business inside out.** They're aware of every part of the process: how it is created (manufactured, correct and designed), how it is packaged and delivered, what the offer is, and why the product is special or unique.
- ✓ **They understand their market, the competition and what makes them different.** This is because they deal with that competition daily – the rival websites, the rival advertising, the rival's presence at trade shows, conferences and other events.
- ✓ **They know their customers' hopes and fears.** They've communicated with customers, received enquiries, answered questions and handled complaints. They know what sort of person buys and also who you they want (the complainers, the

tyre-kickers, the chancers).

- ✓ **They are passionate!** They may have created the business from scratch, and were involved in the development of products or services. It's what they get out of bed to do every day and probably made sacrifices for in the past. Because of this, they have a deep emotional connection to their business.
- ✓ **They have a back story.** There's almost always a story behind why a business, product or service came into being, often linked to the founder, or product creator, and the problem they aimed to solve, or the gap in the market they spotted. Often it's because of personal circumstances, flashes or inspiration or happy accident. The backstory adds credibility, personality and uniqueness to all copy.
- ✓ **They have a unique voice.** There are words and phrases that are unique to them – and also unique to their field of business. By speaking in their own voice, using their own terminology, gives your copy an authenticity that cannot be faked.

OK, let's get down to the practical stuff.

Now the idea of 'writing' sales copy might be intimidating.

You might not believe you have the skills, experience or natural ability to write.

Or you might simply hate writing.

It could be that you're dyslexic or lack confidence with spelling and grammar.

Or perhaps you've tried writing and you've disliked the results for being scrappy, waffling, or a poor imitation of advertising copy.

But with the method I'm about to share with you, it allows you to:

- » Capture a natural voice and personality without needing to write anything down.
- » Overcome fears of writing, lack of confidence, poor spelling and grammar.
- » Draw out the main sales benefits of a product or service, based on the 'champion's' superior knowledge.
- » Get natural-sounding sales copy that comes from a real person, without marketing speak and clichés.
- » Avoid waffle and dry, boring information.
- » Get 80% of a sales promotion down before you attempt to write anything – or which you can give to a copywriter or editor.

Here's how it works...

The Copycatcher Method Explained

The method is really simple.

Record yourself answering a series of questions about your business, transcribe it, then edit it. I recommend you get someone to do the interview for you – a friend, family member or colleague.

Of course, if you are writing copy for someone else, then you ask the questions to your client.

Let's drill down into the details...

- » Set aside 45-60 minutes of your time where you can talk without interruption or distraction. If you are getting someone to interview you, then ideally this should be face to face, but you can use the phone.
- » Use a recording device to get the audio down. Almost all smartphones have a voice recorder on their app list and, if not, you can easily download one.

Alternatively, you can buy a Dictaphone for under £25 from Amazon.

If you are getting someone to interview you on the phone, try TapeACall.com which charges a flat fee of \$9.99 (£6.40) for a year's unlimited use.

If you have an Android device, try Automatic Call Recorder Pro which allows you to record the conversation by shaking your phone, and allows you to store multiple recordings.

- » Use a list of questions structured in a way that teases out all your knowledge and expertise. With the right questions, your promo is practically written for you...
- » Get the recording transcribed into a written document that you can edit. You can now trim the fat, tighten up the sentences and get rid of umms and ahhs.

The JustPressRecord recording app is one of the best, cheapest and quickest voice transcriber for iPhone. For Android devices you can use the Google keyboard app to turn voice into text.

Or even better, try this...

Recommended Transcription Service: REV.com

This service transcription costs only \$1 per minute of audio, which means you don't have to go through the process yourself.

For \$60 (about £45) you can have an hour's worth of audio transcribed, which is around 8,000 words worth of material to shape into sales copy.

You simply upload the audio file from your computer

or paste a URL from the web. They use real people (as opposed to software) to transcribe your files with 99% accuracy. They'll then email you a Word doc that you can edit, usually within a day or two (12 hours if the audio is less than 30 minutes).

- » Finally, arrange the transcribed, edited interview into a sales structure which I've added at the end.

The result of this process will be...

- » Raw sales copy captured effortlessly in your authentic, natural voice.
- » A sales pitch based on your deep understanding of your customers and your product.
- » All the sales benefits in order of priority.
- » Any customer objections addressed.
- » As much as 2,000-8,000 words of copy already written before you sit down to 'start'.

You can either edit this raw material into shape yourself or supply this to a copywriter to edit. This will save you time and money on what you pay a copywriter, as well as ensuring that the final result really captures your brand, voice and personality.

The Interview

Decide on whether you are recording answers to the questions on your own, or choosing to be interviewed. For the most natural results I recommend the latter.

The interview should be structured, but allow yourself to talk as much as possible. Be passionate, excited and enthusiastic. Don't think about the eventual transcription, as that will be edited. Instead just talk and get out what you want to say.

TIP: Have in mind your ideal customer when you answer the questions. Speak the same way as you would talk to that customer if you met them face to face.

Remember that you're trying to get across your personality and voice, so don't be afraid to reveal your:

- » Sense of humour.
- » Taste and opinions.
- » Outlook and worldview.
- » Personal history.
- » Likes and dislikes.
- » Quirks and flaws.

The Questions...

"Tell me about your business..."

"How did you start the business?"

"Tell me about you and your background. What

experiences, goals or problems led you to starting the business?"

"What gave you the ideal/inspiration for this particular product/service?"

"What problems does your product/service you solve?"

"What's the single most exciting benefit of this product/service?"

"Tell me about the other benefits?"

"What makes your product/service better than the competition?"

"Describe the production process. What makes it special, interesting or unique?"

"How has your product been received? Tell me about any great press coverage or comments from customers?"

"Tell me about any special results, trials, tests or statistics that back up your claims."

"Who is your perfect customer? Tell me more about them..."

"Who is not suitable?"

"What are potential customers' most common objections and how do you answer them?"

"Why is your offer so special?"

"Give me a good reason for someone to get this product right away?"

"What do you like most about your business/sector/industry?"

"What frustrates you most about your business/sector/industry?"

"What would you change if you could?"

"What advice would you give to prospective customers/clients to help them enjoy the best results from your product/service?"

"Tell me a trade secret/insider tip that would help your ideal customer get more value out of your product/service?"

"What most excites you about the future for your business/industry?"

"What keeps you motivated and driven?"

"What worries you..."

Once you've finished the interview, save the file onto your computer, then send it off for transcription. Or you might have used a voice-to-text recorder, in which case save the draft.

You can use the Word document version of the transcript to shape your audio into sales copy.

The Edit

Now, as I said, you have two choices. You can give the transcript to a copywriter or you can edit it yourself.

Don't panic if your transcript is a total mess. Editing is a magic process that will bring the copy life. It will help you shape the transcript into something that's easy to read.

Follow this style guide...

- » Simplify the grammar and punctuation.
- » Vary the size of your paragraphs. Break up large chunks of text with single line paragraphs.
- » Stress important words using italics, underlining or bold font (but don't overdo this or you'll lose the effect).
- » Use sub-headlines to break up the copy. These act as mini-headlines throughout the promotion to grab the reader's eye if they're scanning through first. Use the recommended headline techniques.
- » Go through the copy and circle any uses of the word 'I'. See how many of them you can turn into 'you'. Instead of talking about your company, your products, your thoughts, see if you can flip that to what the customer might want, need or be feeling.
- » Use linking sentences to give it flow. For instance, 'Here are some examples'... 'let me show you what I mean'... 'Now, here is the next step'... 'But there is one thing more'.
- » Cut out any clichés. Clichés are familiar words have lost their power and meaning, becoming invisible and redundant. Examples include:
 - Kill two birds with one stone.
 - We're all in the same boat.
 - One stop shop.
 - Friendly, knowledgeable staff.
 - Quality products.
 - Lowest prices.
 - Conveniently located.
 - For all your ____ needs.

If you worry about your editing skills, then there are software programs that can help you.

Hemingway App

HemingwayApp.com

The author Ernest Hemingway was famous for his stripped-down writing style. He used short, simple sentences that got across his meaning as directly as possible. This free tool applies his principles to

your copy. It critiques it, then helps you edit it for readability.

You can also try...

Grammarly

Grammarly.com

You don't need to stick to official grammar when you're writing copy. It's more important that you sound conversational. However, if the grammar is often all over the place and making your copy difficult to read, then use this tool.

Unsuck It

Unsuck-it.com

This tool allows you to convert words that don't flow well in the copy (like business jargon) and replace it with fun words that do.

Once you've got a clean, readable piece of copy, you can now give it structure.

The Structure

This is a general guide to structuring a piece of long-form sales copy. Arrange your written content so that it runs along these lines.

Headline

An attention-grabbing headline should make a big promise. You will probably find this in your answer to one of the following:

"What problems do your product/service you solve?"

"What's the single most exciting benefit of this product/service?"

"What makes your product/service better than the competition."

The headline should tick at least one, but ideally two or three, of these criteria:

- » **Useful** – A headline should offer something useful to your customer. For instance, if you have a health product, then "The belt that helps you burn off belly fat" is an example of being useful. If you sell golf shoes, then something like, "Is this the most comfortable golf shoe ever?" would come into that category.
- » **Ultra-specific** – Where possible, use details. Rather than "Save money on a new car" write "Save £999 on a new Audi". Numbers, prices, dates, times, measurements and names bring a headline to life. They make what you're promising seem more real. If someone tells you the "offer ends at 12pm on Tuesday the 23rd" it sounds more

urgent than “offer must end soon”.

- » **Urgent** – Try and bring out a sense that the information is timely, and that it shouldn't be ignored, or left 'til later. This doesn't mean adding 'now' to every headline. It can be more subtle. The classic “What never to eat on an aeroplane” headline is urgent because you would want to know this before you ever flew, or before someone you cared for flew. Another classic “Are you making this mistake with your English?” is urgent because it's something you would want to find out before you suffered any further embarrassment or failure.
- » **Unique** – Try to bring out the uniqueness of a story, idea, message, product or event. “How our Manuka honey could protect you from MRSA” is a unique headline – whereas “How to protect yourself from MRSA” is something you might read or hear anywhere.

Recommended tool: Advance Marketing Institute Headline Analyser

Aminstitute.com/cgi-bin/headline.cgi

This copywriting tool allows you to check the EMV (emotional marketing value) of your headline. The higher the emotion, the better.

Salutation

A successful piece of sales copy must be personal and one-to-one. Address the reader as you would a friend or family member. If you can personalise the sales promotion, that would be ideal. If not, try “Dear Friend”, “Dear Reader”, or something related to your subject area, such as “Dear Frustrated Fisher”, or “Dear Investor”.

Lead

Make an instant connection with your reader's emotions in the opening few paragraphs. Usually a promotion takes one of two approaches:

- » **Fear** – It plays on negative experiences that the reader might have had, or fears about something that might happen. An example would be a pain-relief product that addresses the reader's experience of joint pain.
- » **Desire/Greed** – It plays on positive experiences the reader might have had, or a strong desire for something to happen in the future. An example might be a Buy-to-Let guide that plays on the reader's desire for financial independence.

Your lead can come from your answer to these

questions:

“What gave you the ideal/inspiration for this particular product/service?”

“What problems do your product/service you solve?”

“What's the single most exciting benefit of this product/service?”

“What makes your product/service better than the competition.”

Benefits

You've made a big promise in your headline and lead. Now break that down into 3-10 key benefits the reader is going to get. Make sure that these address the goals and fears of your customer, showing them specifically how the product can help.

Your answer to these could help..

“What problems do your product/service solve?”

“Tell me about the other benefits?”

Introduce Yourself

Introduce yourself, your business or product and why you're telling the reader about it. This is where your interview comes in useful.

“Tell me about your business...”

“How did you start the business?”

“Tell me about you and your background. What experiences, goals or problems led you to start the business?”

“What gave you the ideal/inspiration for this particular product/service?”

Proof

Back up your claims with some of the information you answered here.

“How has your product been received? Tell me about any great press coverage or comments from customers?”

“Tell me about any special results, trials, tests or statistics that back up your claims.”

Call to Action

The call to action is a direct request or command for the prospect to do something. Why should they act now and what should they do?

“Why is your offer so special?”

“Give me a good reason for someone to get this product right away?”

Risk-Reversal

Here is where you reassure the customer that their actions won't result in any risk. Tell them about the guarantee or money-back offer. Emphasise the ease of ordering, the speed of delivery and reassure that they'll be able to contact customer services at any point.

Testimonials

You can add some proof and reassurance by sharing feedback, case studies or stories from customers who have tried it, or other products you have sold in the past. This could also include any positive media coverage or quotes from experts, CEOs and influential people in your field of business.

Sum Up the Offer

Remind them of the big promise and list what they are going to get.

- » How is it going to be delivered? Download? Post? Live event? Email?
- » How soon can they have the product?
- » What, precisely, will be in the package? This could include bonuses, website access, customer service, email support, updates and other add-ons.
- » What kind of results can they expect and how soon?

Price

Make the price seem as good value as possible. You can do this by:

- » Comparing it against much more expensive offerings in the same field of business.
- » Totalling up the overall benefits and stressing how small a price this is to pay for such a valuable outcome.
- » Totalling up the value of all the component parts and bonuses so that the reader can see what they're saving.
- » Showing how low the price is by using real world examples, for instance, "for the price of a cup of coffee you'll get..." Or "for less than what it costs for a daily newspaper..."
- » Emphasising that if they don't get the required results they can have their money back.

Overcome Objections

Use your answer here to overcome objections:

"What are potential customers' most common objections and how do you answer them?"

Examples of objections you need to answer:

- » Who are you? / How can I trust you? / I'm worried you're a scamster.
- » I don't believe your claims / How do I know that you're telling me the truth?
- » What makes you qualified to offer this to me? / Why are you coming to me with this?
- » I've bought something like this before and it didn't work/I didn't like it.
- » I can't afford it / I can't take the financial risk.
- » If it's so great, why have I not heard of you/this service/product before.

Call to Action 2

Emphasize how to order. It doesn't matter that you've already done this earlier. Do it again. Spell out exactly what they need to do and remind them of the urgency, timeliness and benefits of taking action now.

Sign Off

Finish with your name and signature. Ideally, say something positive at the end.

"I look forward to helping you [achieve benefit]"

"I promise that you're going to love this!"

"Don't miss out on this!"

PS

A PS is a good way of catching a few more people and getting them to click on the order button. There are a few options:

- » Sum up the headline and the big promise you made at the beginning but in slightly different phrasing.
- » Add a final extra thought or benefit you've not mentioned yet.
- » Share another testimonial or piece of proof that backs up your claim.
- » Re-emphasis the urgency, particularly if this is time-limited or stock-limited.

Whatever you choose, always repeat the call to action and provide a link or order button.

Bottom Line

I've been a professional copywriter for 25 years and take it from me, it's never easy. So why bother with years of hard study or spending a small fortune on a freelance writer. Use this simple copy cheat technique to create attention-grabbing and sales generating marketing materials.