



Outrageous Offers, Perceived Value and Positioning with Trevor Toecracker Crook



Ever hear an offer so crazy it just might sell? Trevor Crook is as known for them as for his sales copy. In this podcast episode, he shares the thought behind the outrageousness and why it works.



Trevor "Toecracker" Crook

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. This is Episode 804, and today, we are talking about outrageous offers, perceived value and positioning with Trevor "Toecracker" Crook. Interesting name there, Trevor.

The origin of an odd name

Trevor: Thanks, James for having me on. Yes, it is. The Toecracker name actually came from a client back in 2000, when I was transitioning from my last year of being a commercial finance broker, and I was dabbling in this stuff called marketing. And I gave them literally a seven-second marketing tip, which wasn't my own, I'd learned it from somebody else, of course.

But by then implementing that tip, they went from an average overdraft debit of \$900,000 every day, to \$750,000 cash at bank within a year. So its, you know, \$1.65 million turnaround from that seven-second strategy and sort of verbally kicking them in the ass.

And then I got this testimonial a year later, saying, thanks for your toe cracker ways, we've done this, this and this. And I'd just started in copywriting, and I was like, I'm going to use that. And it's just sort of, it's stuck ever since, so I've used it ever since.

James: So two things on that, firstly, what was the tip?



Trevor: It was simple. Increase your prices 10 percent overnight, and 95 percent of your customers won't leave you.

James: Perfect.

Trevor: That was it.

James: Yeah, I'll actually agree with that.

Trevor: You know, most people are too afraid to do it. But when you know what your turnover is, your growth at 10 percent, there's no increased cost in that, is there? They go straight to your bottom line. So that's a real simple little tip for free money overnight.

When you get past the tough exterior...

James: And the second thing about that is, Toecracker, now, when you first meet you, you look like it could be quite an intimidating character. You've got tattoos, you've got a hard-sounding name, but then when you get to meet you, you realize you're actually a big friendly, cuddly bear, you know, like, super nice, but it seems that the people you've been coaching with your copywriting, you give them a direct feedback.

You're telling them what they need to know. And not necessarily just sort of catering to their ego or giving them false flattery. And that's probably producing some of the better copywriters, correct?

Trevor: Yeah, I would agree with that. I mean, you know, I show them the brutal honesty or the brutal love that they need. They know it's not personal. At the same time, I've had people say, "Wow, you can be such a nice guy." So I'm a nice guy. But I'm very direct about what needs to be done. They're not hiring me to hold their hand or take them on a date. They're hiring me to get results. At the end of the day, results count, reasons don't.

So yeah, now I'm fully two arms, full sleeve tattoos and especially when I've got that on in a bar with a beer and the chrome tip, the toe cracker shoes, yeah, I've been accused of being a hitman and all sorts of things before.

James: Well you do make drug money, but it's just through probably much kinder, and more ethical ways. You do like to travel a lot. This is just like the sort of introduction to Trevor. You travel a lot since you left the bank and the finance world. I was reading your bio. It was really interesting for a couple of reasons.

One is that you had a pretty straightlaced career, you know, coming through, you worked for a big bank in Australia, you are lending out money to seems like a lot of phishing type companies, probably maybe where your geographic area was sort of dictated that. And then you found this copywriting world, and then you travel a lot.

Would you write my bio?

And I've seen you at many, many conferences. I've met you outside of Australia, more than I've met you inside Australia, which is telling for both of us. But when I was reading your bio, the second thing that struck me was, it was a really compelling bio, where you've set out the scene of, you know, a little bit of where you came from, but your bio is like this, pretty much a proof magnet.

It's saying that you did this and you did that, and you did this and you did that. But each one of them has a really strong hook, sort of planting the seed for a customer to think, well, I would like that result, and I would like that result. Wow, this guy must know what he's doing.

So I did want to ask you if you professionally write people's bios for them, because the first selfish thought I had was, I should ask Trevor if he would help me write my bio. And the reason this is important, is because if you are any kind of coach, marketer, business agency, you're likely to be either participating on guest podcasts, Clubhouse, or social media, and those platforms generally require a compelling bio.

And I think that's one of the first offers that if you got to be outrageous, would actually bring you a lot more opportunity so that whatever your actual offer is, could be heard by more people, or the conversions would increase. Am I on track?

Trevor: Yeah, you're right. I mean, I did a podcast last week, and I'm doing yours. I'm going to do more. But I would agree, I mean, people have got to be interested, very quickly decide whether to have you on their show or speak at their event or, you know, hire you to be their coach or mentor or whatever. So yeah, you and I can talk privately. I don't do it for anybody else. But you could probably twist my arm, James, I'd do one for you.

James: I'll definitely do it, I'd have to twist pretty hard. Those arms, you've got big guns. But that's very kind. But the main thing is that device of your bio, it compels me to want to chat to you. It makes me feel very comfortable in your accomplishments. You've been on speaking stages, with really impressive people, you've written sales copy for some of the biggest events, even for billionaires, etc. So that's what we could do.

How to be outrageous with your offer and sales copies

In this episode, I want to focus on the outrageous offer part. It'd be great if by the end of this episode, someone listening to this would have a few tools in the toolbox, a few things they could go and tweak their offers with. Because this is, I think, the hardest thing online is coming up with an [offer that converts](#).

I'm constantly coaching students, you need to speak with a copywriter, you need to learn copywriting because this, what you've just shown me, is not going to convince anybody to buy what you're selling. And I think this is where people who are on a limited budget or just starting out are the weakest at, and they're basically not going to have any hope of getting further down the path. Because they're not going to have funds to hire team, they're not going to have funds to advertise after the first batches run out, because they're taking people to an offer that just won't work.

So what would be your go-to grab bag, the little toolkit that you would operate on a new starting out person or someone who's got a weak or flat offer that you could punch it up a little bit?

Trevor: Good question. You can make a lot of really crazy, outrageous offers based on guaranteeing your product or service. Now, I know you clearly know this, but for the people who don't, I mean, you've got to [know your numbers](#) and your business, guarantees the risk reversal.



But when you look at everything that you've done in the past for your past customers, and know that you haven't had a whole bunch of refunds or complaints, you can make a really, really crazy offer by a guarantee. I'll give you one example from a real estate agent many years ago in Sydney's Darling Harbour, and her problem was getting in front of the home seller. Right? In other words, she struggled to secure the consultation.

But she said when I do, I'll convert, I'll sign nine out of 10. I said, all right, so I wrote a two-page letter, obviously with some decent copy, and guaranteed the appointment. Basically, it's Mr. and Mrs. Home Seller, if you let me come around to your home, bring you morning or afternoon tea and explain why you should give me a listing, if you think I'm full of crap at the end of it, I'll go and turn the dollars out of my own pocket for wasting your valuable time.

And I've used that in many, many spin-offs, that sort of way. You know, I love looking at people's numbers, and then coming up with a crazy guarantee, outrageous offer, which shocks them and frightens them. And when I do that, when they're frightened, I know it's going to be a home run.

James: I have heard radio ads for a mortgage lender or a broker and they say, "Look, if you speak with us, and we can't beat your current home loan, then we'll give you \$100 for your time." That seems very compelling. It does seem like there's no real risk for the customer. They're either going to get a better offer than what they've got, or \$100. So I can see how that might be effective.

Why more people don't do it

What do you think stops people using those offers? They seem like they would be a good idea. There must be a barrier to it, because not everyone's doing it.

Trevor: The barrier that I see is people are fearful that everyone's going to rip them off. Right? Everyone's just going to secure the appointment and then claim the money. And I go, 'Well, firstly, the numbers you've told me, your numbers, so unless you're lying to me, it's not going to happen.' And secondly, look at the percentage of people in the world that are behind bars compared to the people that are not behind bars. Right?

So if everyone is going to rip you off, it'd be the other way around, so it's not going to bite you on the ass. The only way it will is if your product or your service sucks. Other than that, go for it. And so it's been a challenge, you know, certain clients to get them to do that. But when they do, it's like, well, why didn't I do that sooner?

I even had a guy that was selling the old rent-to-buy market in Australia. And, you know, I asked him lots of questions and probed him just, you know, to find out the nuts and bolts, and I wrote a free report. But ultimately, everything was in the headline and the subhead. I guaranteed the house. In other words, if you get a house through me, you've got 60 days to decide if that house is for you.

By that I mean, back up the furniture truck, unpack, put everything in its place, hang your pictures up, enjoy a barbecue. If within 60 days, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And they had no risk because no one that ever got emotionally attached to the house and decided 60 days later, they didn't. Right. So I get a kick out of coming out with those sort of offers for clients.

James: I remember writing an offer similar to that, for the motor dealership, when I was studying about risk reversal. And I had this outrageous guarantee. Because one of the problems we had is people were hesitant to place a deposit. Some people try and cancel it, or they keep shopping after they place an order. People who buy cars sometimes can be a bit naughty. I know there's a bad reputation for car sellers. But car buyers sort of slip into, I-don't-care mode because they're dealing with the enemy.

And I could not get it past management, no one would go for it, they were too conservative. So I guess the type of person listening to this episode probably has a lot more control over their business and their marketing. And they could test having that kind of an offer and see.

Has it ever gone terribly wrong?

I am curious, have you ever had someone roll it out, and it was just a catastrophe?

Trevor: No, I never have.

James: Not once? In all those years?

Trevor: Not once. No.

James: Isn't that interesting. So it's probably a pretty minimal risk. I love your distinction of the amount of people behind bars and not behind bars. And I presume you're talking about prison, and not where you drink. Because that ratio will be very different, I imagine.

Trevor: True. And, you know, I have had one particular client sit on the offer for weeks. Now at the time I wrote this, I thought they were old. But I'm the same age now. So they're actually young. Right? And they had a picture framing business. And they had run a typical, you know, a quarter page, Yellow Pages ad, broke even, never mailed their database at all, you know, usual mistake of business owners, not to keep in contact with the people who have given them money in the first place.

And so again, I asked questions and looked at this and looked at that. And I remember an offer that was in Dan Kennedy's Magnetic Marketing, which was copyright-free. And it was basically sending out a letter, giving the reason why you're doing this crazy deal, and all you have to do is bring in the letter and exchange it for something of value in the business, whatever value you put on it.

And in their case, it was, I think, \$50, and, I mean, they agreed with me, they paid me, they printed the letter off, did everything except mail it. And they had a database of 1776 people at the time, you know, their existing database, which they had never mailed to since they'd purchased. And they were doing the math, let's call it 1800, wow - 1800 people times \$50, 90 grand, we're going to go out of business.

And I said, well, firstly, only a small percentage is going to take up the offer. We've got an expiration date of seven days, from when they received it, clearly stamped in red. And we've delivered it to the first 67 people. So I won't go into the expletives that I used, but you can imagine what I said, and I left with, if it doesn't work, I'll give you your money back, and I'll pay the postage. Just effing do it. And so the letters went out.

Now, basically, this was \$50, you could take that letter into their picture framing store. They did a lot of, you know, really cool sporting memorabilia apart from the wedding frames, and all that sort of stuff and family portraits. And well, first of all, they called me when 67 people had bought the letter in. I said, just keep rolling it out. They ended up getting 167 people, brought that letter in by the expiration day. And how many people do you think just took the freebie and left the business?

James: Probably none.

Trevor: Exactly, zero. They got \$43,000 in net profit just from letter one, let alone mine and letter two and letter three. But they were hesitant initially because they were just looking at the math wrong. And then about three years later, I came across another picture framer in Sydney, because that one was in Brisbane, and I told him about the success. And I said, "Well, I've got the letters." He expected the rate to be cheaper. Because they'd already proven it.

All they had to do was change the name and the contacts. I said, "Mate, it should be more expensive, because I know the results you're going to get, but I'll charge you the same price." So I changed the contact name, phone numbers, email, and it worked equally as well for him.

James: That's so good.

Trevor: But again, that's just looking at your business, looking at your numbers, because the numbers are so important.

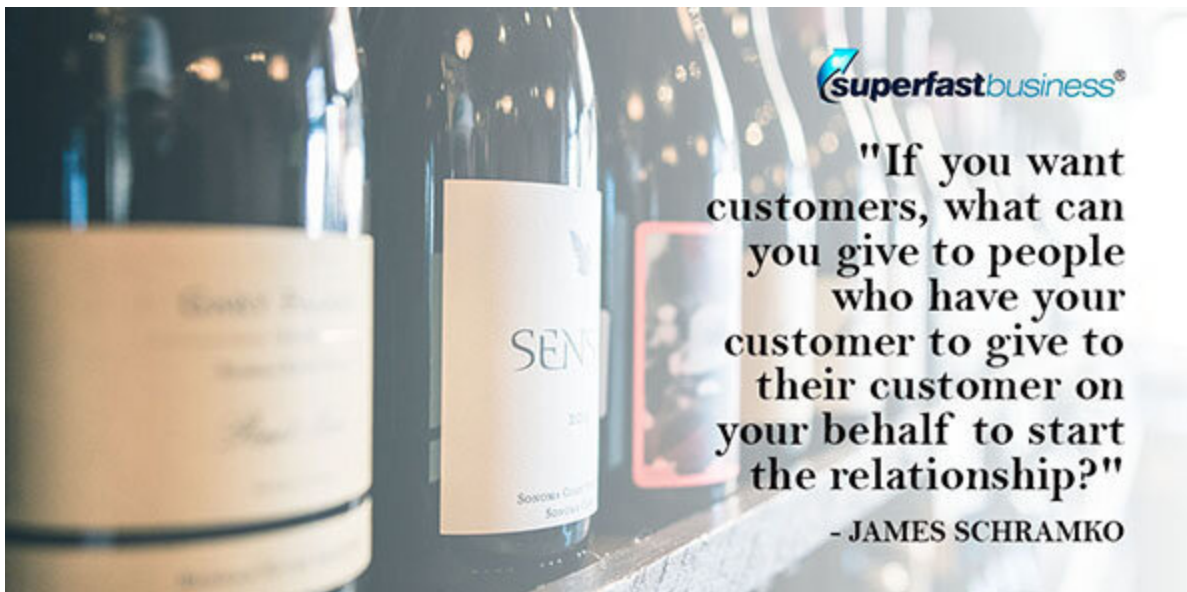
James: When we opened a new dealership, I did a key ring exchange. I got a couple of thousand key rings made. They were like \$8 or \$9 each. And we let the customers know, come and pick up your new keyring. And we had over 1000 people come in on just a weekend.

I did a Jeff Walker Product Launch Formula in the Mercedes-Benz dealership. This is when I still had a job as a general manager. We also did a direct response letter in the PS. It was like, bring this letter in. And with any purchase of a vehicle, you get a case of red wine, and you know, a particular Penfolds or something, it was nice. And I think we got, I'd have to look it up, we got over a dozen letters handed in with a purchase.

So we sold 12 cars at an average of \$85,000 each off this direct response campaign to the database we already had. So I'm a huge fan of this. We also used to give everyone who purchased a Mercedes-Benz an \$800 gift voucher for the local photography studio to redeem on whatever they wanted. And they always made more sales.

Once that agency had the customer, they would get them in the next year for the family photo update and the next year, and they'd order bigger sizes and extra frames. They were making a motzer from it. And we also used to send them a restaurant coupon for the local restaurant. This high-end restaurant was called Rocket, I think. And we'd give them this voucher, they could go and spend it in the restaurant, no strings attached.

And it was like, the restaurant was acquiring Mercedes-Benz customers every month, like 50, 60 new customers a month coming in the door. So big, big lesson here. This is a really actionable episode, Trevor. You're breaking the ground for us here. And you're reminding me of things I've already done that I'd forgotten about. And what I'm saying is this really does work.



Think about what you can give away and how you can get people to come and visit you. Think about how, if you want customers, what can you give to people who have your customer to give to their customer on your behalf to start the relationship? This is great. What other outrageous offer techniques have you got?

The restaurant and the florist

Trevor: Well, actually, I like the fact that you mentioned the PS about the wine. I'm a big fan of the PS, right?

James: I thought you were going to say a big fan of the wine. I know that.

Trevor: I'm a big fan of wine for sure. But the restaurant was one of the things I'd left off my list. You reminded me as well. So back in, must be two thousand and, it must have been about 2003, 2004. I was hired to do a Valentine's Day promotion for this restaurateur in the western suburbs of Sydney. And he'd just boarded an industrial sort of a state, so not the most prime place for a restaurant, let alone romantic dinner on Valentine's Day.

And he was doing the typical, you know, special meal for x and get a glass of wine or whatever bottle of wine maybe. And I'm just chatting away. It's like, you know, do you know a florist, do you know a massage therapist, somebody you could get through some sort of deal? And he's like, 'Yeah, I know a wholesale florist.'

Now, you and I both know what a dozen long-stemmed red roses cost on Valentine's Day, right? Not cheap. I said, 'Find out how much you can get them for.' And I didn't tell him exactly what I was thinking about. And he calls me back. And he said, "I can get them for \$15." Right. So his initial menu was \$45 per head. So I put \$15 per head each side, I think I made it &59. So instead of getting 90 bucks, he got his 108 bucks.

Everyone that came in, the guy was given a dozen long-stemmed red roses to give to his girl. All right, so create an ad around that, and send a few fliers out. And he didn't keep his numbers. All he said was, I could have filled the restaurant for fourfold that night, worked gangbusters. And then a few months later, he approached me about, he said, "Look, Sunday nights are the quietest night of the week. And like a lot of restaurateurs, they'll close their business on the quiet night of the week.

And so I said, "Well, can you still get the flowers from your mate?" And he's like, yeah. And I said, you are going to have an every Sunday night is Mother's Day, in your restaurant. Wrote the copy, two-page letter, got all descriptive, all the normal stuff you'd put in the copy, made him the romance director, etc, etc. And it was basically, if they came in, the server would take the kids out the back and come and give mom a retail bunch of flowers worth 50 bucks, which cost him about eight. Right?

And it just worked gangbusters. The letters, I still look at the letter and go, sh*t, I really liked that letter, you know? But it just changed his business around. He was going to close on the night. He still had his contact, it's perceived value. And it was a talking point for people as well. The letter was sort of modeled off something that Dan had done in his Magnetic Marketing.

Again, it was like, copyright sort of free letter. And I liked that. I modeled it to him. I just needed the woman, the letters went out, delivered in a pink envelope, a confidential letter to the husband of the household, knowing that she was the target. She reads the letter. And she's like, we're going there on Sunday night, it was perfect targeting. It's so easy to be modeled from anyone in a restaurant business.

Putting a price on a free report

And then, what I've done a lot between pool companies, termite businesses, people offering heat leakage and heating and insulation, like business to consumer, instead of them doing the old quote, right, there's so many people will offer you a free quote, who gives a sh*t about a free quote? Right?

So the first time I used this was in my own business. Back when I was a broker, I didn't have a clue what I was doing. And this is what spun all these variations in many industries since I did that. So in 1999, I'd been a commercial broker, I was in my fourth year. And I was very good at being able to screw a bank manager on interest rates through an existing client, I walk them out the door. But the first three, almost four years it was just success fees.

And somehow I had a clue about well, why do this report for free? Let's charge for it. And I bought a business partner on board. And we couldn't call it a finance audit, because not an audit yet legally so I called it a finance investigation report. And so we went sort of from day one, from zero to charging \$750 for this report, low, put the toe in the water. And interestingly enough, people would pay it, and then I'd get to do the finance and make the big fees.

And after two weeks, I said to my business partner, I said, I think we're too low. Let's double it to \$1500. And he was a bit nervous and I said, worst case, we drop it back to \$1000. Got an even better response. So Einstein here goes, two weeks later, let's make it three grand. And he was absolutely against it. But I said, "Really, Brett, it's my business. I bought you in here. We're doing it." And we got an even better response. I was dealing with clients that you know, million dollar plus loan facilities.

And so from my previous banking experience, I could tell them what they're worth in the marketplace, how much the bank was ripping them off, all that sort of stuff. And I used to do the report for free, knowing I'd get the work. Well now I'm getting paid and getting the work. And depending on how much the shock value was, if they wanted me to then negotiate with their bank manager, which I really enjoyed, and 99 percent of the time they did, I wouldn't make the bank offer. So a mafia offer.

I would walk in, suited up, show them the report, they knew I had complete authority to act for their client. And I would just say, "Mr. bank manager, this is how much you're ripping our clients off, and you have five business days to give me what I want, or I walk your client out the door. There is no day six, thank you very much." And I would leave. And seeing fear on a bank manager's face was a lot of fun.

Only one guy tried to bluff me after day five, and I just walked his \$5 million client out the door. But that was where I started doing this sort of, well, I can charge for this what I was doing for free. So anyone that's doing a quote as an example, you call it some sort of name. So I had this client in Ireland that was in the heating and insulation business. So instead of doing quotes, I came up with a heat leakage and inspection report and put a value on it.

I got him to change his quote forms around to reflect such a report, and he owned the market. And I've done that for several termite guys. I've done it for pool guys. I've done it for landscapers, you name it. And every time they've done it, they just get to dominate their industry at their price and no longer competing on price. So in effect it's an outrageous offer, just to go and give a quote, but we're not calling them a quote.

James: I did an interesting experiment with my SEO business after attending I Love Marketing. I was chatting to [Dean Jackson](#), and I was offering a free website check. And then we charged for it. And what we found was, we reduced the number of checks we were doing, we increased the number of actual sales that we made. And we did this thing where we would give people a credit of the amount they'd spent on the website check towards anything they purchased.

Have you ever used something like that way? Like, I'm thinking someone listening to this could very well be a Facebook ad agency or an SEO agency, or a website agency. We have a lot of online marketers. How can they use a consult/paid thing? Because obviously rife in their industry is this, what do they call it, a free consult or a strategy session. I hate those things. I don't do those things.

Proceed with us, and we give you back the fee

I love the idea of getting paid. But do you see the leverage in that? I'll give you an example. When people buy a product from one of my front end products, they get an email autoresponder with a voucher, a coupon voucher that's actually in excess of what they paid for the product to use against my next product. And I've been racking up the claims. Like, they keep claiming it. And like, I call this technique, greeding.

But that's just my sort of description. It's taking advantage of the human nature to want to collect on this windfall they have, and seems to work well. Did you ever offer the consult, like the \$3,000 as a credit against anything they purchased, or no need?

Trevor: I didn't need to from my banking days because I mean, I knew what I was doing. However, I could have easily said, 'If you want me to renegotiate with your bank manager or take you to another bank, no, don't get what I say I'll get for you. I'll give you the \$3,000 back,' or, you know, there's so many ways of doing it.

The landscaping business that I'm involved in with Barry Randall who you met with a lot of our clients, they weren't charging design fees. They are now. They're going, 'Holy sh*t, you're going to actually charge for a design fee?' And so in there, they say, "Look, if you proceed, we'll credit the £3000 against the landscaping project." So it does work very well.

James: Right. So the idea here is, if you're currently doing a service or a front end that's free, consider getting paid for that. And then use an outrageous guarantee where you might give it back. So it sounds to me like they wouldn't actually be in any worse situation than they are currently today, if they're doing it for free. The worst scenario is someone pays them and then they give it back. The ideal scenario is they pay them and they make a lot more sales with better customers.

Proof, positioning, and higher pricing

I guess a possible scenario is they just get less people coming to them or paying for them, but then they might need to work on other elements of their marketing to position better. And it probably is worth us talking about positioning a little bit. You've already covered it a little bit, because we're the person who's charging for our service. And we're charging more. And I have some sort of evidence to suggest that because of where I came from at Mercedes-Benz, some people want it to be more expensive than what else is out there, or they're not interested in it. Have you seen that before?

Trevor: Oh, absolutely. You know, I mean, it's like, I've said this on many calls with various people I've spoken to and my own clients, it's like, I could quote 50,000 for a project and some other copywriter will quote five, and I'll win. Right? Because even my actual proposal, I have a proposal for copywriting, which even though, I don't write copy for clients anymore, I get one of my writers to do it. And there's a proposal for mentoring.

And the mentoring closes at 95 percent. And the copywriting closes around 90. It's all in the positioning and the proof. The proof covers around half of a 28-page proposal format. But by the time they get to my price, I mean, they'd be stupid not to say yes. And I'm not cheap.

James: So that's really something where I see is very weak. A lot of the offers that I look at, there's not even one testimonial or not one example of anyone they've worked for. So there's nothing for me to gauge if they're any good at this or not, or anyone else has got a result from them. And you just said half of a 28-page, there's a big clue there, maybe long-form sales letters aren't dead, as the popular rumor is, and half of it's proof.

And I will say that's what was compelling about your bio, it's hey, look, judge me by the success of my customers, you know? And here's what they achieved. And it's really compelling. So that's good positioning.

Trevor: Yeah, look, you know, it's on the to-do list, you know, the old create list, I hate to-do lists, but I'm actually coming out with a product just on proposals. Why? Because I've been using this format since 2011 very, very well. The mentoring clients, whether they're copywriters or consultants, the first thing I do is say, you're going to model this. And it's very easy for me then to double their fees in three months, because they follow the proven formula and the positioning.

So after that, about 18 months ago, they let me try this in some other industries, you know, some business to consumer, non-copywriter consultants, and see whether I'm full of sh*t or not. And guess what? Seems I'm not. And one guy I was mentoring as a copywriter for many years, him and his wife have a separate business in sort of the home building sector. And he was telling me that, "Oh, you know, can we talk about this business today? Because our conversions are a little bit light on."

And I was, yeah, yeah. I said, "Have you done a proposal like mine, like you did for your own copywriting business? And he's like, "Oh, sh*t, I hadn't thought of that. I'll get to it." Call ended. He increased conversions 260 percent in 90 days, no increase in leads, just better conversions, by having the proof and the positioning.

The things you must have in a good proposal

James: What would be the essential elements that should be in a proposal?

Trevor: Well, for me, you've had a call with somebody. Obviously, you should be listening and taking notes and understanding what them hiring you makes possible in their life. So you use that to your advantage in terms of the copy. So I use that in the headline.

James: So basically the dream transition, the result they're going to get that's specific to them based on the data you collected in the first discussion.

Trevor: Correct. And then, you know, there's obviously the typical bit of stuff that's going to resonate with them, then I get straight into the proof. The initial part of the proof in mine is about 10 pages long. Then I get to the offer. But this time, it's like, I honestly can't go, 'Heck, I want some of that.' I've missed my mark. I only have one actual testimonial in there. And then I get to the offer, justify the pricing, expiration date. And then I just have PS.

And there's another whole eight or nine pages just off testimonials. That's not all of them, that's just the best ones. And everyone who's modeled that formula is just getting crazy results. The best one was a guy in the alternate health industry area, Bernard Fong, he went from a 15 percent close rate to well, 400 percent of his close rate in just over three months. He went 15 percent to 60 percent.

James: Wow. It's interesting you separate testimonial from proof. So what kind of proof can we use?

Trevor: I do what I call snapshot case studies. So just two, three maximum, preferably two paragraphs of written sort of in the third person, almost like an editorial or advertorial. Just get to the nuts and bolts. Because case studies, I mean, over the years, a lot of people have really doubted many testimonials. You know, there's fake ones, people do them on Fiverr and stuff like that.

James: Yeah. I don't rate testimonials anywhere near as much as case studies. I mean, if you're a regular listener of this show, which is a high chance, since we have so many episodes, this podcast is just dripping with case studies. Because nothing sells better than a student of mine telling their story where they were, and where they are now, and how I was involved in that. That's what sells SuperFastBusiness. I don't really need to be a great salesman.

Even though I probably am, if I were to speak to people on the phone with my background, I'm very compelling. However, the case studies do the heavy lifting. And then it's just a matter of if someone feels like they are similar to the case study, if they feel this is relevant to them, and they could put themselves into that story, and they would like the same result.

Why you want a good mix of case studies

And something that I've had a lot of success with is I've done a lot of unremarkable case studies. And I know it's counterintuitive, but I think in my sort of world, a lot of people are talking about \$10 million a year and \$50 million. Like, it just seems so far out there. I know a lot of people listening to this episode would be really happy to make an extra \$10,000 online, or an extra \$100,000 a year would make a big difference in their life, you know? Or to go from 500,000 to a million dollars would be life-changing.

So I put a lot of regular people case studies. And I think that's attracted me the perfect sort of client who I like to work with. I'd love it if you could speak to that.

Trevor: It's very smart, because I have a similar thin. I have a lot of big stuff, but I have stuff there for a little Aussie battler or the little guy in business, who - or let's say someone that's never cracked 100 grand a year. If everything's, you know, 500,000, a million, 2 million, they're going to think, no I can't do this. It's too far fetched for them. So I totally agree, you've sort of got a, I'll say, dumb it down's not really the right word, or the right saying, but you've got...

James: How about I have a good representation of case studies?

Trevor: Yeah, a good mix. You know, because I've had people, if it's just a copywriting testimony, who struggled and then all of a sudden, you know, they picked up a \$3,000 deal to write a two-page letter in a week, you know, some people have never done that. So that's huge. So yeah, have your little stuff, and have your big stuff, and get the right balance in there.

And if I'm doing like, for the stuff that I'm doing with Barry and our landscaping clients, well, then I'm careful which case study I put in there, so it's more relevant to them. Because I've helped lawn mowing companies and maintenance, you know, that type of stuff. So I'm going to make it relevant that they can resonate with that.

James: And it's good to find out, you know, I do, find out from the business owner, what is their perfect customer? And then we say, well, let's get more of those. And we try and build case studies around that. I'm wondering, in your case study snapshots, do you have a framework that you use for it?

Trevor: There probably is, but it's all in my head.

James: Is it something like, you know, once I was lost, now I'm found or is it, here's where I was, here's the problems that caused, this is what I did, and this is my results now, or is it in a different order?

Trevor: Yeah, it's fairly simple. Like, you know, when so and so was looking to increase sales or, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, you know, and they might have tried somebody else or tried some sort of strategy that didn't work. And then bang! This is the results, and you know, they found the man, they found the writer, they found the whatever.

James: And it's suddenly clicked, and amazing outcome.

Trevor: Yeah. You know, like I did one where it was like, when a company was trying to raise four million dollars on the Australian Stock Exchange. They tried all sorts of advertising and marketing, including mailing their own investor list, and they got zero results. They then hired a copywriter who wrote a two-page letter for them, and mailed the existing database. And they were oversubscribed at \$4 million, they found the copywriter. That's a true case. That's something I did, the two-page letter.

James: I saw one other one. I still remember it even though I read it a while back, it was something like a customer spent \$1650 on a sales page that generated over \$200,000 on the first mailing. Something like that. That's like, it's a very clear cut win, like, it makes you think, gosh, I would like a result like that. I would spend \$1650 to make \$200,000 back, who wouldn't? That's a good bet.



Trevor: Yeah, look, it is. What I like about the case studies as well, and I know we might be beginning to push for time, but is that a lot of people, they don't have the testimonials or they don't get outcome testimonies, but they know the outcome or they know the result. Well, then you can write a case study about it. You don't even necessarily have to use the client's name. It's just the way you write it.

And I'm actually doing a little video on this for someone else's group the other day, because I said, "Why don't you just do a snapshot case study?" And they go, "What the hell is that?" So yeah. I had one client, we ended up doing, I got one of my writers to do 40 case studies for their financial advisor business. And, you know, it's a very powerful document for them.

James: This is a common theme. [We've had a case study expert on this show.](#) I've just hired someone who went out and interviewed my customers, and then built case studies to go as chapters in my membership book. So these are successful membership scenarios. And they're just real people with real stories. And they're indisputable, you know? They're verifiable, people call the customer and ask, 'Is this the case?' And they say, yes.

It just shoots down objections. That reduces the risk. I'll be kind to your time, I know, I'm enjoying what is possibly the most Aussie podcast episode we've ever done, like you're literally there with the sun in your face and a barbecue behind you. But you're not in Australia right now, are you?

Trevor: No, I'm in Costa Rica. And I just got my temporary residency for Panama. So I'm back to Panama after a year in a couple of weeks.

James: We'll both transcribe this episode. And we may put translations in there. We'll reference what "bite me in the ass" means, etc. But I'm certainly enjoying this. Hopefully, this feels like you're visiting home for you too, Trevor.

Trevor: I am. Yes, I'm enjoying it.

James: Although I'm not as Australian-sounding as other Aussies, apparently. I get asked by locals here where I'm from.

And I think it's because I speak to people from the USA and the UK. And I try and have a slightly neutral accent to make it easier for people to understand me, but I know my team are going to send me some messages in [Slack](#) and say, "Boss, what does this mean?" Or, "What is Trevor saying here?" It's always a bit of fun to get the mix that we have.

How to start when you haven't got case studies

So case studies are a big win. That's a really easy thing to add in. But what if we're brand new and we don't have case studies or lashings of them that represent the types of customers we want? What's our starting technique?

Trevor: Yeah, good question. I've been through this recently, with a couple of people who sort of haven't really done much in the copywriting world. They're quite brand new. And I just say, "Look, you might not have written copy for somebody. But based on the knowledge that you have, have you shared some knowledge with some person, somebody, even though you didn't get paid, and you know they did something with it and got some results? And it's usually a yes.

So I say, "All right. Well, let's write a case study about that. And then perhaps if someone's come from working for somebody, so they work for a job, now they're going out in the big wide world on their own, put the big boy pants on. Well think about what you did in paid employment, a sort of a result you might have gotten in that capacity. You can still write a case study about it because you did it.

James: I've done it. You know, I was the number one Mercedes-Benz salesperson in the whole of Australia, at one point, in my first 12 months in the job, and I definitely feel that's super relevant for customers who want me to help them make more sales, you know? That's actually well within my wheelhouse. So yes, I think that's great.

So the technique is, put an X-ray over your past and find examples. You're probably blind to it. A lot of people are blind to their unique talent, right? It's what people come to them for, what they are constantly helping people with that they don't even recognize as a superpower.

And a classic example of that is when I did an [Ask method](#) survey of my own audience. A big challenge that came up for most people was building team. And I didn't even have a section in my forum, which had been around for about eight years, for team, because I'm like, doesn't everyone know how to hire people and train them and run them? Apparently not.

Trevor: They're clueless in Seattle.

James: In your industry, you might be the rare exception that has built some scale where you're not on the tools yourself. I've seen it before with [Kevin Rogers](#), helped him build out CopyChief.

Wrapping up the episode

You sound like you're coaching other copywriters as well. Why don't you tell us a bit about what Trevor "Toecracker" Crook is up to? You've got a website. It's a very unusual name, smof, S-M-O-F-O.com. This is your opportunity, Trevor.

Trevor: It's built for serious mofos.

James: I like it. I like a short brandable domain. I'm glad it's not a codename for Smurf or something.

Trevor: No, and there's actually a really cool report on that about the million dollar lobster fisherman guide, which is another outrageous offer, so it's well worth the read. Yeah, look, I mostly mentor, have mostly mentored since 2010. And a few names, the copywriters that people would know, I was their original mentor. you know, Brian Cassingena, Pauline Longdon, a few other people like that.

I mentor business people as well. Because in the finance days, I interviewed at least 10,000 business owners, pulled apart around 35,000 sets of financials, so I know how to pull a business apart and put it back together and then combine the copy and the marketing stuff.

But you know, someone asked me recently, do you find it's work? And I was like, no, because actually, you're changing people's lives. I don't consider it work. I get paid to do something I enjoy doing, you know? Very well. As you said, it's almost like drug money, but legal.

James: Especially in the countries you're currently living in. One has to be careful.

Trevor: Well, I did get detained at Costa Rican airport several years ago for mistakenly being a drug mule. But that's a whole other story. I just had coffee in my bag.

James: Well actually, you're not allowed to take coffee to some countries. I think it's not allowed to be brought to the Philippines, for example. I have to be careful with that.

Trevor: Yeah, it's all changed. This was 2016. So predominantly these days, yeah, like I've got my group mentoring stuff, copywriters, and, you know, it's nothing more pleasing and taking a copywriter who's struggled for so long as an example. And just unf*cking their mind, sharpening their copy skills, getting their proposal together, and all of a sudden, you know, they're doubling their fees in three months. And life is good.

So that's sort of pretty much what I'm up to. And I get to do it living the international lifestyle, which I've done since April 2006.

James: Yeah, I can attest to that.

Trevor: So that's pretty much me. And, you know, I mean, this week, there's this place for a week, and then next week, I'm back in Tamarindo. And then I'll be back in Panama. So now I've got an apartment on the Caribbean. Yeah, literally built above the water in the Caribbean. And I've got a beachfront place in the Mediterranean. I rent both of them, but you know, I can flip between the two. I can do my business anywhere like that.

And obviously, you know, I do a few events. And I had that big event a couple of years ago with [Drayton Bird](#), and [John Carlton](#) and [Caleb O'Dowd](#), etc, etc. So that's pretty much what I'm about.

James: I love it. I appreciate how generous you've been. I feel like we have stayed on the topic here. We've come up with some outrageous offers. We've talked about guarantees, risk reversal, coupons, gift promotions. We've talked about raising your prices, positioning yourself as a more desirable offer in the market. We've covered perceived value by way of those topics as well. And we've learned a little bit more about Trevor.

If you've listened to this episode, and you love it, let us know. Leave a review on whatever platform you're using. Get in touch with Trevor, follow him. Are you on the social media, Trevor?

Trevor: Yes. Instagram is this one, @theinternationallifestyle. And there's the other business card, Income without Borders, and my free group, Beers, Bourbon and Business on Facebook.

James: Right? Well, you know, I've always appreciated your sage comments, you know, when I do sometimes log into social media. You're often there with cheeky comments and support. You're a tremendous fellow. I appreciate you coming and sharing this stuff. Your website is smofo.com. We'll probably get you back if we get some more questions.

If you got questions for the toe cracker, let me know. I'll see if we can get him back. Drag him away from his international activities. And thank you so much.

Trevor: Mate, it's been an honor to be on. Now it's time, I'm actually going for some cooking lessons now. One of my friends, he's come to give cooking lessons over Costa Rican food and have a few wines and watch the sunset. So thanks for having me on.

James: That sounds unbearable. Good luck. I hope you can get through it.

Trevor: Oh, I might. I'm not sure if I can go. I'll pull through.

James: This is Episode 804, SuperFastBusiness.com. We'll have a full transcription and possibly a translation available at SuperFastBusiness.com. Thanks, Trev.

Trevor: Thanks, James.



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