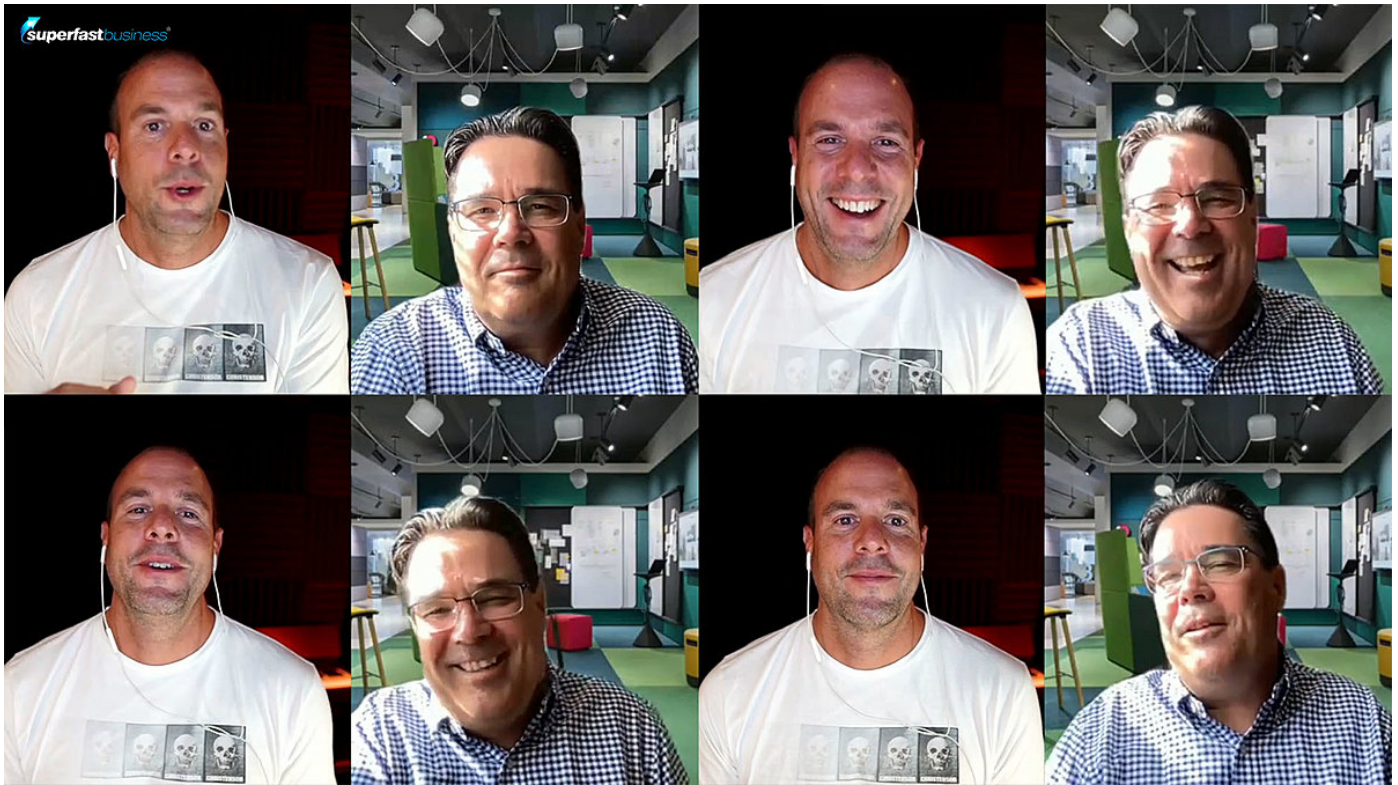




# The Surprising Importance of Ad Writing Research and Editing with Bond Halbert



Copywriter Bond Halbert learned from legend Gary Halbert. He now teaches the crucial importance of good research and smart editing to effective copy.



**James Schramko and Bond Halbert**

**James:** James Schramko here, and in this episode 827 of SuperFastBusiness, I'm chatting with my good friend and ad writing/copywriting legend, Bond Halbert, son of Gary Halbert. We're going to be talking about how to research for writing good ads, how to edit good ads; we're talking about why you may not want to follow your most famous influencer out there. We'll also discuss frameworks you can use and how you need to be aware of where someone is at in the buying phase, or else your message could fall completely flat.

There are also some other little great discussions within this discussion, why you should own your own domain name, how I got into SEO in the beginning of my career, and a whole bunch of other stuff. Bond has been on a previous episode. In fact, in 2010, [Bond was on an episode](#) where I recorded a video with him at [John Carlton's](#) Action Seminar, the very first time I met him by sitting next to him at the event.

And also, he came back for [Episode 502](#), where we talked about how to edit your sales copy, because no one's talking about that. Enjoy this episode. It's a great opportunity to get some deep insights from an industry veteran. So without further ado, let's have a chat to Bond Halbert.

Welcome back, Bond. This is not your first episode.

**Bond:** I guess, and I hope it's not going to be my last. I love talking with you. You are one of those people who gives me advice and I follow it to a tee, to the best I can.

**James:** Thank you. We had a special guest on, recently, [Trevor Toecracker Crook](#), and he was a very popular guest, and you shared that episode in your Facebook group, and there was a big discussion, and I said, Bond, we have to catch up again. Because you're always into interesting things. You go through these iterations every few years, you're into something slightly different, but always based around the foundations, and that's what I love.

### **For those who don't know Bond and his roots**

You've got the Halbert foundations. For new listeners, they may not be aware of your family history. I might let you just share that, because I know that's actually a real sweet spot for you, and it's one thing I love about interacting with you, is how important family is through what I see your father and your son; you're doing this multi-generational sharing, and as someone who is a parent, I can appreciate that.

So why don't you just give us the theme as to where Bond Halbert sits in the marketing or direct response ecosystem from a lineage perspective?

**Bond:** Well, to be quite frank and honest, my dad was arguably one of the best copywriters in history. And that's because he wrote more winners in more niches, selling to more different types of prospects. It's something that'd be a very hard thing to accomplish nowadays, because if you want to sell in finance, or supplements, or heraldry, or anything like that, you would be up against people who spent 20 years studying that market.

So he was doing that in the heyday, but he also had a greater effect on more copywriting careers. And I grew up, a lot of people, they thought, you know, maybe I just kind of grew up as Gary's kid. But he wrote a famous series of letters to me, which proved that he was teaching me seriously early on about how to be a good direct response marketer. And all of his protégés kind of got, you know, a spec; we all got the same training, but we all ended up specializing in one area, like strategy or salesmanship or something.

And mine was kind of the big idea. And then, after he had passed, my brother and I kind of picked up the torch and carried the mantle. And what we've specialized in doing was taking the foundations you're talking about, and applying them in new ways, in stuff that our father never did, because he wasn't around to see the new technologies, the new social media and other things that were going to blow up the way they did, and apply and discover new techniques, because he really kind of taught us how to think.

And what I'm doing now is, you would ask me what I was passionate about. And the truth of the matter is, I'm very passionate about teaching copywriting, because I was one of the first protégés. So I not only saw how he was teaching, and I try and solve, and come up with ways to teach people better ways to write better ads, to create better marketing, and to do it faster, so that they can learn faster and make that learning curve shorter.

And I followed some of your advice recently, we could talk about that, but one of the things that I do is I bring my daughter and my son both into it. My son is working on his first product. It's an info product, of course, and in the world, and I'm training my daughter all about copywriting and about direct response marketing. So, everybody, like, really wanted to focus in on the copy thing, or thinks that I focus in on the copy thing.

The truth is, I focus in on the messaging, you know, matching the offer with the market, coming up with some sort of unique mechanism too and unique solutions and things like that. So that's more what I like to do. I like to say, a lot of people, you know, some people at the very front are like me, they're tinkers. And then there's the people who pay attention to what the tinkers are doing, and they see this'll really work; this probably won't last for long.

So I'll play around with something, even if it's a fad, you know, just to mess with something. And then there's somebody who's an early adopter, and they're the person who really puts the work ethic into it that I will not do. And they're the really sharp people to follow. And then of course, you have master marketers who take that message and do something with it.

And then there are what I call the master managers. They take the stuff that's been working for years, and they make the most comprehensive guidebook, you know, the program, the software, the covers, everything. And, I'm really happy with where I am in that spectrum, right now.

### **Each to their own area of expertise**

And I don't want to move up that spectrum or move back towards it, because you once said it, and it was great; it was a book you recommended, *Rocket Fuel*, and it made me realize that, the creative problem-solving brain doesn't really live in the side of the same brain or in the same skull of somebody who's willing to crunch the numbers and do the accounting every month. They're just not there.

**James:** Yeah, well, for most people. There's the rare exception who can be both visionary and integrator, and I definitely feel that's more me than being a strong visionary or strong integrator. However, you know, whatever you want to do, whether it's Kolbe scores, it's good to know more about yourself. Like, there's a lot of things you could be an expert at, but some of them aren't that important.

Isn't it important, since we're going to be going through life ourselves, it's good to find out where you perceive yourself in that scale? And it's interesting, some of the words you're using, like work ethic or whatever. Some people use words like hard or work ethic in a way that they might feel they need to, to relieve themselves from this peer pressure that they might be frowned upon for not going deeper than they could or whatever. But maybe it's just not them.

And maybe it's okay just thin-slicing or lightly dipping into things and not going deeper into it. If you were to do a Kolbe score, you might find that you're more the type of person who easily catches on to things but you're less the type of person who likes to follow them through. In which case, there'll be people who catch the ball, like in football, whatever you call it; you call it football, we call it gridiron, I suppose, American football. But you know, someone gets the ball, and then they throw it to the other person who runs it across the try line.

So there's different roles we can play, and it sounds like you found your role. [We did speak in 2016](#) about your then new book that was talking about the editing process, and I got such a big takeaway from that. One of the most important ones I got was to remove the word "that". Every time I see the word "that", I think of Bond Halbert, because not many people are talking about the editing side of it.

An example is, everyone's talking about copywriting, not many people are talking about editing. In my world, everyone's talking about traffic. They talk endlessly about traffic. A little bit about conversions as well. Not many people talk about retention, or just having a great product or looking after people. And that's interesting when you're talking about the timeline.

It's not like the people further down the progression are doing a better job, either. Some of the people who are brilliant marketers often are picking up someone else's idea and concept. They're taking it to the market, but they don't necessarily have a deep understanding of it, or in many cases, even have a good product. They're just good at the marketing part.

It's kind of like a thin veneer on chipboard. Sometimes we're better to deal with an artisan who may not be as polished. Would you say it's true that quite often, some of the very best practitioners are not extremely well-known or the most famous?

## The people you really want to follow

**Bond:** Oh, yeah, absolutely. The most famous is usually always that master manager. They've rarely invented anything, but they make a lot of money. By the way, I wasn't saying that with any kind of judgment whatsoever. I'm saying it more along the lines of, you know, people find where they're comfortable in their space. And I was just telling my son that some of the most famous of the marketers are not the people that you really want to follow.



You want to follow somebody who's a little ahead of that position where you see yourself at that moment, and I don't mean follow as in do everything they do. I mean, pay attention to what they're doing to what's coming, what's new. I, for one, pay attention to the things that you teach and the things that you do. I really do. You know, coming on here, I was like, This should be me interviewing and picking your brain more than you picking mine.

But, you know, that's absolutely true. And you'll be surprised, like, the most famous copywriter in history is probably David Ogilvy, if not my father. And David Ogilvy said, I'm not a great copywriter. I'm a terrific editor and a fantastic researcher. But he never taught anybody how to do any editing. And nobody ever did. You know, that book on editing was the first book ever written on editing.

And then I realized, you know, a lot of people, they were showing like, a 10-minute type of thing on research. And I'm like, Here, let me show you how to do research. And I walked people through the research process. And it was something that was kind of new, and I adapted some things for research that were a new way of doing it, and a new way of teaching it that I really appreciated.

I think it's a big mistake in our industry, or in any industry, is to follow people by the fame, the level that they have. As my mom reminded me, which is an older phrase, which is, A wise person can learn from a fool, but a fool learns from nobody. Right? And it's just so true. My dad taught me, you know, basically, you can learn from anybody.

And the reason that works so well with me is, you know, everybody's like, Oh, that's so and so. I want to pay attention to what he or she says, right? And they were doing that, but I was like, you know, growing up at the foot of the king's table, in the copywriting world, right? So I didn't have that starstruck stuff. I was sitting around judging ideas based on their merits.

And so the thing that I try and do, the thing that you definitely do, is you make light bulbs go off. You get people's heads shaking, and you get light bulbs going off in their heads. And it doesn't make a difference whether you're famous or not. The idea on its own says, This stands out, that makes a lot of sense, that's what I should be doing, you know? And so I look to pay attention to people who are doing those things more than I look to people who just have their faces splashed in the most places.

Now, some of those people are sharp, too. I'm not knocking that as well.

**James:** Of course. But it's not a guarantee, right?

**Bond:** Not at all.



**James:** You're heavily vested in the publishing world, right? Publishing Kindle books, etc. And we've often thought there's a big difference between someone who has a book or doesn't have a book in positioning. And I think what you're saying is really, the biggest highlight so far in this episode, is just because someone is good at getting attention, just because someone has a lot of followers, doesn't mean that what they're saying or doing is exactly the right thing for you.

And the classic story that comes to mind is I had someone hire me to coach them last year. And the thing that they said, which was kind of a, it could be taken the wrong way, but he said, I want to hire you to coach me because you're not famous, and of the type of caliber of people you are coaching, and they come to you for some reason, it's not because you're an influencer, you must actually know what you're talking about.

And I thought it's kind of a backhanded compliment, but I'll take it, because it's exactly what we're saying. Look below the surface. Like, I never set out to be an influencer or to get a lot of attention. I just want to do good work, and I want to surf every day, and I do like to fire off lightbulbs. That's absolutely what I do, for sure. So the big lightbulb here is, like my grandfather said, you know, like, have a good look to who you're potentially getting advice from and decide if it stacks up.

### **It's not hard to do your due diligence, but it's essential**

And it's not hard, you know, talking about research, it's not hard to do due diligence. It's not hard to speak to three or four people who that person has done work for, whether they provide them to you or not. You can do your digging, and you can go to the source, and you can find out a lot more information than on the surface. And it's the same information that I would share with someone.

If you said to me, Bond, you've got this great idea, you want to start a cafe, because you'd like to hang out with all your friends and drink coffee and have a place you can chill. And I mean, in almost every movie, the villain usually owns a restaurant, right? Because it's good to clean the money, and it's a nice private place to meet in the back office? I would say, before you do that, go and speak to three cafe owners. Ask them everything about running a cafe, and then come back to me and tell me if it's still a great idea or not.

And then they'll tell you, it's back breaking, don't do it. The margins are terrible, we get squeezed by our suppliers, the staff will let you down every day, you'll be the first one in at five in the morning, the last one out, you'll be exhausted. It'll be the worst decision you ever make in your life. There's probably a cafe owner listening to this podcast thinking, Oh my god.

But anyway, it's not hard to do the research. And I really resonate with this, this is point number two. You've said, you can be a great copywriter - I'm just paraphrasing - by being great at research and great at editing. And that's the function that we have in my own team. My team in the Philippines, what they're good at is doing their research. And they've got some tools they use for that. And they go through our own podcast to come up with show notes and stuff.

And then they're good at putting the stuff for pre-approval, and that's where I actually focus my attention. I would rather help them polish a diamond they've produced than for me to go out and dig it up. And that editing process is the 80:20 of where you can add the most value after you've done the research. So the bit in the middle, the actual copy part, that seems to be where all the copywriters focus. That's the whole game for a lot of them.

But as we're seeing tools, like the AI tools that are starting to throw up copy ideas or whatever, that middle part, I think, is going to get a little more leveraged and mechanized. And so I think the people who are good at research, and the people who are good at editing will have the advantage. Thoughts?

**Bond:** I 100 percent agree with that. The example I always use is the Domino's Pizza campaign. It's an old, old campaign. But the truth of the matter is, this is a very competitive industry. There were thousands and thousands of pizza places in the United States. Everybody was working on, we got the most authentic recipe from Italy. And somebody was saying, we got the freshest ingredients, we got the award-winning tastiest recipe.

Nobody went and talked to the customers. When they talked to the customers, they're like, I'm so sick and tired of not knowing when the pizza is going to arrive. So somebody solved that problem. And then when they solved that problem, they were able to become dominant in it.

And that's the one thing that's true, is everybody's looking for shortcuts. And the shortcuts that are going to get you are, you know, well with copy, it's not paying attention to anything but the bullets, just the offer, and maybe the headlines. They're not paying attention to closing arguments, you know?

There's a lot of mistakes I could say they're making, like they're speaking to people at different levels of market level or awareness all at the same time, and that's a mistake. You know, they're not educating people.

One of the things that I try and recently show people is, once you find the market-level awareness, and that basically, just for anybody doesn't know that, there are people who don't know they have a problem; the people who know they have a problem, but don't know what the solutions are; people who know what the solutions are, but which one's not right for them. The ones that know the advantages and disadvantages of solutions, and then the ones who are brand loyal.

Your company can go after all of them. But your marketing, one at a time, needs to take one of those market-level awarenesses and then educate them so that they're the next market-level awareness. Okay? So that's what your marketing should do, is you should take and elevate, and this is part of doing good in the world. It's elevating the customer's thing.

And I see all of these mistakes that people are making, but one of the biggest ones is they don't put in enough work. They don't put enough work into it. If you ask me, if my kids' life was on the line (my dad always likes to put things in these ultimate kinds of scenarios, gun to the head, marketing type of stuff)...

**James:** That would be canceled out in 2021. That's not going to fly anymore.

**Bond:** But if my kid's life was on the line, the people, the guys, and the ladies that I would hire to do the copywriting, you know, besides being niche specific, right? they're the ones who'd put in some serious time. They're the ones who are willing to get on the phone with actual customers and talk to them. They're willing to go out and spend time with them.

They're willing to go through the process of buying whatever it is you're selling, and find all the ins and outs and figure out ways to make this whole process, make the light bulbs go off, give these people aha moments, educate them, show them things that nobody else was telling them and stuff like that. That kind of due diligence, and doing that stuff, makes the difference between the A-lister, as they call them, and everybody else - the people who are just going to take the client's money and move on to the next client.

And so that's the people that I'm like, Okay, I respect, I see some great marketing from. They're putting in that time and that effort and, they know what they're doing, but they're focusing on what needs to be said, not how to say it. That middle part, that how to say it, that literally is the shortest part of the entire copywriting marketing process.

If you were focusing in on that too much, if you would ever find yourself sitting down at a blank screen saying, Okay, I got to write this on Monday morning, where should I start? You've lost. You've lost the game to somebody who's been hanging out with these marketers and knows what they need to hear in order to buy.

And that's research.



**"You don't come up with a good story, you find a good story. You don't just make one up in your head."**

**BOND HALBERT**

## One of the keys to effective storytelling

And I will get asked questions like, how do you come up with a good story? And I'm like, you don't come up with a good story, you find a good story. You don't just make one up in your head. Now you can create one out of a typical scenario of three or four, people's average experience as your marketer, you can do that. I'm not saying it has to be nonfiction. But it needs to be something that you do.

If you got a moment, I'll tell you one of the things that I had recently discovered that I thought was a great advent into teaching copywriting, and I'll just flat out give it to everybody. I was at a friend of mine's office, he's a screenwriter. And I look over and I see a story arc on the board. And I go, What's that? He goes, That's a story arc. And now we're all used to the hero's journey, right? In marketing, you hear about that.

I don't have a hero's journey. I was not sleeping in my car before I discovered copywriting and all of that other stuff. But I do have my own journey. But there are other journeys that are important. There could be the story of how the product is made, you know, this took 400 man hours, went into the making of this watch, right? It could be the story of the industry. Do you know how far back watchmaking goes or, you know, where they cared?

It could be the average experience of somebody frustrated trying to buy a nice timepiece. Of course, we got my watches, which are all...

**James:** Yeah, that's what I was going to say, watches are your passion. Much easier to store than surfboards.

**Bond:** Yes. So what I did was I took that arc, and I realized that, you know, it starts with an inciting incident. So before that, you're describing somebody's life. So in my world of copywriting, people got into copywriting for one of the few reasons. They either saw copywriters seemingly having a good time, walking the beach and not really doing stuff, when they don't realize what we're really doing is thinking at the time, you know, we're getting a flow state to think up stuff.

Or they were a business owner that started running ads, because they needed to build business. But then the ads, all of a sudden, they realized the key component is they had to start sounding different than what other people said, right? Because the numbers weren't working out. Then there's this inciting moment that makes them want to learn copy, right? And then there's the frustration.

So the arc is actually a bell curve, and it's a stress level, is what it is. And at the very end is like, the grandiose, it's where everybody wants to be. It's like, now my ads are running smoothly, there's money flowing in, and I don't have to worry about coming up with business. So what I did was I took all these little points in the story arc, and I created open-ended questions that you can take out of order, and go to a group of prospects, whether it's Reddit, or a group on Facebook or something, and ask them these questions. And they will, in their own words, write the copy for you out of order, right?

They tell you the story out of order. So like, tell me about your struggles and frustrations in getting your first clients. In a different time, I'll say, what were you doing before you became a copywriter? Right? So I'm getting the tail of them before that inciting moment. And in a different point, I'll be, you know, discover what it was like when you first had your aha moment, and you had your first winning copy. And then, what's life now that you don't have to work a second job, and you made this your main profession, right?

So after all of this, I have all the elements to put together a piece of copy, a story that actually sells and sings to the person at the market-level awareness that I want, right? That I'm starting to address and bring them to the next level. And by doing that, all of a sudden, you know, you could apply this exact same formula too, the history of the industry, the history of the company. You could apply it to the making of the actual product itself, you could apply it to the average experience of the buyer, you know, what the average customer's frustrations are and all of this other stuff.

There's a couple more of them. But the point is, it became something where these people were writing the stories for you. So I don't have to be a wordsmith. I don't have to have a degree in creative writing, or anything like that. What I have to do is do that investigative work that tells me what they're thinking, what their frustrations are, what's the relief they had, what's the joy of getting the benefit that you're offering.

And once you have that, especially if it's in their words, you know, one of those people is going to talk about the relief of being able to quit their job with confidence and security, better than I'm going to be able to say it, right? But my research is going to do that for me. And so, all the power in your marketing's in your research, the professionalism is in the editing, the talent is in the gut knowledge of saying, this person put it best, and this is dead on, and this gut reaction tells me that this story is going to make people want to buy more than the other story.

## **Copywriting versus ad-writing - why there's a difference**

And it's different for market-level awareness. So if you're brand loyal, you want to talk about what the Halbert family means in the history of copywriting. That's brand loyalty. That's the story they're most interested in. At the beginning, I don't even use the word copywriting. I say ad writing. I'm like, you know, are you not getting enough business? Did you put up a ClickFunnels page and just hoped that sales were going to come in, and that didn't happen? Well, you need to start advertising. And the key to making ads work is what you say in the ad. So you need good ad writers.

I wouldn't even use the word copy, because at that market-level awareness, it's not right for them, right? And then you could tell them a story of what that average person who was struggling with the same thing they're struggling with then. And then of course, you know, do more of the editing techniques where you're taking on the negative and then giving them the positive, you know?

James was struggling with his business, and he was doing this, he was staying up late at night, he was actually worried that he was going to have to ruin all of his credit. His wife was putting him under pressure, and so forth. But then he discovered the secrets that allowed him to do XYZ, and now that he's sharing this information, you can benefit from all those hours that he put in, and you get XYZ benefit.

And you take them to a place that's better than they had dared dreamed. But you always make it real. This is the one thing I love about you, you're very ethical. And being ethical means you write your dream copy, but back it down to where you and I would say basically the same thing about it to my mother at a dinner table.

**James:** That's a classic thing, right? The copywriter, if you let them off the chain, they're just going to try and hit it out of the park with the biggest, boldest, most outrageous offers, enticements, incentives. And then you have to think, Well, hang on, is the expectation you're building here matching what I can actually deliver? Is there parity in that? And yeah, I agree with you. I've always been very realistic in where I'm going to allow that elasticity.

Firstly, I always did it myself up until recently anyway, but when I do get help, I'm always tuning it, making it come back into my orbit so that I feel really comfortable that I can deliver on the promises that they would like to make. They always want to do more than I'm prepared to.

**Bond:** But you brought up the benefit of that, which is retention.

**James:** Of course. That's the payoff.





## Avoiding the pitfall of overpromising

**Bond:** Yeah. You know what, I was talking about in a meeting the other day, and the big problem with overpromising is you destroy lifetime value of the customer. You destroy your opportunity to increase that. And once you do that, you're doing yourself a financial disservice as well. The copywriter's, Look, my conversions are 300 percent of what they used to be.

**James:** I think it's easy to make sales, it's harder to deliver. I was walking along my local community recently, there was a signboard out the front, and it said, you know, serving coffee. And I walked into the store, and I asked for coffee. They said, Sorry, the machine's closed. And I said, What? You're literally advertising out the front that you've got it. Oh, yeah, we put that out for the afternoon session. And I'm like, It just doesn't make sense to me.

So I left the store. But I'm like, I won't bother with that store again, it's like, they've set me up for a massive disappointment. They've promised me something they can't deliver. And then they've almost made me feel bad for asking for the thing. It's like, you should realize the machine's closed. We're not serving coffee. So there's a huge mismatch. And I think, yeah, you're right, a lot of marketers are focused on that one quick win, that first thing.

And I've learned over time, to be very, very deliberate and specific about who I'm talking to. And I make sure that I let people know who are not the right person for me to be talking to, that this is not the place. It's like putting a sign up saying, Machine is switched off. Like, I don't want them to come in and get a bad experience, and make sure that they build up that trust.

So a classic example for the prime coaching that I do, I generally do not work with startups, even though I can do them, even though I've started up businesses, and even though I can have great success. It's absolutely the most frustrating experience for them as a customer and me as a coach to do startups. So I prefer to work with people who already have something in motion.

As my mentor said to me, You can't steer a parked car. Like, people who are trying to get parked cars running, we don't even know if there's an engine half the time. But if you're already on the freeway, stuck in third gear, and you've got six gears in the gearbox, then I can show you how to push the clutch and change gears. That's joyful, as a coach, because you get an instant result and everyone's happy.

So I'm very careful about screening out startups and setting a minimum criteria of where I want to get started. That's for [SuperFastBusiness coaching](#). I then created a [product](#) under that, and that's where I send people. So I got clear messaging. So I really like what you said, my mind's buzzing with the possibilities.

But if it were to look like a chart, you'd basically have your components of the framework, which if you can follow a system, just like selling, if you can follow the research system and frameworks, you can extract all the information you need from the market without you having to bring it like an artist.

And then you would have your categories, whether it's what type of story, and where is the customer at in that story, you know, awareness level, so you probably have each category or use case, and then you'd have your four different awareness levels for each of those stories. That is a massive system.

If that's the only takeaway you got from today's episode, is that you can come into the market with your product or service, use a framework to systematically go and extract the pieces you need and then construct them in a way that makes perfect sense for the exact type person who you're trying to attract at the awareness level they're at in their market, then you have an amazing outcome that you could expect, versus just winging it, flinging it, or paying a huge amount of money to someone else who might wing it or fling it even if they're popular on social media, or not.

## Creating a system for market-level awareness

**Bond:** You're going to love this, because what I'm working on right now is a system that, okay, so I finally followed your advice and started a group just for copywriters. It's not like SuperFastBusiness, and I fumbled over the goal line, in my typical way, and I said, Okay, I'm going to do this, right? And I took our main Facebook group, and I created a second Facebook group, which is like a landing page, because there's no other posting allowed there, there's no other commenting allowed, there was just this one training. And I gave them a research training, and out of 500 people, 170 people signed on to the program.

And what happened was, I started teaching them headline, bullet, but in the research, it was the market-level awareness, it was like, the first thing they were seeing, that you need to know this, who you're going after. Well, now it's come back full circle, that after I'm done with a few more things like ordering instructions and everything, what I'm doing is I'm taking the market-level awareness they're going after and getting more specific on the stuff that I had already taught.

So when it came to headline writing, right? So you want to call out your target in your headline, right? So let's suppose it's, you know, men over 50 with three extra inches of belly fat, right? They don't know that that could mean a symptom of heart disease. They don't know that they have the problem, they're problem unaware, but what they do know is they know the symptoms they've got, right?

So in my checklist chart, it's going to be, Okay, the target callout by the symptoms, right? The second level of people is the ones that say, you know, Okay, you've done this, and you just got your blood test results, and the cholesterol is way higher than you thought it was. And now you're wondering if you need a Mediterranean diet, a keto, what supplements? Your doctor's even thinking about putting you on a statin, which, you know, whether you know it or not, is really bad for you, right?

So it's a different market level awareness. And so I'm doing that and going back and kind of giving a framework for each of the headline, which story's best for which market-level awareness, you know? All the elements of headline writing, which is authority, being newsy, benefits, specificity with numbers, bits of proof, and you're deciding based on your offers. But this is something that the top copywriters have always done kind of intuitively, like, you know, I know this person I'm talking to, I know exactly who this avatar is.

So they didn't really have to think this out in a systematic way. I'm working now on a systematic way of doing that, that this is the headline framework that works best for this market-level awareness. You know, this is how you call it out. This is the proof they'll believe. So authority, for example, the reason that you see people who are going for a problem unaware, you'll see people like, you know, William Shatner or somebody.

Their authority, they don't know who's a good doctor, they don't know anything like that. They just need somebody that they've seen, that they recognize and know. But if you're talking to somebody who studied supplements, and is studying cholesterol and stuff like that, now they might need Sanjay Gupta or something, you know, now it's a different authority that you want to put out.

You know, the higher that gets, the more specific, and it changes who's an authority to that person, and who's not.

Once they become brand aware, the authority in that industry is, you know, copywriting, for example, an authority would be [John Carlton](#), right? Whereas people lower down the market-level awareness in the world of copywriting don't even know who he is, right? And so, what I'm doing is a systematized way of saying that this is where you should focus the energy. But it always still comes back to letting the customers, real buyers and real customers, put the descriptions, give you the words, give you the stories, give you the chunks, and stuff like that.

“That guy’s super sharp.”

You know, we met at a Carlton event, one of his events. Coming back full circle to the idea of not judging people by framework, you weren't nearly as well-known as you are now. And I was like, this guy is super sharp. Actually, somebody had already whispered in my ear that you were super sharp. So I sat next to you on purpose.

**James:** I did not know that.

**Bond:** Yeah, actually, it was John himself. John said, Hey, you want to follow James, that guy's really sharp. And so I did that. And then you're like, Oh, you need to do this. And I think you know this now, because I've mentioned it, I have always followed every piece of advice you've given me and then came back and reported to you that I followed the advice you gave me. Because a lot of people, here's the difference between an ethical marketer will always be happy that income came in and that it supports their lifestyle.



I think one of the big mistakes people are making right now is wanting to control all social media and work 18 hours a day, and they just don't have a life, right? That's not what life's about. You and I love life. We love our families. I spend my time walking at the beach and meditating, and you're surfing.

**James:** I saw you were at the beach today. You did almost...

**Bond:** 7.9 miles.

**James:** Yeah, almost eight miles, you know, I'm paddling about three and a half miles on an average surf these days.

**Bond:** Which means more than mine. But I turned around, This guy is super sharp. I'm going to start paying attention to what he's saying and stuff like that. It wasn't based on, you know, because of that fame recognition. You and I have been in masterminds together, and you've been in a lot of masterminds. I've been in a lot of masterminds.

**James:** We've won samurai swords together.

**Bond:** That's right. And my brother voted for you.

**James:** You know, if there's anyone I was going to tie with, it'll be Bond Halbert, he's right up there.

**Bond:** You have no idea how proud I was to tie with you, you have no idea. You know, I was talking to my children before doing this. I'm like, well, this is a little different than the normal podcast interviews that I do, because I've done a lot. I'm like, James is super sharp. You're one of the few that I follow, like I said, that I follow all your advice that you give me, and I report back, because back to what I was saying, an ethical marketer, every marketer gets a little dopamine rush when they get a sale, or they get a new customer, or the intake of funds is larger than it was last month, this month, and things are on the rise and stuff like that.

I'm very happy to know that throughout this whole, you know, last year and everything that we increased what we're doing. And so, it just kind of reassures that I'm never going to have to worry about what the economy is doing. But the biggest dopamine hit of all, is always, Hey, I did what you told me to do, and it worked like a charm, thank you so much for showing me how to do that.

That's what you give. And that's got to be the brightest part of doing what you do, sharing what you do with other marketers, with other business owners and stuff like that, is actually giving them results that they appreciate, and them giving you that feedback. So I'm always like, Oh, yeah, by the way, I did that, and it worked like a charm. And thank you very much for the advice.

**James:** Of course, you feel good. You feel, I guess, more significant when someone gives you that feedback. I absolutely love hearing success stories, because that's where you've gone through from the transactional phase or the gun-to-the head phase early in life, you know, when you're in your 20s, and you have a family, and you've just got to make money. We all start out wanting to make money, generally. But then you go through more.

## What the kids have to say about it

I would say I'm more in a creative artistic phase where I just want to do good work. I want my words to trigger light bulbs that get results. And I've had some incredible success stories with the people I'm working with. And when they get off the call better than when they started, that's a win, and you've shared stories with your kids, and I see you with your daughter, with your son, plenty of times.

The other day, I was helping one of my kids move something, and I was doing a coaching call while we're doing that. And he said, Dad, I've heard you on like three or four of these calls now. He said, Are they always this excited and happy by the end of the call? I'm like, Yes. It's like, they get what they came for. That's what I do. That's my job, is to create the transformation from where they start to by the end, they have total clarity, they know exactly what to do, they're very excited about it.

And we've given lots of [case studies](#) and examples, like hard tangible evidence of what is likely to work, what definitely could go wrong, based on all the data points we get. I imagine for you, it's good when your kids are seeing you do things and they're learning from that as they do, being kids.

**Bond:** Okay, so one of the things that I don't do, that my big rush for me is not just to give them a transformational moment, like teaching them feature benefit with a headline. I can give them the same lessons that people have been giving for copywriting for decades. I like to create breakthroughs. Like, when I speak any place, my number one goal is to make the most experienced copywriter in the room's hand hurt from taking notes, that's literally my goal. And I've done it, and I get them up and taking pictures.

My daughter's at that age where she's like, you know, when they hit the teens and a little bit older, they just want to like, bring your ego down a little bit and always keep you grounded and stuff. Yesterday, I was doing a training on the Google sniff test, which is how to control and make sure that when people Google your name and your business, they're like, Wow, that person's the real deal, and that business is the real deal and so forth.

And at the end of the training, they were like, Man, thank you so much for doing all this. And I was like, you know, because, you know, like you, I love the members, right? And they're like, Oh, we love you Bond, and blah, blah, blah. And my daughter's right behind me and I hear her groaning going, Uugh! I'm never going to hear the end of this, and I'm like, Trust me, you are, because, you know, as good as that makes me feel and stuff like that, I am one of those people who will always try and learn.

I'm not going to be one of those people who says, Okay, I've reached this spot, and there's nowhere else to go. And you're not going to find a bigger fanboy of you, than the Halbert family is. My brother and I both sing your praises. And when people say, Who should I be following? I probably shouldn't say this publicly, because I have so many connections and friends and everything, you're usually on the top of the list.

And then I say, If you're going to follow anybody, follow James, because when we go to a large event, you know, one of the largest events and everything, when they're speaking on the stage, they're talking about things, like I said, going back to the tinker, the early adopter, the master marketer, and the master manager - and I know there's other names for these things - you know, they're usually talking about something that we've known about for a long time or have been doing for a long time.

**James:** 2020 was the year people finally really got the message about [OwnTheRacecourse](#), and, you know, controlling your assets, [cancel culture](#), shutting down of whole markets, offline businesses being difficult. So yeah, I like to think down the track. Bezos is famous for that, and he's pretty much the richest guy on the planet for thinking about what won't change, how do we obsess about the customer. Those sort of things can be more informative than what will change.



But I think like you. I speak to a nice wide pool of people, probably like your father used to do. And just listen, and learn from everyone and everything. I have clients who are so varied. I equate it to running an exotic zoo. And there's such different animals. You can learn to run like a cheetah, or you can learn to observe like an owl by just seeing these different characters and what they're good at and taking the clues and inspiration.

## Where to go for all things Bond

But let's make this a little bit more Bond-focused. Where can we go to get your book about editing? How do we find out about your membership? I'm so thrilled that you're doing that, by the way. And I've seen some of your stuff in there, and it's wonderful. It's really how we got connected again, to come on the show, is because of the interplay between our mutual friends. So what are some resources we can go and look up and start to learn about copy or ad writing, depending on where you're at in your business journey?

**Bond:** Okay, well, if you're on Facebook, just look up [The Gary Halbert Copy Club](#). If you look up that, then there's links to the other club that I mentioned before. And then when we open up memberships, the group that we run is called Halbertising, because it's not just about copy, it's about direct marketing. So half of the trainings that I give are about copywriting, the other half is direct response marketing. It's more like the Google sniff test thing.

And [Amazon](#) is a great place to go. I'll publish books up on Amazon. And of course [bondhalbert.com](#), you know, that's where you can link into all of those things. I am one of those people that, you know, like, I'm busy tinkering with stuff, and the next leveling up that I'm going to do, which again, I'm taking from you, is to figure out how to outsource better to teams. Because, you know, when I talk about work ethic, I don't mean work ethic in the way that, you know, I spend a lot of time thinking about my craft or what I do, and mine is to teach, right? That's what I'm good at. That's what I love.

But, you know, I think that going to those places, those contact points, The Gary Halbert Copy Club on Facebook, [bondhalbert.com](#), and of course, [thegaryhalbertletter.com](#), but that's more like a memorial site, we don't really kind of want to change anything or do too much to add to that. But if you get on those email lists that are there, you'll get some good information and you'll get updated as to what we're doing.

I wouldn't even have bought bondhalbert.com if it wasn't for you. You're like, Hey, why don't you have your own name, I say go get it. So I not only got it, I went and got my kids and, you know, I have theirs. I think I could only buy their domains for 20 years or something. So I bought them, so they wouldn't even have that if it wasn't for you.

**James:** I think it's good to own your own domain name if you can, and having an unusual name helps. Even a popular one is usually worth it for someone, especially if he's doing sniff testing. So that's great news. Thank you for sharing those links. We're going to list them all where this episode is, which is 827, on SuperFastBusiness.com. Your other episode was 502, and [your original one](#) was like, one of the absolute earliest ones of all, I'm not even sure if it has a number.

So thank you so much for coming back. We definitely have to do it more frequently. We should have you on at least every year, multiple times, because you're just a fountain of knowledge and information. But also, I like to hang around with people who are interested in being interested in new things and sharing them with us.

## Summing up and winding up

Just to summarize what we've really talked about here is, be careful who we're looking at when we want to discover where we go to. We don't have to follow the most popular people. If you are going to write better ads, it pays to have a framework and to be aware of where people are at in their journey. So they have the right conversation at the right time. You've touched on doing great research and great editing.

We've talked about owning your own domain name, if you want to control your presence, pass the Google sniff test. I remember my friend, [Stephan Spencer](#), helped me get that special expert panel on Google, which was a really good thing to do, if you ever get the chance to. If you don't have that property, that's something you'll want to try and control if you possibly can.

When you type your name, you'll see on the right hand side. When my name goes there, it'll list my book and stuff. You get to control some of that, which is good. It'll give you the choice to verify yourself and to tell it which links you'd rather, which pictures of yourself it wants to show.

And funny little backstory, one of the main reasons I went online in the first place was when I was in the car dealership at Mercedes-Benz, one of my peers got their own .com domain name, and I thought I should do that. And when I used to do the Google sniff test for my own name, my acting credit used to come up. So I actually learned about search engine optimization so that I could rank my own name above IMDb. That is what started my journey on SEO, which became my specialty, which helped me have a great bonus offer for people who bought website software to help them rank better.

So my heart was in the SEO world in the beginning. And through that journey, I started to learn all the other things, like making my site convert better by writing better words on it, came into your world. I remember Rich Schefren and Stephen Pierce had this squeeze page for a Jay Abraham offer, and it had all these italicized and bolded things in yellow highlights. I didn't know what a copywriter was, but I put my email address in and found out about Jay Abraham stuff online. I'd already heard about him. I was actually looking for his name, and they captured me, and that's when I discovered The Gary Halbert Letter.

So we'll sign off. And I hope to catch up with you again in the future, much shorter future, Bond.

**Bond:** Okay, please, please. Like I said, I love talking with you any chance I get.

**James:** Let's do it more often. Thank you so much.

**Bond:** Thank you.

**James:** Well, there you have it. That was Bond Halbert. This is Episode 827 of SuperFastBusiness.com. We're putting up all the resources and links to Bond's sites, groups, books, etc. at episode 827 on SuperFastBusiness.com. Bond is such a great guest, very knowledgeable.

If you'd like Bond to come and address a specific topic in the future, please leave your comments where you see this podcast, because I can invite him back. We can talk about whatever you want. Let me know. He's a great guest, and I would really like to have Bond back a little more frequently.



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