

# South Africa needs more creative B2B writers

 By [Taryn Netterville](#)

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When I meet people for the first time and they ask what I do for a living, "I'm a copywriter" usually gets a great reception. But when I clarify that I write about technology that makes life easier for people to do their jobs (Sales and Marketing software in particular), things get a bit awkward. It just sounds so boring doesn't it?



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But I love it. What better challenge than to bring a bit of life and colour into a traditionally 'dull' world? And the technology sector is a fascinating one to be in - it changes all the time, with new innovations announced almost daily.

Unfortunately, "B2B marketing" and "creative", are two terms that most people would not put together. But things are changing. B2B companies are looking for a fresh approach.

Take [Slack](#) for example, what a brilliant little idea to help teams collaborate on a project. It's a B2B product, but what makes it stand out is that it has a bit of a B2C brand: it helps people "be less busy" - whether they're at work or not.

This is the way the world is going - B2B and B2C are merging. Which makes it a great time to be a *creative* B2B copywriter. As long as you are able to understand your audience and the technology or product you need to get them to engage with, how you do so is only limited by your imagination (okay and maybe your budget).

And it's a great career path. Business products are always designed to meet a need, which actually makes the marketing department's job a bit easier. Budgets have to be discussed and approved, so there are very few 'impulse buys' - and while emotion is certainly important, an 'emotional buy' is just as unlikely. The business case has to be made, and the benefits clear.

## Isn't it boring?

I guess that depends on where you work. Some B2B companies are still very 'corporate' in the way they talk about and market themselves. Others are more fun, visionary and 'colourful'. I'm lucky enough to work in the fun type, which means that I can be quite creative with the content I write and the story angles I find.

Just take a look at these links for some examples of B2B content that's not boring:

- [news.microsoft.com/stories/index.html](http://news.microsoft.com/stories/index.html)
- [thecroc.com/case-study/superpoints-facebook-campaign/](http://thecroc.com/case-study/superpoints-facebook-campaign/)
- [www.wearetwogether.com/cs-motorola-wireless](http://www.wearetwogether.com/cs-motorola-wireless)
- [www.wearetwogether.com/cs-vmware-nothing-lasts-forever](http://www.wearetwogether.com/cs-vmware-nothing-lasts-forever)
- [www.earnest-agency.com/our-work/temenos-productivity-paradox/](http://www.earnest-agency.com/our-work/temenos-productivity-paradox/)

### **So what makes a good B2B copywriter?**

First, you need to be a heavy reader, not just of novels and magazines, but of science news, technology news, engineering news or whatever else floats your boat. The point is that you need to be interested in these 'technical' things, because before you can tell a good story, you need to understand the subject matter.

You also need to be inquisitive and empathetic. Good marketing content is impossible to create if you a) don't know who you're writing for, b) can't understand what their objectives are, c) don't know how your product will help them meet these objectives, and d) can't write for your audience on their level.

It's all about the audience. And there's nothing stopping an inquisitive, determined writer from finding out what their target audience is like, what types of content they like to read, what kind of language they use etc.

And then of course, there's the actual writing. I am a firm believer that with a bit of coaching and guidance, anyone can be a good writer. What's more important is the ability to structure an argument or a story so that it flows naturally and is easy to read. Post-graduates often make great writers because they've had so much practice in structuring essays or a thesis, and presenting an argument that follows a logical structure.

### **Creative B2B writers are a rare breed in South Africa**

South African B2B marketing has a long way to go in terms of becoming more creative, but the upside is that those who are doing it have an advantage over those who aren't. Which means that good, creative B2B writers will become even more sought after than they already are.

### **ABOUT TARYN NETTERVILLE**

Taryn manages content and messaging at Qorus Software, a global provider of bid, sales and marketing solutions. She's always interested in hearing from young writers who might be interested in business technology, as well as from creative b2b freelancers.

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