

To give you a flavor of what you might ask in The Office, here are some questions I've been asked recently, along with my answers:

Q1: I need leads, and I'm not sure what path to take. I've seen people doing Loom videos showcasing a few quick wins – I'm not opposed to that. I just don't want to put in loads of effort if there's going to be little to no reward. Is that reasonable? Do people have success with that approach? Is there something else you'd recommend?

A: I've had great success with cold pitching – in fact, it's how I launched my copywriting business years back.

There are two proven ways (that I've used) to cold pitch:

1. Hit as many people as you can in your target market, letting them know what you offer and how they can work with you, and do it often enough that you find people because of the volume you put out. I did that with my info kit and offering specific services to businesses and agencies. I have a client who did that recently and landed two very nice projects in the first month. I suggest "compressing the time frame" – if you'd normally get out 2-3 pitches in a day, see if you can get out 10 instead. Aim for 100. I know that sounds like a lot. But. I've rarely seen anyone send out 100 inquiries without getting some action. It's absolutely a numbers game.
2. Create custom pitches where you point out a problem they have and how they can fix it. This is much more of a time investment and it usually works when you've been following them and have a sense of what's going on in their business. I like using short videos (loom) to show them what you're talking about/recommending. This has the additional benefit that you can use their website or other asset of theirs as the thumbnail. Very hard NOT to click on something that's yours.

Funny anecdote. The client I mentioned above was opposed to generic pitches. They thought it was a waste of time. I told her to test it. Send a bunch of each. Track how much time they take. If you send 100 generic pitches in X hours and 25 custom pitches in the same amount of time, you can compare which gets better results.

Guess what? The generic ones landed clients, the others got some responses, but no action. Doesn't mean they won't work over time, but it does mean you need to test and see what YOUR audience responds to.

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Q:

I'm feeling a bit like a scheduling mess. The "why" behind this boils down to a couple of things, but mainly it's all the white labeling/subcontracting I'm doing.

I'm proactively working on growing my authority outside of subcontracting, but it has felt like a net-positive so far to have consistent jobs pop up while all those authority efforts build.

But that means that evvvverryboddyyyyy feels like they own my time. They'll pop in out of nowhere with a "I've got a new client, copy delivered in 3–4 weeks?" request and two things simultaneously go through my brain:

- 1). This is not a healthy way to work
- 2). I don't want to make them seek out another freelancer and therefore lose my spot as their go-to (plus, ya know, the money)

There are also a few clients who I have on contract who have had to pause their projects and then pop out of nowhere with an "I'm ready now" mentality that I've probably been pretty bad at managing, so that doesn't help (your pause clause will definitely be part of my contracts going forward...)

Soo... what do you think? Is it worth it to suck this all up while giving space for my independent authority to grow? Am I killing my work-life balance while having kind of ridiculous thoughts about all the cities that will fall if I start having stricter boundaries with the web designers I've been white labeling with? Do I give up my massive revenue growth in the last year for the sake of... ya know... having a vacation that's actually a vacation?

A:

This is a tough one. However. I think you can tame this beast a bit while you're building authority — it doesn't have to be one or the other necessarily.

You're right though, it's not sustainable. Curious — when clients come and have these demands, do you ever push back? Say something like: Absolutely, I can get that done, here's when?

Pause clause definitely helps, but at the same time you can start to put up better boundaries. A simple thing would be when they pause to tell them "hey, don't expect I will be able to get you right into my calendar when you're ready..."

The pause clause gets used more as a threat (hey, remember, if we stop now, it will cost X to start up again AND we'll have to get you back on my schedule which can take a couple of weeks).

Another thing to consider is a subcontractor. Someone else who can pick up the slack for you, so when things do hit all at once (and sometimes they do, no matter how much control you have over your calendar), you have a safety valve.

That allows you to keep the client under your auspices for future projects and still make some good profit.

The fact that you're mindful of what's going on is encouraging. Boundaries can be scary to enforce, but people respond to them, and you get a huge sense of relief. That make sense to you?

Their response: I do not push back — and that's a mindset piece I know I have to get better at! Despite the super close relationships I have with some of these web designers (and the many, many times they've come back thrilled with how happy their clients were with my work) I'm still convincing myself that one wrong move or one misspoken "no" will send them running.

I'm going to start testing those boundary waters more and more, thanks for the vote of support on that front!

My response:

I bet you anything they're waiting for the pushback and wondering why it's not coming, while also thinking they've got a great deal.

Try this – next time when you want more time – instead of saying yes, or I'll have this right away, say something like: I have a lot of projects in house at the moment, if I got this to you by May X, would that work? IF they push, you can compromise. If they don't? You've just put yourself in charge. You can 'gentle in' so it doesn't feel so overwhelming to you...

Their response:

Stellar advice per usual @Amy. Totally agree that they're probably wondering why I'm simultaneously "so available" and "so booked." Glad I popped this one in here!

My response:

I'm glad you did too – let me know how it works and what you discover when you start to shift what you say/how you work.

Q2: I have a reservation about lead magnets. Most of the time they attract DIYers to whom I suppose I can sell lower ticket items (but that doesn't interest me)... my clients right now are not lead magnet folks. They don't have time to download stuff... mostly they want the job done yesterday and enjoy an exchange of ideas/dialogue. I am way better off working on a cold outreach campaign to gain new clients or networking (LinkedIn is my jam). That being said I love my list and want to build it more. I've been writing weekly to them for about 70 weeks and they are like my referral network/like-minded people/idea testing ground.

So... I've been thinking about treating my newsletter itself as the lead magnet and going the thought leadership route. Any ideas on this? Any ideas on lead magnets that would actually tempt a busy CMO who just got funding (I execute content for them on retainer) or a seasoned executive coach who wants to establish thought leadership (I content coach 1:1)? Thank you!!!

A: You can absolutely do this – it's exactly what I'm doing on LinkedIn.

Maybe let's remove the idea of a traditional lead magnet – some boring PDF you download and never read.

Your audience wants valuable content and expertise. If you can deliver that weekly in a newsletter? It's perfect. If you think about it, lead magnets are typically used so you can get people on your list and then send them your newsletter.

If you can jump over the middle step, why not? I actually think it's easier to subscribe to a newsletter than it is to decide to request a lead magnet, because as you point out, it looks and feels like work. A newsletter feels like less of a commitment, and now they're on your list to be nurtured.

Another point is that too many lead magnets tell people how to do something, rather than share a point of view or talk about processes and reasons to do something. I don't like the "how to" approach, because no one should read your lead magnet and be able to practice your craft (that's like saying "all you need to be an expert is read this piece," which is SO very far from true)!

Bottom line – it sounds like you're already creating the content and getting the eyeballs, so maybe CTAs and a posting strategy that gets people on the NL list?

Does this make sense? I'm having good success with this myself, so I know it works...!

Their response: Yes! Thanks. That puts my mind at ease. I will use LinkedIn at my top of funnel and drive to my newsletter through social. I'm literally breathing a sigh of relief that I don't have to make a lead magnet. Lol. Not that I had to... but you know what I mean...

My response: Well, perfect! Permission granted 😊

Q3: I'm pretty sure I'm overthinking. I'm pretty new to offering website conversion copywriting and brand voice strategy to clients. I've taken the courses, attended the webinars, done the reading, practiced on my own, etc. I'm working on building my authority and planning out my content strategy.

The thing is, I'm "waiting until" (I know, I know) I have finished my website and spruced up (read: created) my lead mag before I fully go live to new clients. I'm super close, but now I'm thinking my lead magnet (mistakes b2b service providers, saas marketers, and solopreneurs should avoid if they want their voice and value to stand out) is too simple? With so few clients under my belt, I'm trying to make sure I put my best foot forward. But now I'm stuck.

So my question: how good is good enough? Can I expect people to join my list with an 'okay' lead mag? I plan to make a truly exceptional one, but I don't have time if I want to have one live before I launch at the end of the month. Can I expect clients to take me seriously and join my list when everything seems/feels so...basic?

I hope this question isn't too basic. I just feel myself going in circles of doubt and I'm struggling to pull myself out. TYIA 🙏

A: Oh, I feel ya. Here's what I'm going to tell you unequivocally:

IT'S GOOD ENOUGH RIGHT NOW.

You have to be willing to iterate. You have to get started. That's the absolute hardest part. Yes, people will sign up and no one is paying that close attention, promise.

It's a very tough thing to let go of (that everyone is watching and you need to be perfect, cos here you go).

But actually, you know way more than you think you do. And here's the key thing to remember: clients don't care what you know; they want to know how you can help *them*.

They care that you have a voice. That you have an opinion and are willing to put it out in the world says something about you. You're real. You're a genuine business person. You've got an opinion!

And listen, this never ends, so you have to get used to being seen, in the mess, in the middle, when you look great. When I did my last rebrand, it took 5 months – I felt self-conscious that whole time. I didn't want to make big moves, I knew how much better (and clearer and dialed in) the new site would be. And yet, no one else cared. They thought my site was fine. I had clients coming to the site and buying and even complimenting on it. So...it was all in my head. But damn, it loomed large.

It was my own head trash, my own limitations I've had to get around each time, as do you. And, it's not easy. And, the circles of doubt will wait for you at the next level. SO.

Make it a discipline thing. Organize the steps and do them.

Decide not to second-guess yourself. Decide to believe me that you're ready enough. And that being bold and taking this step will give you the confidence to take the next one.

Believe me, being exposed (and finding out it's not as bad as you imagine) and getting on with it is way less painful than rolling around in self-doubt and fear. That shit'll kill ya!!!

Seriously, we all go through this all the time, at various levels. while that's not comforting in itself, take comfort in knowing you're on The. Exact. Right. Path. This is what business growth feels like and it's damn uncomfortable sometimes.

You took the boldest move. you're here. You started. You got this. What say you? How does this land?

MORE Q&A:

Q4: Hey @Amy! Okay, so here's where I'm at -- it's taken me a long time (like A LONG TIME) to really get comfortable with my sense of value, my POV, and how I want to position myself in my market. Getting that confidence was *hard*. Now trying to figure out how to handle being in that transition space between doing the dang thing and waiting to be able to put the dang thing on the market? That's harder. (I already wrote new website copy, mapped out my offers, sent it all off to a designer, and am basically on the precipice of being able to talk about it loudly). So if you were me, what would you be doing during this waiting game to feel like you can *sprint* as soon as all the design pieces are done and it's officially ready to launch to the world? (I'm not pivoting fully yet because I still have leads for my old shtick coming in, and I don't want to lose them/lose money right now.)

I'm posting on LinkedIn. I'm posting on Instagram. I'm writing a newsletter. I'm trying to create an engagement plan for who/how to reach out when everything is ready to go. I have plans for how to 12x my content strategy as soon as I can take a breath. But the leads I've got are about to be a bit misaligned. And all the pieces aren't together to *sprint toward the dang thing!!!* And also I'm worried about pushing too hard while waiting or not pushing hard enough.

Is it safe to say I'm a little scared? Is it safe to say a little fear is good sometimes?

Idk....WWAD???? (What would Amy do 🤔)



Yesterday at 9:34 AM

Q5:Hi @Amy,

I have a couple of questions, but you already answered them in recent chats, but I thought they might be of interest:

- Should we be open about using AI in our work? I'm using it as a productivity tool, and never give the raw output to end clients. Something tells me the client could care less how we do our job as long as we help them get results, but maybe using AI (in a good way) could become a differentiator?
- I'm having doubts about my brand voice and style. My target audience is B2B and most of my work is strategic in nature. My head tells me to adopt a corporate/semi-formal communication style and brand, because that would make me seem serious/professional/reliable. But my heart tells me this isn't my style, and it's taking ages to write copy. What do you recommend? Head or heart?



Yesterday at 4:14 PM

A:  Growing pains hurt. I think you're actually doing the exact right thing. The most important thing is to be realigning mentally, while also deciding who you will be targeting and how.

Sounds like you have that engagement plan in place, and the content creation. I don't think it's too soon to get yourself into some "new pools" - I wouldn't do any direct outreach to my most important/valuable leads/contacts (because you do want your asset to be aligned when you do that), but change up your LinkedIn and Insta profiles (if you haven't already) to reflect your new positioning and offerings, and your content as well -- which I think you already have.

It's really easy to get hung up on the website. But truthfully, you're likely paying more attention to it than anyone else is/would be.

^^Hate to be the wet blanket on that. BUT. In most ways, you should act as if it's done. When you get in convos with people you just tell them you're changing things up. I've run three businesses with websites that didn't reflect my current iteration. It felt icky, but it never stopped

me from selling into different markets with different offers. Let me clarify. It did stop me mentally, for a while. But, once I said screw it and just went ahead, it never held me back.

I guess what it boils down to (and I suspect this is what you're sort of doing already) is to get started. Don't wait for the site to be ready and then DO EVERYTHING. You still have that presence to get leads for your previous iteration, so let that be, and then "act as if" -- as if you've changed everything and are addressing a new market.

I remember waiting for my new site to launch and thinking it would be monumental, but no, it was then the work started and it made me wish I had just started it sooner. Does that make sense, resonate? Answer your Q?



Amy Posner

Yesterday at 4:23 PM

A: [redacted] Great question about AI, and I like the subtlety you bring up. I agree 100%, nobody needs to know how you arrive at your end result, or how long it takes you or whether you do your work in a tuxedo, or naked on a sailboat. The work product should speak for itself. Period.

Now, that said, your other point is well taken. AI has become so ubiquitous that I think clients probably wonder whether you use it, and if so, how. So, getting out ahead of that and letting people know you do use it -- as a tool to assist you -- not as a creative partner, is a great idea. What we want to protect from is clients thinking that you're shortcutting somehow, but rather to let them know how you're able to do more for them, using the tool.

And, I think -- to some extent -- you're considered more savvy if you have a command of tools, and if you talk about how you're using them, they don't have to worry and wonder. Especially if you can present it in terms of advantages to them.

What say you?



Amy Posner

Yesterday at 4:30 PM

A:  I LOVE this question. My short answer? Heart.

My longer answer is the reason why. I've seen this over the years -- B2B being considered stodgier, more buttoned up, different than B2C.

That said, I've always believed and taught (when I've taught copywriting) that people make decisions based on emotion and back them with logic. Inside of B2B, you have people making decisions, so the same rules apply.

And, things have become more casual over the years too, so that's also a factor (corporate image, pinstripe suits, etc). Things have loosened up, so the language and marketing can follow.

But truly, I think the messaging was so same-y same for corporate comms for so long that it's grown a bit boring -- stodgy got old, and tired.

It's much more interesting to read something different. Still smart, still appealing to their logic, but remembering they're humans and still operating with the same motivations.

That said, I think it's actually a breath of fresh air to read B2B comms that read like a human wrote them, and presuming a human is reading them.

If you're writing for a company that has a stodgy style guide? I might question it (maybe after you've proved yourself a bit) and point this out to them.

I've had this convo in B2B and it's almost always been received well. As if they didn't consider that's every piece of copy should still be written as if one person is reading it. And person is the key factor there. A human wired to make decisions the way we do!

How's that for an argument?



Yesterday at 4:41 PM

@Amy sound advice!

I like the idea of telling them I use AI to do more for them. Right now I see it as something that speeds up my work – what took me a day to analyze now takes a few hours. I suppose that

means I can get copy and optimization ideas to my clients faster, so they can start testing them sooner than they otherwise would. The sooner they can run tests, the sooner they'll learn from iterations and start improving conversions.

I think it makes sense to talk about how I use AI as part of my process. Right now I focus on how it's streamlined, smooth, and designed to avoid over communication (the antidote to death by Slack message). But talking about how I use AI in my process would, as you say, make me look more savvy (forming a smartness trinity along with the glasses and gray hair) and could convey honesty and openness. I fear it might be a divisive topic (there are lots of AI haters out there) but I guess it depends on how I use it.



Yesterday at 4:48 PM

@Amy As I wrote my question my head was actually screaming "heart, obviously" so I'm glad to see you agree 😊 I'm actually excited by the challenge to bring my voice to B2B copy, though it'll take time to settle into a groove. But every journey starts with a cringeworthy LinkedIn post I'll be ashamed of in 3 months, so here goes...
(Oh, and I gave up writing copy naked on a sailing boat. Turns out it's not covered by my insurance, and also, despite being English, I hate the cold 🥶)



Today at 8:29 AM

@Amy It's funny -- I kind of thought I was just repeating things that you and I had already talked about 10,000 times, but forcing myself to actually ASK a question and get to the heart of what I was thinking actually generated totally different angles of it (and totally deeper levels from you). I feel like de-centering websites a conversation is exactly what I needed to feel more balanced. And re-doing my LinkedIn and Instagram is on my "do ASAP" agenda now. Thank you!!



Amy Posner

Just now

 The sage trinity ftw! Yeah, there are so many great uses of AI in our work - I know people think beyond "Oh you're using AI to do what we hired you for" (writing). And I think it shows a certain savvy that you're putting it to work for you. And a confidence, too. Because there are people hiding their head in the sand, fearing it. It's bold to say you've embraced it, here's how and how it benefits them.



 I LOVE the de-centering website realization. And, working on LI and forging ahead. Because honestly? You're already there. Assets will catch up invariably.

