



Investment in AWAI Propels Boat Captain into Waves of Action — “Retirement” Dreams of Boats, RV’s, and Writing: On Target for 2021

He’s thought of himself as an author ever since he was 13 years old and started journaling in a notebook whose cover read, “Chuck Warren, Author. DO NOT OPEN.” This was the dream that would float around in his mind for more than 40 years as he pursued a life in the boating business for the first 20 and as an IT consultant to small businesses for the next 20 (plus the fun part of boating!). But then there was always that persistent tugging about being a writer.

Needing an Anchor

He even enrolled in the AWAI *Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting* in the early 2000’s. But he says he didn’t have the commitment, the clear direction, or the self-confidence to follow through. At the time, he lived in Florida and worked for boat dealerships, then as a chief engineer on a large research and salvage vessel. In the evenings, he would enjoy taking people out on a boat to watch the sun go down. But a bad back was the start of signals that he needed to switch gears. With that realization came a move to Michigan, where he started his own IT company and transitioned from saltwater to freshwater sailing. By 2016, the IT business had begun to change, and so had Chuck. He loved boating and he wanted to write. In what seems like a serendipitous event, he wrote a fundraising appeal letter for a local animal shelter. It was so well received — and worked! — that a restaurant framed it and hung it on their walls. That’s when he began to reconsider writing. Maybe he did have the right stuff if he could just learn enough and get really prepared.

CASE STUDY:

Chuck Warren

“I did nothing for 40 years because I didn’t think I was good enough. Fear and self-doubt are crippling. Once I actually submitted my writing, instead of just preparing to submit, that’s when I thought just maybe I had something right and should do this for real.”

MEMBER:

Chuck Warren

LOCATION:

Somewhere in Michigan, maybe in a house, or on a boat, or in an RV

OTHER CAREERS:

Boating Industry, IT Consultant for Small Businesses

HOW HE GOT HIS FIRST CLIENT:

Wrote a successful fundraising appeal letter for a local animal shelter

HIS FIRST PAID MAGAZINE ARTICLE:

In a regional publication about transitioning from a saltwater to a freshwater boater

TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:

- *FastTrack to Copywriting Success* Bootcamp and Job Fair
- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*
- *Circle of Success*

He made a New Year's Resolution to be published by the end of the year and got serious, enrolling in various courses and inching toward his goal. Full of hope that he would get solid information about writing for magazines, he attended a writers' conference. When Chuck approached one of the panelists who had offered to answer any follow-ups, he was handed a business card and told to email his questions. Back home after the conference, he did so. Soon came the man's reply: "Don't bother, do something else. It's too hard."

"I almost listened," Chuck said. "I almost listened. Because I had nothing, I had no footing, I almost listened. This guy's been published, so he must be telling the truth. It must be too hard." But he was still determined, not quite ready to give up. Despite that amazingly stark advice, Chuck moved forward with writing copy for his IT customers: a website here, a business letter there, then a blog or two. AND, he submitted boating articles to regional magazines. Success! Four of them were published. BUT something was missing.

Finding His Compass

Chuck decided to enroll for the second time in AWAI's *Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting*. That started his quest to learn more and more, to keep preparing To Be instead of Being.

"I didn't feel like I'd really learned what I needed. I just wasn't

committed enough. I was taking classes and trying to learn and kept telling myself, 'learn one more thing, you're almost there.' Really, it just was 2016 and I was like 'that's it, that's enough.' You need to get to work!"

When a company lost a writer, a friend encouraged him to apply for the position. During the interview, he was planning to show his four published articles to the owner, along with other examples of his writing. "Oh, don't bother," she said. "I read your website and I knew you were hired on the spot." With that, Chuck began writing, writing, writing: all kinds of assignments including business letters, press releases, web content, emails. He wrote them for a wide variety of clients, including animal trainers, home builders, camper rental companies, a divorce lawyer, and many more. During this time, he also learned more about copywriting by researching, networking, and taking courses. What a great feeling to become a published author — not just one article, but now 60 and counting — plus all of the successful writing for his company.

Taking Over the Helm!

With that good solid experience under his belt, he knows he can be the captain of his own copywriting service and still rely on his IT income for support. Chuck has learned many valuable lessons in his journey to find his niche in copywriting. He understands how collaborative copywriting needs to be. He says that he has profited from the comments of his

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clients who wanted him to change this or that. “I wrote it, but you hired me to write this. If you’re not happy with it, I’ll make the changes you ask. I don’t have a problem with that. I’m not some literary genius working on my novel. I’m writing what you’ve asked me to write.” Chuck even wrote to a client to let him know how the client’s input made him a better writer.

Another lesson is about lessons. He has taken full advantage of the wide variety of AWAI opportunities, from classes to Facebook groups to live events. He gets very serious about describing “BB” and “AB.” “Before *Bootcamp*, I was a writer who was thinking about copy and After *Bootcamp*, I was a copywriter who happens to write articles.” He sees this as a pivotal point in his career, having full knowledge that he can become untethered, free to write whenever and wherever he is at the moment, travel in an RV, and captain boats.

“I credit AWAI for a great deal of the success I’ve had. It’s everything from the Facebook groups to the classes to the lessons to the events. All of it feeds into building your self-confidence, building your knowledge, giving you a support system.”

Chuck’s Ultimate Goal is to sail the Great Loop, a journey from Lake Michigan down the Mississippi, up the East Coast, across the Saint Lawrence or through the Erie Canal, and back into Lake Michigan. Copywriting is helping to get him there, and he plans to move from half IT/half copywriting to full time copywriting within two years. “It’s a career I can do from anywhere (so much for retirement!), make a good living, and be able to continue on the path that I really set up for myself.” Chuck has his plan firmly in

place and well on its way to grab that dream of over 40 years ago, that dream to be a writer. He

- declared himself an author at 13
- sailed through a lifetime of experiences getting all the pieces into place
- eagerly sought the advice of others and networked
- gained the self-confidence he needed to dive in and write
- mastered his craft
- polished it with learning opportunities
- anchored his plan to retire in Grand Loop style

He has a clear and focused path forward to support his plan to sail the Great Loop, travel leisurely in his RV, and continue copywriting for fun and profit. What a life!

Conquer Fear, Keep Moving Forward

If Chuck had listened to the naysayer early on, he would have missed the opportunity to publish 60+ articles for local magazines, write web content for a local web design company, create emails, business letters, and press releases for clients such as the shelter, a dog trainer, a divorce lawyer, and the largest homebuilder in the Midwest, just to name a few.

Remember to keep moving forward and conquer fear one step at a time. As Chuck says, “If I hadn’t tried, I never would have known.”

“I’m Chuck Warren. I’m a Writer.”

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Chuck's Tips for Copywriters

- "If you're serious, treat writing as a business."
- "Put yourself out there: approach people and take assignments."
- "Use all the phenomenal resources of AWAI - programs, staff, networking."

Ready to pursue *the writer's life*?

Learn more about the program that has piloted Chuck Warren to his dream life of copywriting, boating, and RVing:

[FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp and Job Fair.](#)

