

# Case study



## Proving the value of professional writing

Writing Machine is enhancing copy quality and saving money for TomTom, the world's leading provider of personal navigation systems.

What happens when you stop using freelancers, and outsource your copywriting to a specialist agency? You would expect that the overall quality of writing would improve. You might also expect greater consistency of both corporate messaging and writing style. But even TomTom was surprised at just how much money could be saved.

Following its first year using Writing Machine, TomTom calculates it has saved more than 20% of its annual copywriting budget. However, when TomTom first talked to Writing Machine at the start of 2008, the highest priority was consistency rather than cost-cutting.

### A challenge of consistency

At that time, the requirement for copywriting services was growing as fast as the business. TomTom defined the personal navigation category, and has enjoyed phenomenal growth, with annual revenue rising from €8 million in 2002 to €1.7 billion in 2007. But whilst this growth was exciting, it was also extremely challenging – particularly for the marketing department.

Although marketing activities were efficiently distributed between a number of different teams, this young company had yet to establish an official writing style. What's more, because most of the writing was carried out by a plethora of freelancers, there was a similar plethora of inconsistent messages and writing styles.

This was the challenge that faced Wayne Meek, TomTom's Copy Co-ordinator. "For a consumer-focused company such as TomTom, brand consistency is vital," says Wayne. "If your brand is saying different things in different places, then it's clearly far harder to build trust with customers. That's why we needed to make sure the same, consistent messages and style were being used in all copy that TomTom produced."



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**Stephan van Kruisselberge**  
Vice President of Marketing  
TomTom

## The solution: A professional writing company

According to Wayne, using so many freelance writers also made commissioning the writing difficult and inefficient. Marketing colleagues, for example, were frustrated at having to brief so many different writers and having to re-explain the same TomTom products and services so often. And if one writer was absent or ill, TomTom would have to find and brief another - with no guarantee the job would then be completed on time.

With a full programme of product releases and marketing activities scheduled for the coming year, the decision was made to find a writing agency to help centralise the copywriting function, improve efficiency and enhance quality and consistency.

"Bearing in mind our aims, we decided to only look at agencies that specialised in copywriting," says Wayne. "We felt the right agency would be able to support us on many different writing projects at the same time."

Following copy tests, Writing Machine was one of only three organisations to be invited to pitch to TomTom in Amsterdam. According to Wayne, Writing Machine stood out from the crowd. "Writing Machine's test copy had real punch and quality," he says. "But more than that, they had experience in producing all the types of copy we needed, and the resources to meet our tight timescales."

## Exceeding expectations

More than a year down the line, the relationship between TomTom and Writing Machine is exceeding expectations. This is highlighted first of all by the significant cost savings TomTom has enjoyed. By outsourcing the bulk of its marketing copywriting activity to Writing Machine instead of a mix of freelancers, TomTom has made cost savings of more than 20% over the past year. Wayne is, not surprisingly, very impressed. "This is just great. I was hoping Writing Machine could save costs by stripping out inefficiency, but I never anticipated this."

Thanks to Writing Machine's work, TomTom marketing copy is now much more consistent in terms of style and quality. Wayne has created a TomTom tone of voice, and a series of product boilerplate documents which Writing Machine writers follow for consistency across all literature.

Importantly, Wayne now feels everyone can trust in the words they receive. This is critical – not least because TomTom is based in Amsterdam, and the majority of the marketing staff speak English as their second language. "I think it's fair to say that Writing Machine has given our copy a breath of fresh air. The writers understand complex product data, distil it down to the most relevant information for our customers, and write about it with clarity and energy."

"My priority was to ensure excellent and consistent copy quality. To be achieving this, and to cut our costs by more than 20% in the process, is fantastic – especially in this day and age."

**Wayne Meek**  
Copy Co-ordinator  
TomTom

In the future, Wayne hopes Writing Machine can become involved in more strategic activities. "Although we're based in Amsterdam, regular face-to-face visits and daily virtual contact is making Writing Machine a real extension of our marketing team. We've already used their help to develop messaging for certain products. I hope to do more of this in the future."

Wayne's sentiments are echoed by TomTom's Vice President of Marketing, Stephan van Kruisselberge. "I am very impressed with the work I see from Writing Machine," he says. "The style and approach they use for TomTom copy is excellent. To be producing such high quality copy whilst saving more than 20% of our costs is testament to the calibre of Writing Machine as a business."

## About the client: TomTom

TomTom is the world's leading provider of navigation solutions and digital maps with approximately 50% market share in Europe and over 20% market share in the US.

The company was founded in 1991 by Peter-Frans Pauwels, Pieter Geelen and Harold Goddijn and publicly listed in 2005. TomTom defined the personal navigation category and has seen phenomenal growth in recent years. Annual revenue grew from €8 million in 2002 to €1.7 billion in 2007. In 2007, annual profit increased by 43% to €317 million. TomTom also has an installed base of over 20 million navigation products sold worldwide.

TomTom NV has more than 3,500 employees working in four business units – TomTom, Tele Atlas, Automotive and TomTom WORK. The company is listed on Euronext Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

## About Writing Machine

### Clear, Concise, Competitive & Compelling

Writing Machine is a leading provider of writing and training services to marketing and sales departments. It has an impressive client list including organisations such as HP, Nortel, TomTom, BT, Alcatel-Lucent, Siemens, Juniper Networks, QinetiQ, Thales and SITA, as well as many others.

What makes Writing Machine different is the time taken at the start of a project to understand and refine key business messages. This understanding is then used to create compelling copy across the entire sales and marketing spectrum, working with web and design partners to deliver websites, corporate brochures, case studies, white papers, press releases, opinion articles, pre-written content for proposals and executive summaries for 'must win' bids.

