

Expert advice and guidance from the
Communications Sector

SUCCESSFUL COPYWRITING

MEET OUR EXPERT

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Based in Cambridge, Jonathan Steffen Limited specialises in corporate and marketing communications. The company's offering extends from strategic communication counsel through copywriting to publishing services.

Jonathan is a freelance writer, editor and communication strategist. A graduate of King's College, Cambridge, he is a widely published author and has worked in international corporate communications for over 25 years.

Jonathan is a member of the Society of Authors, the Royal Historical Society and the Association of Business Historians. His company offers a unique communications methodology - the Narrative Capital™ Framework - that helps organisations derive maximum communication value from their beliefs and history.

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Would you like to get involved with our Communications Sector? Do you have ideas for future events or expertise to share in a guide like this?

Please get in touch with Helen Bosett, Sector Co-ordinator at Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce on 01733 370809 or email h.bosett@cambsccci.co.uk

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How to write successful copy

Copywriting is one of the most challenging of marketing disciplines. It calls for a deep knowledge of your subject-matter and a profound understanding of your target audience. It requires a love of words and a passion for facts. And it demands relevance, focus and concision in every sentence.

Great copy is literally unforgettable. It makes you want to re-read it. It makes you want to tell others about what you have read. It makes you want to engage with the subject, for the subject speaks to you. Great copy leaps straight off the page and into people's hearts and minds.

Can everyone be a great copywriter? Probably not. Can every copywriter be a better one? Certainly. How does that happen? It happens not by thinking about copy, and not by thinking about writing, but by thinking about people...

“Nobody reads ads.
People read what interests them.
Sometimes it's an ad.”
Howard Gossage

Top tips for successful copywriting

- 1 Copywriting is about people**
Who is likely to read your words? What are their expectations and needs, their values and habits? Understanding your readers is the first step to influencing them.
- 2 Copywriting is about change**
Copywriting is not about words as such. It is about using words to change people's perceptions in order to influence their behaviour. What do you want people to do when they have read your copy? This must be the starting-point for everything you write.
- 3 Copywriting is about content**
Whatever your style and whatever your subject, people will only read your words if they convey meaningful content. Any word that fails to add meaning to your copy is a word too many.
- 4 Copywriting is about context**
Where will your words be published? Online or in print, in an article or in an advert? The context in which your copy appears will dictate people's reading behaviours, and must therefore influence your own choice of words.
- 5 Copywriting is about focus**
However compelling your content, you will never be able to convey its full entirety. Select the ideas that speak the most powerfully and let the omissions speak for themselves.

- 6 Copywriting is about conviction**
Whatever your subject, you need to be convinced of your facts if you are to write persuasively. Never make an unfounded claim; never ask the reader to believe anything you do not believe yourself. Research, research, and then research again before you write.

- 7 Copywriting is not about you**
The copywriter writes words for a readership, not for him- or herself. However much you may care about a subject, your feelings are not what matters. It is the subject that matters and the response that the subject evokes in the reader.

And finally ...

Copywriting is about flow. If you find the flow, you'll find the words!

