

wordspring ltd

copywriting that flows

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Hello. I'm Fiona Thompson,
a London-based freelance
copywriter.

I work with charities and businesses, writing vivid, engaging copy that connects with people.

When you hire a copywriter, you don't just need a writer. You need someone who's also a good listener and a creative thinker.

I'll add an extra dimension to your written fundraising and marketing materials by listening carefully to what you want, unearthing the essence of your offer and coming up with creative suggestions to help you get your message across.

If you like the sound of this approach, let's talk.

Photo top left by Michael Pollard

A bit of background

THE  **TIMES**

**The
Guardian**

How I can help you

Do get in touch with me if you would like a fresh pair of eyes on your marketing or fundraising copy. I particularly enjoy working with charities, writing long-form copy such as appeals, case studies, blogs and other web content.



The story so far

I started with a degree in French, worked in fashion and textile publishing as a writer and editor, had a stint in business psychology, then became a freelance journalist and wrote regular features for The Times, The Guardian and Esquire magazine.

This means I'm good at interviewing people and identifying what makes your organisation tick, and writing clear, concise, engaging copy that tells the world what you do and how you do it.



Awards 2018
Jury President
Writing for Design

Languages and music

I've played the harp since I was nine and currently work with a range of music clients, from Help Musicians UK and Decca to the Paris Opera House. I'm fascinated by the crossover between words and music, including the importance of rhythm, contrast and silence.

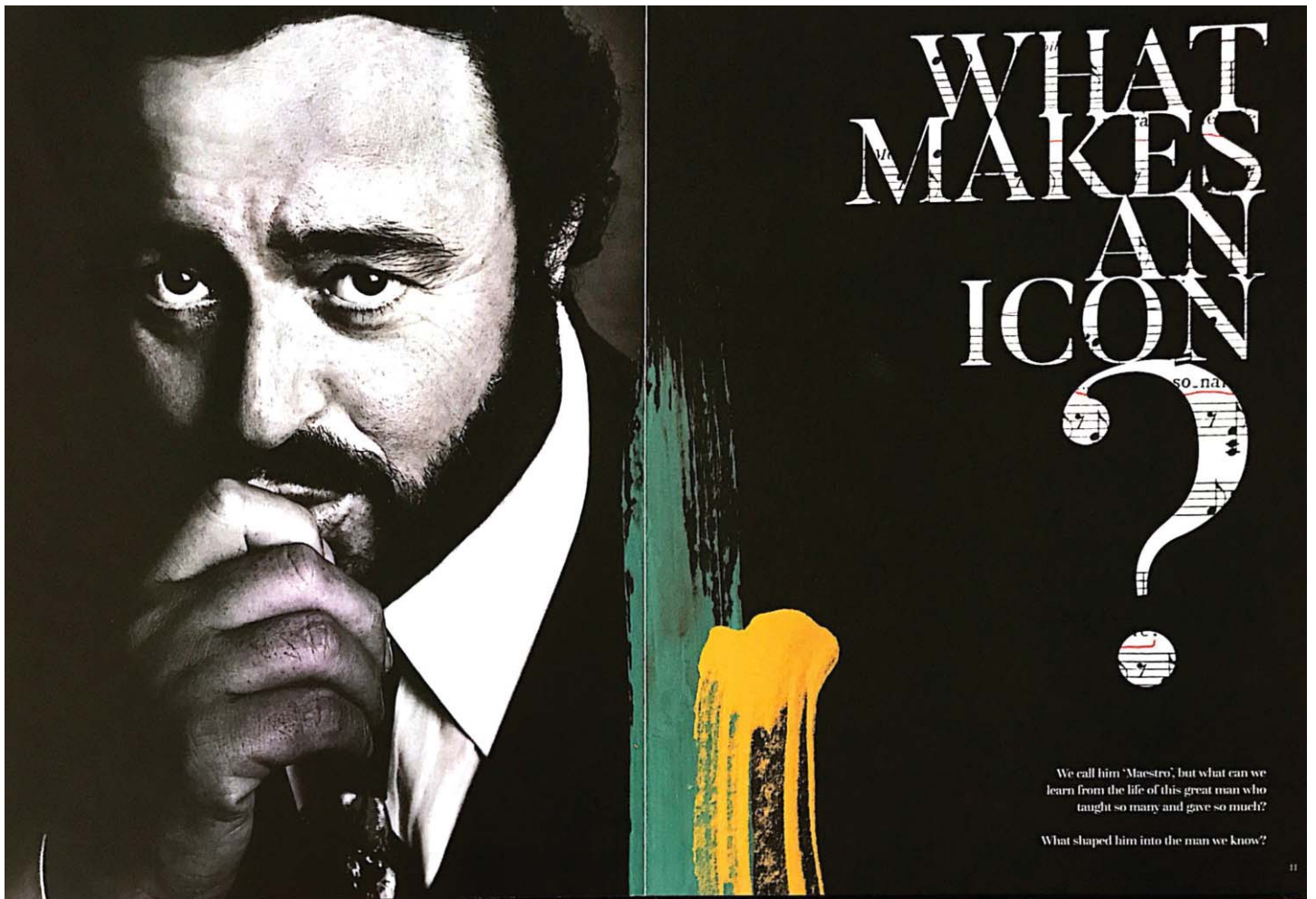
I also speak fluent French and Italian, which is useful when I'm working with international clients.

**animals, arts and heritage, charities,
environment, mental health and
wellbeing, classical music**

**fundraising materials, digital content,
case studies, blogs, articles,
communications training**

Clients

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Paris Opera House | Nike | Nokia | Environmental Investigation Agency |
| Deloitte | Help Musicians UK | The Brooke | Battersea Dogs and Cats Home |
| Kooth / Qwell | The Goldsmiths' Company | Save the Children | LSE |
| The Crafts Council | BBC | Microsoft | GSK |
| Lintbells | LEGO | V&A | Asthma UK |
| Youth Futures Foundation | Fine Cell Work | Decca | Renegade Generation |
| Coca Cola | Imperial War Museum North | Museum of Childhood | National Museum of Scotland |



Decca Luxe - Arts and heritage / Brochures / Music

Decca Luxe, an offshoot of British label Decca Records and part of the Universal Music Group, is celebrating the world's greatest musicians with its Masterpieces collection. This brings together unreleased recordings, new sound technology and skilled craftsmen to create timeless musical objects dedicated to iconic artists.

I contributed to this project by editing and copywriting text for a luxurious book to promote Decca's limited-edition Masterpiece dedicated to Pavarotti. This was a fascinating opportunity to dive into the life of one of the world's most celebrated tenors.

I discovered that Pavarotti loved to paint. He describes the moment when this passion was ignited. "I was playing Tosca's painter, Mario Cavaradossi, and after the show, a friend gave me some brushes, paint and canvasses. I don't know what happened to me but I was seized by an absolute uncontrollable urge to paint. So I started painting with all my heart, day and night, sometimes even forgetting to eat."

We know how to save children's lives...

"Save the Children has always imagined the impossible and sought to make it reality. Our big plan now is to save millions of newborn babies' and children's lives." **Jasmine Whitbread, Chief Executive, Save the Children UK**

It's shameful and it's unjustifiable that in 2009 more than nine million children will die before they reach their fifth birthday. And, unless we act urgently, newborn babies and young children will continue to die for many years to come, even though the world has the knowledge and resources to save them.

In the world's poorest countries, children die from easily preventable and treatable diseases like pneumonia, diarrhoea, AIDS, malaria and measles. Not so long ago, many of these were the big baby-killers in the industrial world. If we've made them a thing of the past in rich countries, we can get rid of them in developing countries too.

Simple steps to saving a child's life

It's relatively straightforward to keep a child alive from birth to school age. It takes just a few life-saving steps. These include:

- good antenatal care
- skilled help during labour
- effective postnatal care
- prevention and treatment of childhood illnesses
- promotion of breastfeeding
- immunisation against killer diseases
- preventative measures against malaria
- prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV
- family planning support.

¹ Sachs J et al 2001, Report of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health: Investing in Health for Economic Development, WHO
² According to the International Monetary Fund in 2007, EU GDP was \$16,905,620 million, while US GDP was \$13,807,350 million.

How much will it cost?

In global terms, cutting the number of child deaths is affordable – just \$25–30 billion a year would reduce the number of deaths by two-thirds by 2015.¹ This is a tiny fraction of the \$700 billion the US government spent on its 2008 financial bailout, and accounts for only about 1.5% of the combined gross domestic product (GDP) of the United States and European Union.²

Every year, 9.2 million children die before their fifth birthday. Of these, two million children die the day they are born.



A baby being weighed at the Save the Children supported clinic in Kroo Bay, Sierra Leone.

...so why are millions still dying?

Every time a child dies it's a family tragedy. It's also a sign that the people with the power to make a difference aren't devoting enough money, and aren't stirring up the political will to help more children to survive.

Every developing country should have plans and policies in place to reduce poverty and stop babies and children dying in such shockingly high numbers. It doesn't cost much to save a child's life. Yet a child still dies every three seconds.

Where are the most children dying each year?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| India 2 million | China 415,000 |
| Nigeria 1 million | Ethiopia 389,000 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo 620,000 | Afghanistan 327,000 |
| | Pakistan 423,000 |

In some countries where the population is lower, proportionately children still run a high risk of dying eg. in Sierra Leone, one in four children die before the age of five.



Sunkari with her surviving daughter Mary, 11 months, who's also sick with diarrhoea and vomiting.

Sunkari's story

"The baby I lost was called Kadiatu. She was sick with diarrhoea. The doctor told me to pay \$23 but I only had \$6. He wouldn't look at my baby. He just got in his car and drove away. She just got worse and worse. I went to the clinic. They couldn't give me any medicine. They said they'd call me when they had some. But the medicine never came, and my baby died. Why did my baby die? Because of poverty. If I'd had \$23 I could have bought medicine for my baby"

Sunkari, mother in Kroo Bay, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2008.

Save the Children – Fundraising / Brochures

World leaders have made a lot of promises about saving babies and children from dying. But are they just empty promises? Save the Children wanted a new brochure to communicate the need for urgent action to governments, businesses, health professionals, policy advisers and campaign activists.

Ogilvy brought me on board to work on this project, together with Save the Children's Brand Manager and Head of Communications. I had just over a week to write the copy, which had to strike the right note – direct, hard-hitting and inspirational – and encourage people to act.

I enjoy working with charities to help them engage with key audiences and inspire action. Do get in touch if you work for a charity and would like to discuss a potential project.

Meet the forest elephant

Forest elephants are smaller than their cousins, the savannah elephants of East and Southern Africa, and many scientists now consider them a separate species.

They live in small family groups and are most often found in the tropical and sub-tropical rainforests and woodlands of Central and West Africa.

To supplement their diet, forest elephants seek out mineral-rich waterholes and 'mineral licks' - areas of soil that contain concentrated minerals.

As a result of the minerals they eat, forest elephants have tusks with a pink tinge, in contrast to the cream-coloured tusks of the savannah elephants in East and Southern Africa.

This pink ivory is highly prized in the Japanese market, where the ivory trade continues to flourish. The deadly demand for pink ivory makes forest elephants a target for wildlife traffickers.



Environmental Investigation Agency - Charities / Fundraising

The Environmental Investigation Agency initially got in touch with me looking for support on writing campaigns for their appeals that fight environmental crime. My first task was to write an appeal to save the forest elephants of West and Central Africa.

The charity asked for my help in:

- Writing an appeal letter to donors.
- Writing an accompanying 'lift piece' to give further detail on the issues.
- Writing web content about the campaign.

Since that time, I have written various other appeals for the charity, as well as long-form web pages to highlight the important work the charity does to save elephants, tigers and pangolins. The aim of these pages, each 3,000 – 4,000 words long, is to make the charity's work in these areas more visible.

Anawim

Helping women make a fresh start

"People think that women's prisons are full of Rose Wests and Myra Hindleys," says Joy Doal, CEO of Anawim, a Women's Centre based in Birmingham. "But when I walk around the prisons where we work, I think, 'Wow, these women are just like me.'"

In fact, in 2020, 72% of women who were sent to prison were sentenced for non-violent offences. Women are more likely than men to commit a crime in order to solve a practical problem such as drug addiction, unemployment, a lack of accommodation or debt.

"Many women also end up in prison due to pressure from a man in their life," adds Joy. This might lead to the woman being coerced into prostitution or dealing drugs. Or take the case of economist Vicky Pryce, who served two months in Holloway prison for accepting speeding points on behalf of her husband, then a cabinet minister.

For a shockingly high number of women, prison compounds the trauma they have already experienced on the outside. Over half of women in prison have suffered

emotional, physical or sexual abuse in childhood, and almost two-thirds are survivors of domestic abuse. Seven out of ten women in prison have poor mental health.

"So many women end up on a trajectory towards prison because of the trauma they've experienced in their lives," says Joy. "Then the prison system takes this traumatised woman and locks her in a small cell on her own for hours on end. It's no wonder if she self-harms and her mental health deteriorates."

Anawim offers life-changing support for women caught up in the criminal justice system. Set up in 1986, the charity provides counselling, training, advice, family support, outreach work and employment in prisons to help women break the cycle of re-offending and move towards a better future.

"We currently support around 700 women a year who are either in prison or at risk of receiving a custodial sentence," says Joy. "We want to keep women out of prison wherever possible and help them deal with their issues in the community."

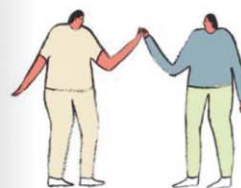
To achieve this goal, Anawim provides support for women at every stage of the criminal justice cycle. It offers early interventions for women who have committed low-level offences, as well as in-prison services, 'through the gate' resettlement, accommodation for women leaving prison and post-release support.

In March 2021, the Goldsmiths' Company Charity awarded £20,000 a year for three years to help fund Anawim's prison in-reach work and associated core costs. "There's a massive need that outstrips resources and we



have to scabble around to put together a jigsaw of different grants," says Joy. "What's wonderful is that we can put this grant towards core costs. It's helped us respond more flexibly, particularly during Covid."

The prison in-reach team consists of eight workers and a Prison and Resettlement Service Manager, who – Meet and build relationships with women in HMPs Drake Hall and Foston Hall while they serve their sentences. – Identify potential residents for Dawn House, the charity's specially designed building that offers accommodation for women who have recently left prison. – Support women 'through the gate' on release and as they settle back into the wider community.



"We get to know women on a personal level and make sure their needs are met, whether it's helping them manage their money, deal with bills or find somewhere to live."

The success of Anawim's prison in-reach work depends on gaining the trust of women who may have come from difficult backgrounds, suffered complex trauma and developed a deep mistrust of authority.

"We take a non-judgemental approach that acknowledges how past trauma has affected women's current situation," says Susie Cox, an Anawim Centre Link Worker at HMP Drake Hall. "This really helps people to open up. It's often the first time anyone has listened to their story."

Susie gives the example of a woman who has been in and out of prison several times. "She's gained the confidence to talk about the domestic abuse in her past. Before, she always looked forward to having a drink on release. Now, she's acknowledged she needs to change and has asked me to accompany her on the day she leaves prison. It's a huge sign of progress."

"The support we offer to women after release is crucial," says Andrea Sterling, Anawim's Prison and Resettlement Worker. "There are such high rates of recidivism – about 58% of women end up back in prison in the first few weeks."

"Many women are overwhelmed when they come back into the community. They often have no friends or family nearby and they really need the support that Anawim provides. We get to know women on a personal level and make sure their needs are met, whether it's helping them manage their money, deal with bills or find somewhere to live."

Despite the considerable barriers that female ex-prisoners face, Joy finds them inspiring. "I'm bowled away by their resilience and strength in the face of adversity. They're still smiling. I think they're amazing."



The Goldsmiths' Company - Articles / Charities

The Goldsmiths' Company, one of the City of London livery companies, has a long tradition of making a substantial contribution to national life. Since it was founded seven centuries ago, it has set up partnerships that make a positive, lasting impact both on the trade it serves and on the lives of people in diverse communities across the country.

I was delighted to be asked to write 'The Story of Skills' – a series of stories about the charities that the Goldsmiths' Company has been supporting.

For this project, my task involved interviewing the founders of the charities supported by the Goldsmiths' Company, then weaving quotes, stats and project outcomes together to create satisfying stories. To write 'The Story of Skills', I delved into the work of Anawim (a women's centre in Birmingham), The Clink Charity, Fine Cell Work and the Bounce Back Project – all on the theme of prisoner rehabilitation.



Interview skills workshop with Fiona Thompson

How to put people at ease, ask the right questions and get great quotes

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Kooth / Qwell – Training / Articles / Blogs

Supporting people's mental wellbeing is critical at any time, but particularly in the aftermath of a pandemic. Kooth and Qwell offer safe, free, confidential mental health support for young people and adults respectively through their online platforms.

The head of content initially asked me to deliver writing and editing workshops for their content team. Subsequently, I created and delivered a workshop on interviewing skills for the team.

I also write content for the site on a variety of topics related to mental health and wellbeing. The starting point for these articles is usually an interview with one of the team's psychologists, with the aim of sharing useful, practical information that helps people deal with their day-to-day concerns.

PLAYING A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE CITY OF LIGHTS

Paris attracts more international visitors than any other city in the world, largely due to its heritage and the extraordinary variety of arts and cultural activities it has to offer. It is home to some of the world's most important museums, most prestigious designers and most iconic buildings.

The Opera national de Paris, with its two legendary venues – Palais Garnier and Opera Bastille – plays a vital role among the City's internationally recognised cultural institutions.

Seminal operas and ground-breaking ballets for 350 years

A RICH HERITAGE OF SUCCESS

The Opera national de Paris is celebrated worldwide for its artistic and cultural heritage, the outstanding quality of its programmes, its artistic savoir-faire, its dynamic repertoire and the exceptionally creative nature of its opera, ballet and dance productions.

Since the beginning, we have embodied a distinctive pioneering spirit. The first French opera was created for Opera national de Paris and classical ballet, as we know it, was invented on our stage.

A WORLDWIDE REPUTATION FOR ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

We are known for our highly original productions that combine the best of centuries-old artisanal skills with ground-breaking technology to create unforgettable moments that touch audiences around the world.

*✦ The Paris Opera Ballet
and the School come together
for a gala performance
at Palais Garnier*
© AGATHE POUPENY / ONP

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Paris Opera House – Arts and heritage / Brochures / Music

As a Francophile, harpist and classical music lover, it was an amazing opportunity to be asked to write a new brochure for the Paris Opera House.

The brief was to write a brochure to introduce the skills and experience of the Paris Opera House to cultural organisations overseas. So if, for example, a city in India, China or Brazil was thinking of setting up an opera house, this brochure would showcase the expertise of Paris Opera House professionals who could help.

The brochure covers everything from the opera's two world-class venues, cultural milestones over the centuries and innovative commissions through to artisanal skills, set design and highly technical staging machinery.



Coca Cola - Internal communications / Storytelling / Training

There's something magical about storytelling. In a world where we're assailed by information on every side, stories still have the power to draw us in and engage us.

I worked with the communications agency, Radley Yeldar, to create and deliver a series of storytelling webinars for Coca-Cola Hellenic, one of the world's largest bottling companies. The training aimed to enable internal communications professionals to source and write stories that would populate a new storytelling platform on the company's website.

Working closely with the agency, I created a series of three two-hour webinars on the subject of storytelling. These ran over the course of two weeks and covered an introduction to storytelling for business, a look at best practice, and practical ideas on how people could source and write stories for themselves.

What people say

"You picked up the baton with the most basic of briefs and just got on with it. Not only was your writing spot on, you also handled communication with our own people and clients fantastically well."

Jenny Hardy, Director, Gowling WLG

"Fiona's inquisitive nature helped unearth the uniqueness of the proposition – producing elegant and engaging copy that gave the brand immediate understanding and personality. A great job, delivered on time, on budget and with a smile."

Kevin Cauldwell, Founder, Cauldron

"Fiona is an absolute pleasure to work with. She can take the bare bones of a brief and turn it into impactful and beautifully written copy, designed to appeal perfectly to your audience."

Carly Vincent, Philanthropy Executive, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home

Fiona isn't your average copywriter; she really gets under the skin of a brief, a subject matter and an organisation."

Christine Brown, Communications Manager, Help Musicians UK

"Fiona brings energy to our team and her enthusiasm and creativity are contagious!"

Elisabeth Michau, Head of Fundraising, EIA UK

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