



Thought Leadership Writing Incubator Program

For Harvard Alumni Entrepreneurs

By Application Only

September-December 2022

By Rhea Wessel and team

Program Overview

The Thought Leadership **Writing** Incubator Program by the Institute for Thought Leadership is designed to help HAE members and guests find, frame and write their best stories.

By doing so, you can position yourself and your company as the go-to experts in your niche.

Taught by journalists, our program gives you the skills and mindset you need to share more knowledge in the form of stories. This helps you gain visibility and win the trust of your audience, critical steps in the entrepreneurial process.

The stories you create won't be blah-blah content. They will be stories born of your thought-leadership niche that help your audience begin to solve some of the highly complex problems they face.

By application only, the program gives you:

- The **ability** to write better, faster and with a process that makes writing less “painful”



- **Less time wasted** on writing stories that are too academic or technical
- **Skills in articulating value** and communicating that value to clients and investors
- **Methodologies and tools** to establish a long-term writing and ideation habit
- The **confidence** you need to publish your ideas and have conversations with colleagues, clients and investors about them

After the cohort is selected, the program begins with our **Write Like a Thought Leader Story Boot Camp, the kick-off training**. The boot camp will be broken down into 2 x 3-hour sessions and held online.

In the boot camp, you will write your first article about your business.

You will then be asked to sign a **commitment letter** in exchange for the training and professional development you are receiving at a greatly reduced cost. We recommend that you write a total of 3 articles over the 3 months.

Our program does not just leave you hanging after the initial training in September. It is designed for long-term enablement – therefore the name “incubator.”

Once you are committed, you will begin creating your articles with the help of **your personal story coach** who meets with the you twice a month for 1 hour to discuss any blocks you’re having and review your texts line-by-line to help improve them.

You will also have the opportunity to attend hosted, online co-writing sessions and compete to win an award for your article.

Here is our process:

Phase 1 – Gearing Up – September 2022

Focus: Gaining skills and empowerment

- Cohort selection based on applications
- The Write Like a Thought Leader Story Boot Camp for all participants. Write your first draft. (2x3-hour workshops)



- You will receive a copy of Rhea's book, Write Like a Thought Leader
- You will do a self-assessment and set goals
- Commitment letter from participants (eg. "I commit to write at least 3 articles during the program.")

Phase 2 – Gaining Momentum – Oct/Nov 2022

Focus: Establishing a personal thinking and writing practice with story coaching and writing support

- Let the writing begin. You will draft your articles on your own and then meet with your **assigned story coach** (2 x 1 hour a month for 2 months)
- Story coaching is not simply an editing session. This is where the skills that were instilled during Boot Camp are turned into capabilities.
- You have the option to visit hosted, drop-in group writing sessions to carve out time for writing and get support
 - Group writing sessions are a key format for getting words on paper and making sure you cultivate the ideation and writing discipline.

Phase 3 – Program End - December 2022

- The program ends in late November when you submit your best article to be judged by our jury of journalists
- We ask that you take time to fill out our program survey and give feedback
- Your gains and successes in the program will be called out on social media during the program
- We will hold an awards ceremony and feedback session

Dates

All dates will be posted here later:

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=ZnZpc2R2YXUzZm5wYzJyNTA0ZjQzNjQ4ZGtAZ3JvdXAuY2FsZW5kYXluZ29vZ2xlMnNvbQ>



Key deadlines:

- Application deadline – Thurs. Sept. 8 at 10:00 p.m. EST
- Notification of acceptance: Fri. Sept. 9 at noon EST
- Payments due: Mon. Sept. 12 at noon EST

Meet the cohort/program Q&A session for participants:

- **SAVE THE DATE:** Tues. Sept 13 from 11 a.m.-12 p.m. EST

Tentative Instruction Dates

- **SAVE THE DATE:** Story Boot Camp Session 1 – Tuesday Sept 20 from 11 a.m. -2:00 p.m. EST
- **SAVE THE DATE:** Story Boot Camp Session 2 – Tuesday Sept 27 from 11 a.m. -2:00 p.m. EST

One-on-one story coaching

- By appointment with your assigned editor

Tentative group co-writing

- Oct. Session 1 – Tues. Oct 11 from 11-1 p.m. EST
- Oct. Session 2 – Tues. Oct 25 from 11-1 p.m. EST
- November Session 1 - Tues. Nov 8 from 11-1 p.m. EST
- November Session 2 - Tues. Nov 29 from 11-1 p.m. EST –
DEADLINE TO TURN IN ARTICLES TO THE JURY

Awards session and program feedback/testimonials

- Tues. Dec. 6 from 11-1 p.m. EST

Application deadline

Thurs Sept. 8 at 10:00 p.m. EST at

<https://tinyurl.com/HAEF22WritingIncubator>



Maximum number of participants

15

Price

\$199, payable to HAE

What we ask in return

- In return for participating in the Incubator, the Institute would like to ask you to give detailed feedback about the experience and, if you wish, provide testimonials
- We will record all sessions. By participating, you agree to being recorded and agree to our use of snippets from the sessions for marketing purposes

Participants' time commitment – overview

Time commitment required	Phase 1 Gearing Up	Phase 2 Gaining Momentum
<u>HAE Members and Guests</u>	Write Like a Thought Leaders Story Boot Camp – 2 x 3-hour workshops	6-8 hours a month to develop and write your article (x 2 months). This includes 2 x meetings with your personal editor Optional: Weekly group co-writing (like a drop-in university writing center)



About the team



Writer and educator:
Rhea Wessel

Rhea is founder and head of The Institute for Thought Leadership. A former finance and tech journalist, she is now focused on helping individuals and companies identify their thought leadership niche, articulate story ideas around that niche and tell better stories.

As a journalist, she wrote thousands of stories for magazines and newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal, The New York Times and CFA Magazine. More recently in her work for companies, Rhea has written and edited thousands more stories about more than 30 industries. She is an American based in Kronberg, Germany.

Rhea is currently serving as an entrepreneur in residence for Harvard Alumni Entrepreneurs. Her book, Write Like a Thought Leader, was published in 2022.

Find more here: www.instituteforthoughtleadership.com
or <http://www.rheawessel.com>



Writer, facilitator and instructor
Roger Malone

Roger is a message strategist, editor and writer with more than 30 years' experience in corporate communications and mass media.

He helps senior officials and executives create and deliver influential content across channels. Roger, an American, is based in Zagreb, Croatia.

Find more here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rogermalone/>



Writer, facilitator and instructor
Maria Atanasov

Maria Atanasov is a prolific writer and editor who has worked for global multimedia publications like the Wall Street Journal and the BBC, as well as corporations like MSC Cruises. She has written news, politics, careers, management, finance, lifestyle and real estate.

Find more here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mariaatanasov/>

About the Institute

The Institute for Thought Leadership is owned and run by former journalists. We are specialized in ideation, concept development, writing and editing. We help subject-matter experts gain the tools they need to find their best ideas and frame those ideas to make them useful – for themselves, for the business, for their careers and for the greater good.

We use our language and narrative skills to help you identify the salient kernel of an idea and pull it out of a jungle of other ideas.

Find more here: www.instituteforthoughtleadership.com



Sample Agenda

Write Like a Thought Leader

Workshop

Overview – Story Boot Camp

In Part 1, Find your Niche (1 hour 30 min), you will consider your platform and what subject-matter expertise you want to be known for with your audience.

You will articulate your thought-leadership niche as a statement that combines your expertise, your unique viewpoint and your passion/purpose.

Ideas covered:

- What is thought leadership and what characterizes a thought leader?
- How to connect dots about your own work to get a new view on what you do
- The importance of thinking in story

In Part 2, Frame your Stories (1 hour 30), you will brainstorm story ideas that will help you find new ways to express your ideas and make them more accessible to a wider audience. This training is based on the Story-Finding System created by Rhea Wessel.

Ideas covered:

- Understand the difference between sharing facts and telling stories



- Create a list of story ideas born of your thought-leadership niche that you can begin writing immediately

In Part 3, Flesh it out (3 hours), you will write the first draft of the article you framed before lunch. This is an article that is born of your thought-leadership niche.

Ideas covered:

- Understand the ingredients of a good piece of writing in the thought-leadership style
- Learn how to set up your article in a logical way that captures the attention of your audience
- Write a solid first draft