

Write Like a Thought Leader –

CPA Society

Houston January 2024

By Rhea Wessel



Overview

Drill down: Part 1 – Find it

What is thought leadership?

Find your thought leadership niche

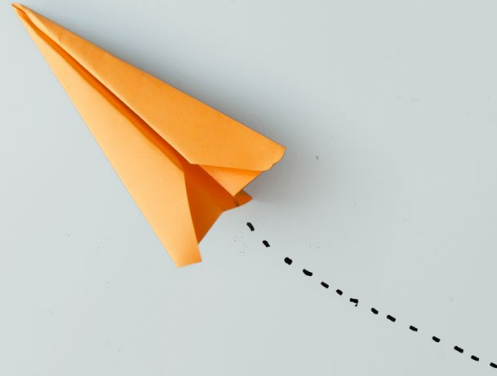
Overview: Part 2 – Frame it

Find and frame story ideas born of your thought-leadership niche

Overview: Part 3 – Flesh it out

Write your first draft of a story born of your thought-leadership niche.

Flesh out your story.



Write like a thought leader

What is a
thought leader



Thought leaders are...

Subject-matter experts who:

- Give useful advice
- Publish widely
- Influence their field
- Steer the conversation
- Set the agenda

How do they do it?

Thought leaders:

- Think conceptually
- Explain visually
- Simplify the complex
- Provide guidance and insight through story

Three steps to thought-leadership writing

STEP
01

FIND IT
FIND YOUR
THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP NICHE



Five types of thought- leadership writing

A body of short-form work can add up to thought-leadership writing

01. 

Short-form, first-person articles

Such as LinkedIn articles (not posts), Medium articles or blogs

02. 

Magazine-length reported stories

Feature-style reported articles based on research and multiple interviews. Includes quotes. May include data.

03. 

In-depth interviews

Deep-dive interviews, presented in writing in Q&A format

04. 

Studies*

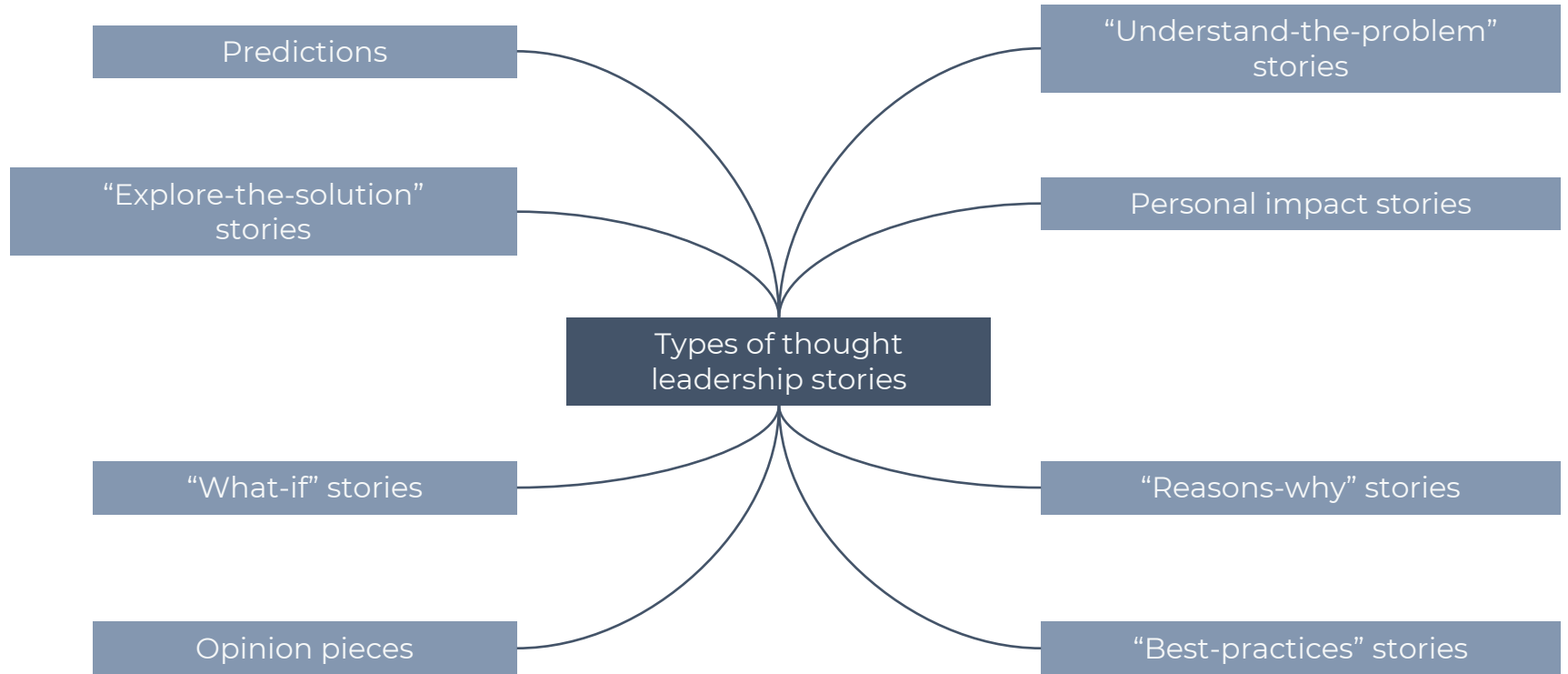
Studies on an industry, process, product or service. Based on proprietary data or unique viewpoint/synthesis.

05. 

Books*

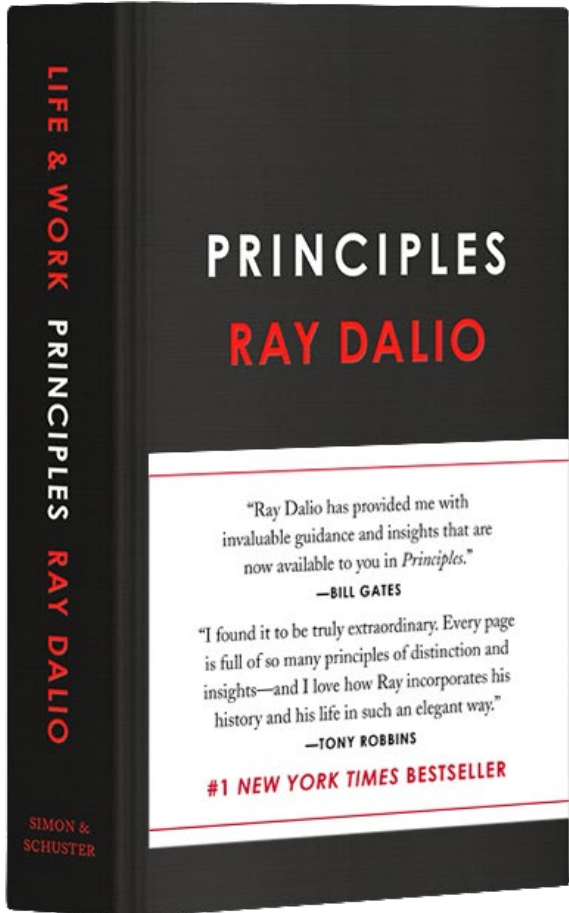
Books about a subject-matter that present it in a new and fresh way.

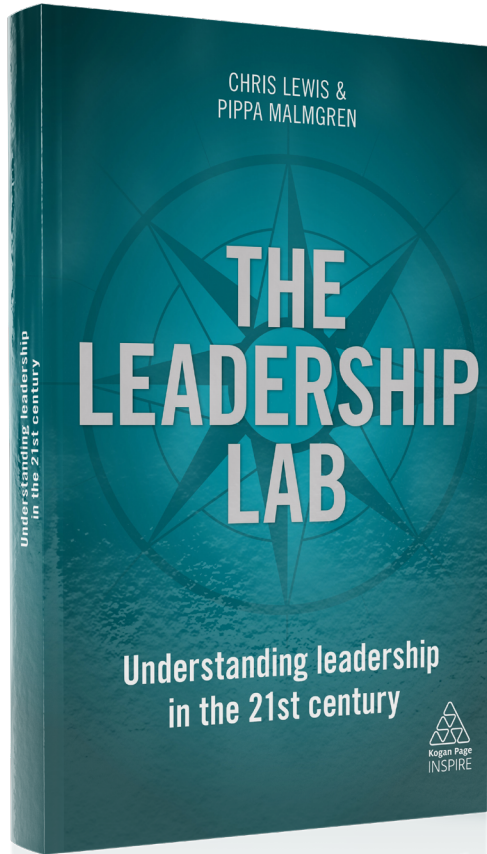
* Studies and books can be thought-leadership writing on their own





Who is already
writing/blogging?

Which **subjects**?







Pippa Malmgren · 1st 
Co-Founder at H Robotics Limited, Inspiring 50, Top 100 Women in Tech, NED
London, England Metropolitan Area · [500+ connections](#) · [Contact info](#)


Robotics

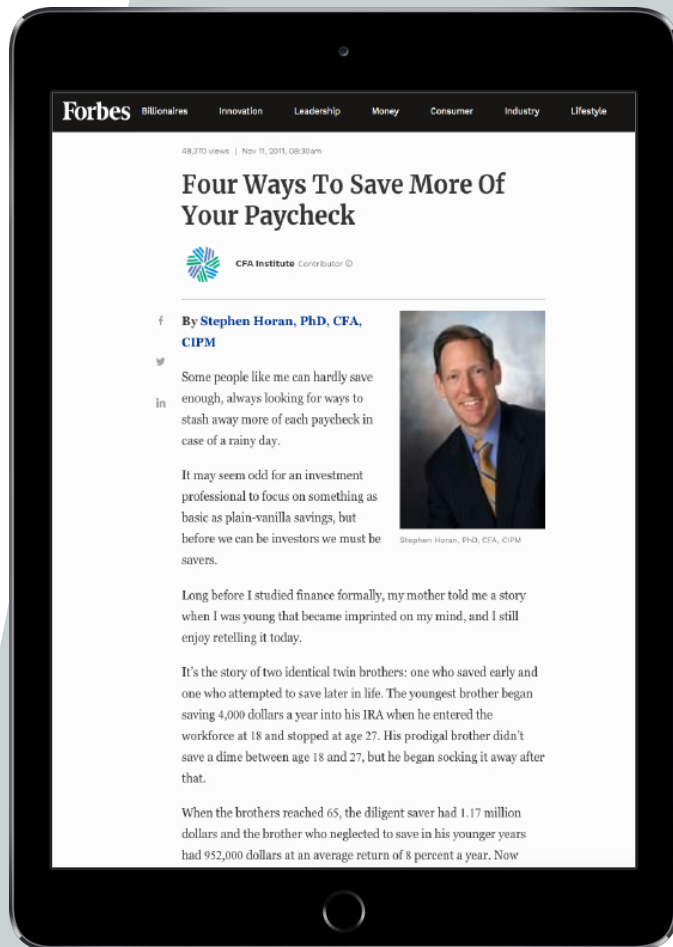
[Message](#) [More...](#)

 H Robotics Limited
 London School of Economics and Political Science

Four Ways to Save More of Your Paycheck

By Stephen Horan, PhD, CFA, CIPM

48,000+ views



With your neighbor: 2 min each

Who are some
thought leaders in
your niche that you
admire



What do these people
have in common?

Thought leaders **give
away their knowledge
for free.**

TRUST.

Other reasons are...

- Help explain the **value of what you do**
- Boost your **career** – pave the way to the next step
- Build your personal **brand**
- More?

In writing, what's the trick for coming off as a **thought leader**?

Using the **journalistic** approach to story-finding.

Then deliver like a **journalist**:

- Colorful intros
- Conversational tone
- Includes data, quotes & statistics, but not too much
- Short sentences
- Short paragraphs
- Fast-moving
- Strong headlines

It also means using
your sense of **humor**

“What a coincidence!
I’m a thought leader
too!”



What a coincidence! I'm a thought leader too!

Step 1: Find It

Your thought- leadership niche



© Your Thought-Leadership
Story Sweet-Spot by Rhea Wessel

5 minutes total



What is your
area of expertise?

**Why do
you love it?**

Example Rhea:

Independent Business Owner

I want to be seen as an authority in:

(insert niche topic that you burn for)

thought leadership writing/ story-finding

Because I... (insert higher goal / greater good you're after related to niche topic)

**like to help others articulate and spread good ideas /
to help solve some of humanity's biggest problems**

which will... (insert business/personal goal)

**build my business and enable me to live the life
I want to live.**

Step 2: Frame It

Starting points for
finding **story angles**.

- Your opinion
- Your knowledge
- Your process
- Your criticism (of methodologies/conclusions)
- Your advice
- Your reactions
- Myths you can debunk
- Best practices
- Ethics in your niche

Headline types – Examples From Rhea's Stories

#1 Numbers

10 ways to... 5 secrets for... 7 reasons why...

Four ways to save more of your paycheck

Forbes

#2 How to + Action (do something) + Unique benefit

How to induce sleep without drugs

BBC Capital

#3 Highlight mistakes

Speechless: Three big mistakes of public speaking

BBC Capital

#4 Clever language

Business Schools Set Course For Chartered Waters

WSJ

#5 Questions

Is your colleague pure evil?

BBC Capital

#6 Bold statements

Take your power back from a control freak

BBC Capital

What is this type
of headline/story
angle good for?

It is an
“enabling”
constraint.

Case: Our work with Harvard Alumni Entrepreneurs

A model that helps companies
tackle the TIME and BUDGET
problem

Thought leadership is not about
repackaging ideas.

It's about cultivating **new ideas.** That function cannot sit within an ivory tower.

“Operationalize” writing by your subject-matter experts

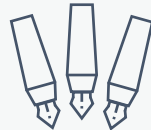
Program:



**Story Boot
Camp**



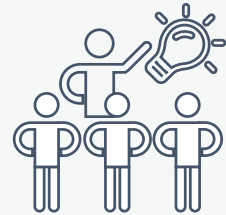
**Story
Coaching**



**Hosted Group
Co-Writing**



**Short theory
sessions**



**Ideas coaching
for leaders**

20+ Thought Pieces for LinkedIn in 6 weeks (or 1 day)



TOTAL

20+ articles

Source: Project experience, including our work with Harvard Alumni Entrepreneurs

VISIBLE EXPERT

CONFIDENT

**GAINING
CONFIDENCE**

RESISTANT

3 - SUSTAINED IDEATION

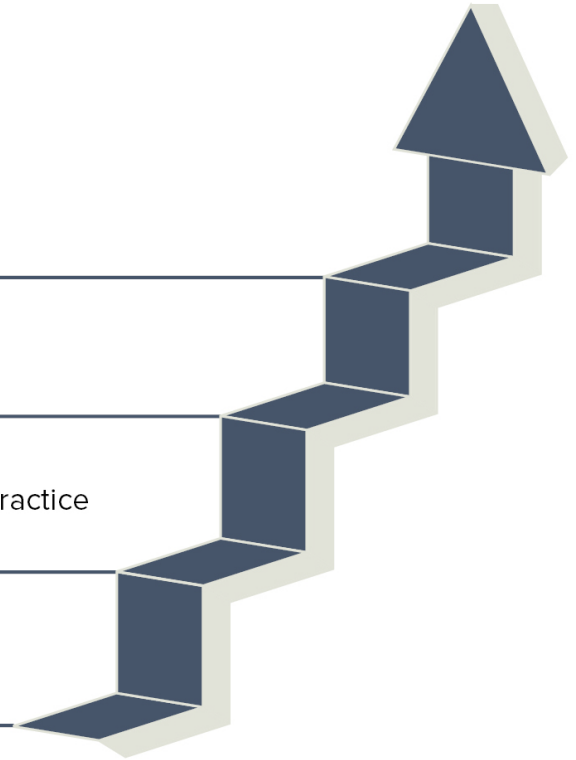
Additional ideas and story coaching for the journey to thought leadership

2 - GAINING MOMENTUM

Establishing a personal thinking & writing practice with story coaching and writing support

1 - GEARING UP

Gaining skills and empowerment



Watch an info session about our
Thought-Leadership Writing Incubator
for Harvard Alumni Entrepreneurs



[Watch here](#)

AI for Individual Thought Leaders

2 Steps to Thought-Leadership Writing At Scale

Thought-Leadership at Scale



Step 2: Be heard.

On top of your base content, you're publishing original ideas regularly

4-6 full-length articles a MONTH, ongoing

With a base of SEO-optimized content, you're finally findable

Step 1: Be found. Create the base of SEO content you need just to be found

3-4 full-length articles a WEEK for 6 months

Level 0: Not publishing ideas regularly

Thought-leadership writing

AI-assisted, SEO-Optimized content

Coaching and Writing Offering

- One-on-one coaching with Rhea to hone your ideas and message and generate your base content
- 16 x SEO-optimized posts PER MONTH for 3 months - e.g. a minimum of 48 posts
- 2 x SEO-optimized 3,000-word articles in the first 3 months
- Guidance and light editing of your own writing of original thought-leadership articles
- Money-back guarantee
- Use code: CPAJAN24



Limited offer – Until Feb 1

20% off package – Use
CPAJAN24

\$2,500/month

Q & A



TURN YOUR
EXPERTS
INTO
THOUGHT
LEADERS

Rhea Wessel

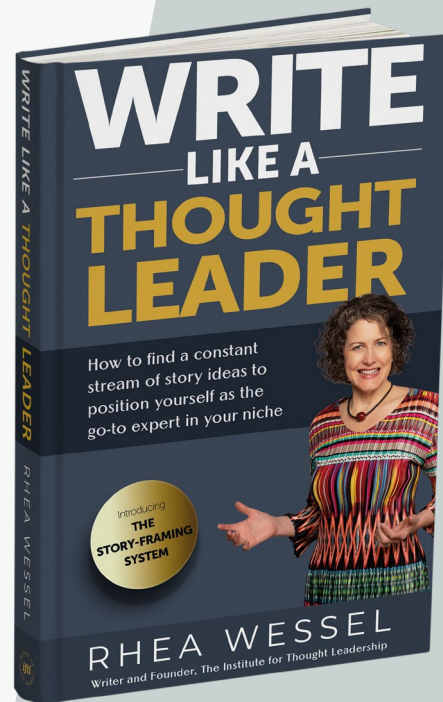
Founder and Head
The Institute for Thought Leadership

Author of:
Write Like a Thought Leader

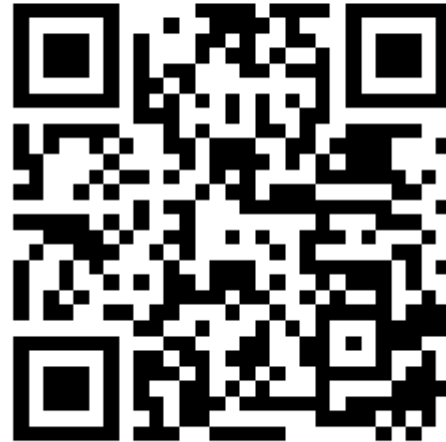
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Please circulate my slides but please
do not publish them online.



Schedule an
appointment
with Rhea here



Step 2: Frame It More

Live **story-framing** demonstration

- Say your niche/topic
- Who is your reader?
- What is their problem you're trying to address?
- We're looking for adjacent subjects

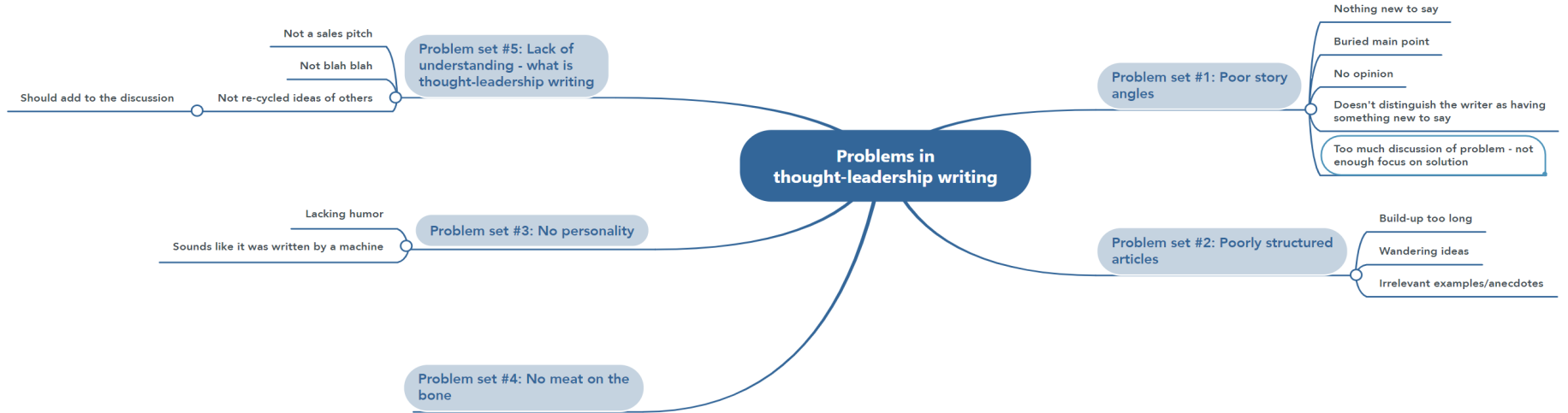
Deconstructing what we did:

How we found
cool story angles

The 5-Step Story-Framing System

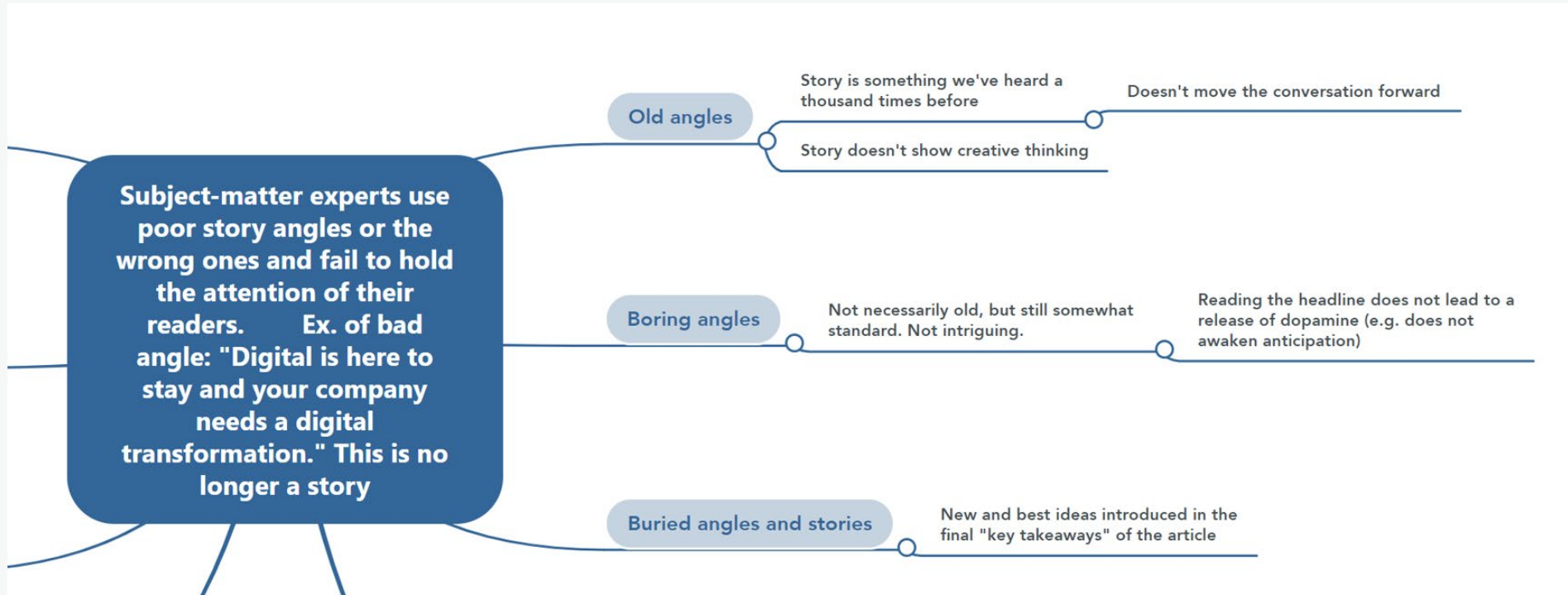


Rhea's Level 3 mindmap – Problems in my niche



Note: In this map, we look at the general problem landscape before drilling down on one problem faced by one audience

Rhea's Level 4 mindmap – One problem faced by one audience - Details

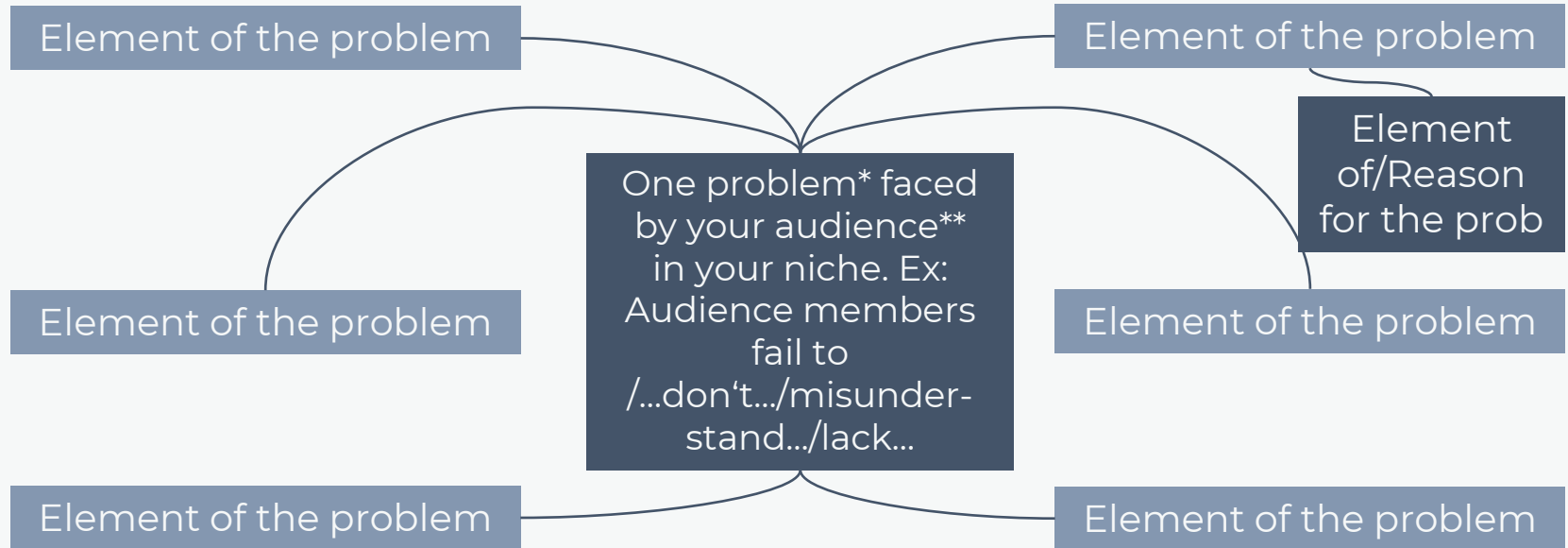


Note: By breaking down the problem, we can find "adjacent" story angles. These allow us to say the same thing over and over again in a fresh way

Rhea's headlines.

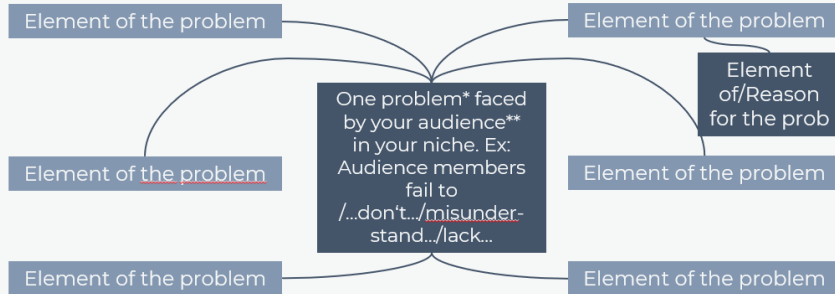
- Three ways to improve any story you write about your business
- The Write Way: Bringing your personality to the page
- You're not a dud. Don't make your writing one either
- How nut grafs can help keep your story on track
- With this story-framing process, you'll never write another boring story again

Mindmap the problems related to your niche subject
Look for **adjacent** subjects – Keep your reader in mind



*Problem is one you know a lot about **Choose only one audience

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*Problem is one you know a lot about **Choose only one audience

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