

COURSE OUTLINE

Best Practices in Communications: Writing with Impact

The goal of this workshop is to elevate your corporate affairs team's writing to the next level. Attendees learn how to see their written content from the reader's point of view; how to be structured about identifying desired impacts; how to understand different audiences' needs; how to see writing as a constant series of choices – around style, placement, structure and content; and how to edit and refine their own work appropriately as a result, zeroing in on the content's core message.

It is an interactive session, where we work collectively on interrogating styles, techniques and structures in different pieces of writing – both public content and their own work. We then hardwire that formal learning by having attendees create fresh content of their own, which is then reviewed and rewritten in-session by the group. The training is divided into two parts. These can be done on the same day around a natural break or can be split across two separate sessions.

Part 1: Key principles

- **Storytelling impact:** How to focus your writing on the audience's perspective, so that articles, press releases and social media posts resonate from the first line.
- **Style:** Simple techniques to improve the elegance and flow of your communications content.
- **Structure:** How to use classic journalistic and storytelling structures to add greater impact and focus to your writing.
- **Strategy:** How to be systematic about content, so that you're building towards a clear strategic business goal – and how to do that without simply regurgitating corporate slogans that risk losing the reader.
- **Science:** Learn how people read online, in print and on smartphones, so you tailor your written communications to the ways people absorb information today – online, casual, and fleeting.

Part 2: Applying your learning.

The class is given an in-depth written scenario about a fictitious company – a report, detailing the company's commercial situation, history, forward strategy and reputational challenges, and a series of recent/upcoming commercial developments, product releases, new appointments, key decisions, etc.

Individually or in pairs (depending on the size of the group), class members then find a story angle from within that scenario and write one or more of the following:

- internal news article
- internal feature / case study
- CEO email
- press release
- series of social media posts
- internal pitch document / proposal / memo

We then go through their finished work on-screen and “live edit” it – allowing for the team to justify their choices, challenging them, and asking the rest of the class to suggest their own additions or alternative edits. The original writer then rewrites a fresh version, incorporating the feedback.