

Made to Stick Study Guide

Made to Stick by Chip Heath

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Summary

“Made to Stick – Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die” by Chip Heath and Dan Heath is a book about finding, adhering to and conveying one’s “core issue.” The authors stress the importance of simple messaging based on an individual’s or group’s core issue. By simplifying the message and provide the fundamental purpose or value of a concept or organization, the target audience will be able to grasp it immediately.

Southwest Airlines’ core issue is its low fair. Everyone one in the organization is aware of this fundamental company value and are trained to work toward that goal. The message is simple and clear and therefore effective. James Carville was the national campaign manager for Bill Clinton’s 1992 presidential campaign. Carville, of course, was a huge supporter of Clinton but the candidate had a habit of talking too much and confounding the staff as to what the fundamental message of the campaign was. To dispel any misunderstandings, Carville took a white board one day and wrote, “It’s the economy, stupid.” The message was for the staff. It said much more than those few words. It fundamentally told the staff to ignore Clinton and focus on the economy. He had to stop Clinton from burying the lead.

The authors discuss effective elements of messaging once one’s core issue is determined. They describe how an element of surprise or the unexpected can be intriguing and draw the interest of target audiences. One professor started his lectures with a mystery that he revealed at the end of class. He noticed that students no longer left class early or lost interest. They wanted to find out the answer to the mystery.

Abstract appeals to students or potential customers are perfectly acceptable but they aren’t engaging. By providing concrete samples the concept comes alive and can make the important connection with the audience that is essential for buy-in. The messenger who delivers the message must be credible. Experts in the field and those with hands-on experience have credibility. Those learning about new concepts from someone they deem credible are more likely to trust the validity of the information.

Appealing to a person’s emotions is a proven way to get one’s message across as are anecdotal stories that everyone can relate to. When a nurse is certain that a newborn is having heart trouble in the neonatal intensive care unit of a hospital, she doesn’t trust the heart monitor that indicates his heart is fine. She listens for a heartbeat with her stethoscope but there is none. The heart monitor was malfunctioning. The baby was treated for his heart problem and lived. Others refer to relatable stories like this as a comparative technique.



Chapter 1: Simple

Summary

All operations in the Army originate from orders from the President of the United States. The orders filter down through the ranks down to the individual foot soldier. A lot of time, effort and resources go into planning. Unfortunately, the plans often turn out to be useless. Combat is a volatile and unpredictable undertaking. What actions the enemy will take is unknown.

Colonel Kolditz believes that plans are useful; however, they don't work in the actual application of them on the battlefield. In the 1980s, the Army adapted a planning process called Commanders Intent (CI). A CI statement appears at the top of every order. The statement contains the big-picture end goal of the operation. The CI allows some leeway in the conduct of the war by the field officers and soldiers.

At the Combat Maneuver Training Center simulations unit, the soldiers are taught to ask what the top priority of the CI is and the most important thing they must do the next day. By doing so they are being "simple" so they can find the core of the orders. The two steps in making an idea stick is 1, find the core, and 2, translate the core using the success checklist.

Southwest Airlines has been successful mainly due to its consistent focus on reducing costs. Herb Kelleher, Southwest's CEO, has said that all anyone needed to know about running Southwest was that they are the low-fare airline. Everything else will fall into place after recognizing that. "The low-fare airline" mantra is Southwest's CI.

A reporter is trained to start with the lead. This is referred to as the inverted pyramid. Some people may not read past the lead but he will have the gist of the story. Some reporters have a difficult time finding the lead. The important thing is not to bury the lead which is analogous to finding the core.

Building a national political campaign organization is a daunting task because many of the people involved are inexperienced volunteers. Working against the effectiveness of Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign was at times Clinton himself. The rumors about extra-marital affairs didn't help. Clinton also made policy matters too complex because he liked to pontificate about every detail. James Carville, the campaign manager, simplified things when he wrote on a white board the phrase, "It's the economy, stupid." It was Carville's warning not to stray from the core issue with too many complexities. Clinton's advisors urged Clinton to keep it simple when he was speaking. If you say three things about a subject – you're not saying anything.

People can be driven to distraction with too much information. It makes it difficult to separate the critical from the beneficial. Recognizing the core issue helps people avoid making mistakes and bad choices.



The Daily Record newspaper in Dunn, North Carolina, has a subscription rate that is higher than its population. The reason for its success is that founder Hoover Adams understood that the paper had to be about local issues – not national issues that are covered in many other venues. Adams knew his “core” issue and shared it with his staff. He made it stick by emphasizing and reemphasizing including the names of local people in the stories as much as possible. His message was so engrained in the minds of his staff that he finally didn’t have to remind them any longer.

The best messages are simple and succinct. Adams’ mantra was, “Names, names, names.” He left no doubt about what the core issue was. The more the information in a message is reduced, the “stickier” it will become. To make a profound concept compact, there must be a lot of meaning in few words. Proverbs like “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” and “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” are concise, impactful and there is no question about their meanings.

Simple and compact was the way that the Palm Pilot was designed. It had great success at least in part due to its lack of complexity. The engineers did not want to overload the product with bells and whistles that had nothing to do with the core value of the device. They avoided “feature creep” and enjoyed great success with their innovative product.

It is possible to turn simplicity into complexity. With a series of simple ideas correctly layered they can become complex. By tying a new concept to a familiar one, a concept can become more complex. If the term “pomelo” is presented to many people they won’t know what it is. If the next “layer” of information is that a pomelo looks like a grapefruit but has a thicker skin, a visual begins to form in the person’s mind. The grapefruit has a schema, or general accepted characteristics. Those can be called up to begin to build a schema of the pomelo. Starting with the simplest term is the best way to introduce a new idea or plan. Schema are used in economics and physics to introduce new concepts to students.

Simple schema presented may not be completely accurate; however, it provides the student with the general concept. Overloading the first layer of the scheme with too much information can render it useless which is symptom of the Curse of Knowledge, which represents the difficulty in adhering to the principles of creating ideas that stick.

The use of analogies is a good way to convey new ideas. Hollywood studios sometimes commit millions of dollars based on an analogy that describes the concept of a movie in one phrase. “Speed” was pitched as “Die Hard on a Bus” and “Aliens” was “Jaws on a spaceship.” Those pitching the movies relied on the schema of already known movies to get their message across. Such “high-concept” pitches are Hollywood speak for “core” issue.

Good metaphors are referred to as “generative analogies.” Disney refers to the employees at its amusement parks as “cast members.” The underlying message from Disney is that they expect their employees to perform while they’re on duty – an actor would not take a smoke break wearing a costume of one of the Disney characters.



Proverbs and generative analogies are effective because they substitute something easy to contemplate with a more difficult concept.

Analysis

In this section, the authors stress that it is vital to cut through the fluff and determine what one's core issue is. It is especially important for messaging and for making a convincing case to your target audience or those appealed to for support. It is difficult for people to accept new ideas or innovations unless they can connect to its fundamental purpose or basic values.

Southwest Airlines proudly touts that it is the low-cost airline. Management has driven that point to the staff so that they are mindful of keeping prices down however they can. Southwest would rather lose an air fare than cater to one person who insists on having a chicken salad sandwich. Southwest will happily cede one passenger in exchange for maintaining their no chicken salad sandwich policy.

Creating messaging that is simple and clear and based on the company's or individual's core issue or core value will be better received than a message that has too many layers of detail. The audience doesn't need to know everything about your company or idea. They want the basics. The only way to create such a message that is designed to sell an idea and have it stick is by knowing the core issue. Once that is determined, the message naturally falls into place.

Vocabulary

munitions, resonance, concentric, apocryphal, pontificate, impromptu, convoluted, incremental, ambiguous



Chapter 2: Unexpected

Summary

The FAA requires that a safety message is announced by a flight attendant on every flight before it takes off. It's a tough audience – no one listens – but the flight attendant doesn't care either; he or she just goes through the motions. Flight attendant Karen Wood was creative with the safety announcement. She made it humorous and everyone listened. She even drew applause afterwards. The first step of good communications is to get the other person's attention. Karen used one of the tactics of doing so – she broke the expected pattern. The second step of good communications is keeping the person's attention.

Compelling or “sticky” ideas are generated by two emotions of the target audience: surprise and interest. It's a one-two punch – surprise gets our attention and interest keeps it. The Ad Council created a PSA that featured a new mini-van with all the bells and whistles. The kids are in the car, dad is behind the wheel, mom is in the front seat – everything is idyllic until the van is rammed by another car at an intersection. It wasn't an ad for a mini-van, it was a public service announcement to always wear seat belts. The Ad Council utilized the unexpected to get their message across. The schema that is in the minds of people about car commercials is totally violated.

The “surprise brow” is a facial expression that is displayed when an individual is surprised. The eyebrows go up and the eyes widen so that the person can see more. Anger causes eyes to narrow closing the person off to more information. Surprises are likely to stick because they make us pay attention. Surprises intrigue us and make us want to know more. Going for a surprise, avoiding gimmickry is a must. Some ads are so over-the-top dramatic that they “bury the lead.” Unless a brand name is shown on the commercial, it is often impossible to tell what the product is and what their message is. If the drama covers the core issue, the message is ineffective.

To make ideas stickier there are three important steps: identify the central message, find the core; figure out an unexpected element of your core issue; and, surprise your audience.

Nordstrom's is an expensive department store that focuses on super customer service. Their core message to their employees is to make the customer happy even at the cost of efficiency. Some Nordstrom sales associates have ironed shirts for customers, warmed up customers' cars in the winter, and made deliveries among other above and beyond the call of duty tasks. Word has spread about Nordies as they are called and the result has been overwhelmingly positive. The behavior of the Nordies exemplifies that power of unexpectedness.

Robert Cialdini, a social scientist at Arizona State University, wanted to improve the way he communicated to his students about science. He was inspired by the writers who



began a topic with a mystery – what are the rings around Saturn and why do experts come to different conclusions? This approach engages the reader who wants to learn the secrets of the mysteries and would read the entire article until the answers are revealed.

Borrowing the styles of the authors he enjoyed, Cialdini began to set up “mysteries” in his classroom. He introduced the mystery at the beginning of class, revisited it during his lecture and then provide the solution to the mystery at the end of the class. He noticed that his students didn’t start packing up when it came time for the class to end. They wanted to learn the solution to the mystery.

Renowned screenwriter Richard McKee emphasizes that in a well-written screenplay every scene is a turning point and is able to pique the curiosity of the audience. “Curiosity is the intellectual need to answer questions and close open patterns.” (83) Curiosity will keep the audience engaged to the final scene.

Curiosity and interest in a topic go hand-in-hand. Situational interest is when there is a gap in knowledge which sparks curiosity. This theory was posed by George Lowenstein, a behavioral economist at Carnegie Mellon University. Not knowing something is like an itch that needs scratching. Those who want to evoke curiosity must recognize that many people think they know everything. The gap theory doesn’t work with these individuals. A clever teacher can demonstrate that their students do not, in fact, know everything, opening them up to the gap theory which will spark their curiosity which will engage them to learn.

A story is introduced with a premise and questions. Movies make people wonder what’s next; mystery novels make us ask who did it; ballgames causes us to ask who will win. In order to engage a person in the gap theory, they must first recognize that they are missing some vital knowledge. Curiosity is sparked in most people with news teasers like, “Man found dead - Tape at eleven?”

Eric Mazur, a physics professor at Harvard, developed “concept testing.” He had his students vote on answers to make them feel more committed. Gaining knowledge creates curiosity to learn more. We know who celebrities are but yearn to know more about them. ABC ventured into pioneer territory when it decided to broadcast college football games. How could the network draw viewers who had no connection to a university? The problem fell to Roone Arledge who decided that in addition to the game the cameras would the town and campus, the fans and the colors and the pageantry of college football games. His core issue was, “Taking the viewer to the game.” He provided information about the teams, their histories, records and rivalries. It made the viewers care about the game. Arledge performed the same magic with the Wide World of Sports which featured sports Americans had never heard of. He gave the audience knowledge which piqued their curiosity and interest and their desire to learn more.

In 1961, John F. Kennedy gave a speech to Congress. It was during the Cold War and the height of the space race. America had been the most innovative country in the world. However, at the time the Soviet Union was beating the U.S. in the space race.



They had launched the first satellite were leading the U.S. in space exploration. JFK asked the Congress for funds to finance a program for international development and to expand alliances across the globe. Everyone was floored with the surprise ending to his speech. He said that by the end of the decade the U.S. would have a man on the moon. He gave his country a glimpse of what could be and what the nation should strive for. JFK's words inspired engineers who began trying to figure out how and a nation who dared to dream his words could come true. Kennedy got everyone's attention.

Analysis

The authors emphasize the element of surprise and the sparking of interest as key to convincing others of the value of an idea or innovation. The authors tie this approach back into the core issue. Words that shock and surprise are ineffective unless they are connected to a core issue that is simple and clearly defined.

In the first chapter the authors emphasized the necessity of finding the core issue and introduced the concept and effectiveness of simple messaging. The reader has learned that it's crucial that the core issue is at the foundation of any discussion about an idea. In the first chapter, the authors explained "what" needs to be in place to create messaging that will make an idea stick. In the subsequent chapters the authors dive into "how" to create messaging that will impact the target audience based on the core issue.

In this chapter, the authors stress the importance of the element of surprise and using the unexpected to grab the attention of the audience. Once doing so, they will be better positioned to convince people about an idea or innovation which will lead to buy-in and ultimately make an idea stick. Compelling ideas are driven by emotions like surprise and elements like intrigue and can be very inspiring. When President John F. Kennedy gave a speech to Congress in 1961, no one expected him to say that the U.S. would have a man on the moon by the end of the decade. The Congress, the country and the world were all shocked. At the time, the world was lagging behind the Soviet Union in space exploration. As it turned out, JFK's words weren't just bluster. Scientists and engineers were immediately inspired and began working on making his prediction come true. JFK used the unexpected and surprised the world with his words but he made his idea stick.

Vocabulary

gimmickry, zealot, complacency, colloquium, regurgitating, pedagogical, conceptual, procrastinate

Chapter 3: Concrete

Summary

The fable, “The Fox and the Grapes” was written by Aesop and has endured for 2,500 years. It is where the term “sour grapes” originated from. The reason it has survived the centuries is because it contains a profound truth. The fox is portrayed as bitter because he fails to reach the grapes.

The Natural Conservancy (TNC) helps protect the environment by buying land and then protecting it from damage from human activity like logging or drilling. It is particularly focused on California because the state is one of only five areas in the world with a Mediterranean climate. While these five regions only occupy 5% of the earth’s land, they produce more than 20% of the world’s plant species.

TNC did not have the funds to buy up California landmass. Their solution was to pay landowners not to develop their land or allow it to be damaged. This payment arrangement is referred to as “conservation easement.” According to Mike Sweeney, COO, these arrangements didn’t feel concrete, didn’t seem as solid as the purchase of land. The problem was how to make their staff feel like they were just as real. To resolve the issue, they broke the massive landmasses involved into larger groups they dubbed “landscapes.” Fifty “landscapes” was easier to grasp than was two million acres. The TNC gave the protected areas names to give them their own identities. TNC solidified their program and avoided the abstract by transforming blobs on a map into unique landscapes.

The gap between the performance of Asian children and American children starts with a gap in first grade and grows steadily after that. Asian education is accused of being harsh producing children who are robotic and uncreative. A difference was found in the way the teachers in Asia and America taught math. The Asian teachers teach abstract math concepts using concrete, visual images and familiar schema. Two accounting professors at Georgia State University used a semester-long case study so that the students could apply the abstract concepts they were being taught to a concrete entity. This methodology is referred to as “learning in context.” Concrete items are easier to remember because they can be visualized. Most people can conjure up an image of “The Mona Lisa” but visualizing “Truth” is more difficult.

To explain the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., to her third-graders, teacher Jane Elliott used a concrete example. She separated the all white class into two groups: brown-eyed kids and blue-eyed kids. On the first day, she announced that the brown-eyed kids were smarter than the blue-eyed group. She saw friendships end and brown-eyed kids taunting their blue-eyed kids. The next day, she told them that she was wrong. It was actually the blue-eyed kids who were smarter. She saw the kids change roles immediately. When the children were in the inferior group they saw themselves as dumb, bad and sad. The kids in the superior group felt happy, good and smart. The



“superior” group even performed better academically for the day. The teacher made bias concrete; she made prejudice real for them. Even years later, the kids recalled the profound impact it had on them.

Experts in their field think in the abstract while novices rely on concrete facts that they can connect to. A study was conducted on a manufacturing firm that created silicon chips. Building the machines to make the chips was accomplished by two teams: the engineers who designed the machine thought in the abstract while the manufacturing team thought in the concrete. There was a communication barrier between the two teams. The solution was for the engineers to abandon the abstract and work with the manufacturing team in concrete, physical terms. In this case, it was the language that everyone understood and that allowed for coordination.

Stone Yamashita is a master of developing concrete techniques that help create change for his customers. Hewlett-Packard asked him to create a proposal for HP to present to Disney for its theme parks. Stone created a large walk-in exhibit to demonstrate the ideas that HP had in mind. Disney was the novice and needed a concrete representation of HP’s proposal. HP were the experts and could work in the abstract. However, the presentation was a complete success even inspiring HP engineers who enjoyed the concrete model.

Jerry Kaplan a young entrepreneur was anxious when he waited to give his presentation to a group of venture capitalists. The young man before him was dressed in a suit and tie and was giving a fancy presentation with charts and graphs. All Jerry had was a slim notebook with nothing inside. When it was his turn, he simply told the group that the next generation of computers would be like note pads. He tossed the notebook he brought onto the table to demonstrate how compact the computer he was proposing would be. There were few questions and little discussion. Jerry got a call in a few days that the fund was financing his project with \$4.5 million.

A message is most effective when it is structured to appeal to a target audience. Melissa Studzinski was hired to boost the lagging Hamburger Helper division at General Mills. After trying to wade through folders of stats and data, she pushed it all aside and decided to send in reps into the homes of Hamburger Helper customers. They quickly learned that they had too many flavors and it was difficult finding their favorites among the mountain of choices. The company pared down their choices which resulted in an eleven percent increase in sales.

Churches can even target for the type of individual they are trying to reach out to. The Saddleback Church in Irvine, California, has a congregation of 50,000 worshipers. The pastor is Rick Warren who describes the type of people they seek in their church as Sam Saddleback. Sam doesn’t go to church and is in his later thirties or forties. He has an advanced degree and is married with two kids. He is happy with his life and career and skeptical about organization religion. This concrete profile is important in the church’s outreach and marketing programs and everyone within the organization is very familiar with it and aware of its importance.



Analysis

While the core issue is the first step of an effective argument that will convince individuals that an idea is worth sticking, there are ways to enhance that basic tenet. Abstract arguments appeal to the intellect but they are dry and can be mind-numbing. They don't have the spark of surprise or the contain elements the unexpected. They excite only the nerdiest of humanity. To appeal to the emotions and evoke interest from the broader target audience an argument is something that has to be visualized.

The authors stress that a concrete message is far superior to an abstraction or statistics. A concrete concept is something that can be imagined and that image can be retained in one's thoughts far longer than an abstract concept and statistics can be used to prove both sides of an argument

The authors provide a perfect example of a concrete message and it's 2,500 years old and is still effective. "The Fox and the Grapes" is about a fox who spots some delectable grapes but after repeated attempts cannot jump high enough to reach them. He trots off saying that he really didn't want them and that they're probably sour. A parable like this that has been told over and over again never fails to strike the intended note. The fox is bitter that he couldn't get to the grapes. Making this story into an abstraction would be a narrative about bitterness. When a person doesn't get his way he is bitter. Try to visualize "bitter." The story that provides an image is much more effective.

Vocabulary

millennia, encapsulates, paradigm, contiguous, cognitive, novice, visceral, entrepreneur, prestigious, transcendent

Chapter 4: Credible

Summary

When medical researchers Barry Marshall and Robin Warren discovered that ulcers were caused by bacteria, the medical field did not rejoice – they didn't believe them. The researchers were young and lack experience and therefore credibility. The fact that they were from Perth, Australia, also diminished their credibility to the elitists in the medical research field. Researchers and physicians snickered when Marshall and Warren presented their findings at seminars.

Marshall grew tired of the rejection and ingested the bacteria they had isolated as the cause of the ulcer. He developed an ulcer and cured it with antibiotics. Still this wasn't enough evidence for most experts. Ten years after their discovery, research revealed that their finding was accurate. They won the Nobel Prize in medicine in 2005.

People typically believe those who they trust – parents, family, friends – and believe what they've learned from their own experiences. It is difficult to present new ideas to a skeptical audience. Authorities like government agencies have credibility. Celebrities are paid to endorse products and we believe they like the products because we "know" them. They convince us that we'll like the product, too.

There are also anti-authorities that also have credibility. Pam Laffin was an unknown private citizen. She had smoked since the age of 10 and by the age of 29 had developed emphysema. She was asked by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to share her story in a public service announcement. She had credibility because she was a concrete example of the horrors of smoking because she'd suffered severely from it.

Dennis was a driver for the Doe Fund which was committed to helping homeless men return to productive lives. He was the perfect spokesman to convince these men that the program worked because he had been homeless. He had credibility.

Internal credibility is attained by believing in something yourself from your own experiences. Researchers Jonathan Shedler and Melvin Manis at the University of Michigan created a simulated trial in which Mrs. Johnson was accused of being an unfit mother. It was a balanced trial with eight arguments against her and eight arguments in her favor. The researchers found that adding vivid details to their arguments strengthened their credibility. Internal credibility can also be achieved with statistics which everyone's been taught to trust.

The Beyond the War movement got the attention of people who were unconcerned about nuclear weapons. They arranged house parties in attempt to enlighten people about the danger of nuclear war. A single BB was dropped in a metal bucket. It would clang around and those attending the meeting were told that it represented the bomb



dropped on Hiroshima. The guests were asked to close their eyes after which 5,000 BBs were dropped in the bucket. The noise terrified those present especially after being told that it represented the current nuclear warheads in the world. It got their attention. That statistic alone would not have been as impactful.

In his book, “The 8th Habit,” Stephen Covey included a poll of 23,000 employees from a variety of companies and different industries. The results indicated that the majority of employees weren’t fully aware of their organization’s goal. More than 20% of those polled trusted their company or could connect their tasks to the overall goals of the company. He used a soccer metaphor to provide a more concrete image of employee dissatisfaction or disconnection. Only 2 of 11 players would know their positions and only 4 of 11 players knew which goal was theirs. The soccer analogy created a more concrete image than did the statistics.

Making comparisons can strengthen internal credibility. The Center for Science in the Public Interest waged a campaign against unhealthy food. They focused on movie theater popcorn. Instead of referring to the 37 grams of saturated fat which would be Greek to most people, he referred to the popcorn as eating unhealthy food for an entire day. Since statistics can be used fairly and unfairly and can “prove” both sides of a debate, they are best used for internal consumption. Draw your conclusions from the statistics you trust and go from there to find a concrete way to make your case.

Another way to develop internal credibility is to pass the Sinatra Test. Sinatra sings in “New York, New York, that if “I can make it there I can make it anywhere.” An Indian Express Delivery company was trying to convince Indian companies that they were reliable. They took on the challenge of distributing films. It is risky for a company to ship films because they are often pirated or “lost” and the shipping company is blamed for it. The company also delivered on time copies of a newly released Harry Potter book. The company passed the Sinatra Test. If they can deliver Harry Potter and Hollywood movies – they can deliver anything.

Bill McDonough convinced skeptical business executives that there can be synergy between business goals and environmental concerns. In 1993, McDonough and chemist Michael Braugart, were asked by a Swiss textile manufacturer to create a manufacturing process that didn’t require toxins. The partners approached chemical industry executives about developing toxin free chemicals. They got no cooperation and learned on their own that only 38 of 8,000 chemicals used in manufacturing met the desired safety standards. To the delight of the Swiss company, the process that they developed was not only safer it was cheaper.

A testable credential is when a manufacturer prompts its customers to verify the claim he is making. The Wendy’s ad that asked “Where’s the beef?” compared their burger which did have more meat with other popular drive-thru restaurants. The ad invited the people to see for themselves and enjoy a heartier and meatier burger. Ronald Reagan issued a challenge to the public when he asked, “Are you better off today than you were four years ago?” The viewers could answer that themselves better than anyone else.



The NBA came up with an ingenious way to get their rookies to be on guard against AIDS. NBA reps had recruited women who were HIV positive to meet up with the rookies in the hotel bar that night. They had plans to meet the next night. However, the next morning the coach had the girls meet with the rookies and reveal that they were HIV positive. It proved to the rookies that people who look healthy and attractive can still be infected with the AIDS virus. The point was made.

To get people to believe, there has to be the element of credibility which can be achieved in a variety of ways as explained above.

Analysis

A person could find his core issue, stay true to it in his messaging, add some alluring elements like mystery or surprise and could even make his argument concrete by staying away from abstractions and providing a clear visual of the core issue within the message. The author points out that this could all be for naught if the messenger is not credible.

The author stress that the best messenger is someone who has a close connection to the core issue or messaging. They cite a convincing case of a credible messenger when the state of Massachusetts wanted to create an effective Public Service Announcement about the horrors of smoking, they turned to a woman who had started smoking at 10 and had contracted emphysema at the age of 29. No one could talk to teenagers about not smoking better that this woman who developed a serious and ultimately fatal disease from smoking. If a young athlete or gorgeous movie star neither of whom had never smoked had made the PSA, neither would be an effective messenger for the campaign.

Credibility can be “demonstrated” and make an effective argument as in the experiment to demonstrate the danger of nuclear war. Those who participated in the study gained internal credibility because they had a concrete demonstration of the power of nuclear warheads. The experiment was much more effective than just reading the stats on nuclear power. The people in the experiment trusted the messenger because they gained internal credibility through the experiment.

Vocabulary

mitigating, nullify, compunction, paradox, galvanize, intangible, decimate, mundane, rumormongers

Chapter 5: Emotional

Summary

Carnegie Mellon University did a research study about people's charitable traits. They used two letters asking for contributions to Save the Children. One letter featured statistics about the suffering of all the children. The other letter focused on just one girl. The letter provided the little girl's background and her particular hardships. People given the second letter gave twice as much as those given the first letter. The little girl's letter tapped the emotions of those receiving it. The analytics in the first letter were credible. This study proved that along with information being credible an individual has to care about the problem.

Charitable foundations have learned this lesson and have devised ways to appeal to the sympathy and compassion of potential donors. The Truth was an anti-smoking ad campaign waged by the American Legacy Foundation. Its credibility was the teenage spokesman who announced the daily death toll from tobacco was 1,800. The credibility of the ad was its young spokesman. Anyone watching the ad would shiver at the thought of the youngster dying from smoking.

Tobacco giant Philip Morris filed a complaint requesting that the ads be yanked off the air. The tobacco companies had requested that an anti-vilification clause be added to the settlement that the government had reached with the tobacco companies. The reaction of the tobacco companies proved one thing: the ads were working. Its effectiveness was confirmed in a poll of teenagers who remembered that ad more than other similar ads and were less likely to begin smoking.

The challenge to someone wanting to get a message out is how to make the target audience care about the topic. Historic figures like Albert Einstein can be borrowed to give a message gravitas even if his field of work and life story has nothing to do with the subject at hand. Phrases used in ads or other messages like "quantum leap" or "uncertainty principle" create a mystique even though they aren't related to the message. Damage can be done to the image of Einstein's theory of relativity or to quantum physics if too many references are made to them on matters that are not relevant to them. Their power is watered down by overuse. The word "unique" is an example of the overuse of a word. It is used when words like "unusual" would be more fitting. This "semantic stretching" is used in advertising to make an association between subject matter and potential customer.

Sportsmanship is another overused term. John McEnroe was once the poster boy for being a bad sport. It has become common for parents and kids to display bad behavior during youth athletic competitions. It's a misused term. Teams are awarded sportsmanship awards for coming in second. Jim Thompson of the Positive Coaching Alliance has tried to put the focus on having respect for the game instead of the sportsmanship of the individual player. The program was called Honoring the Game.



Thompson hopes his efforts will have an impact on all sports including professional level.

One sure-fire way to make someone care about a message is to invoke their self-interest. John Caples was successful in writing ads and established mail-order advertising. These direct mailings tell the advertising what is appealing to the consumer by the orders they place. Caples felt that companies often made the mistake of emphasizing features instead of benefits. "WIIFY" or "what's in it for you" is always an important consideration that an advertiser should never neglect. An example of expressing the benefits of focusing on self-interest is teachers who tell their students that algebra will make them better video game players. A message that prompts the individual to visualize and imagine his possibilities has captured the important self-interest element of the communication. Self-interest alone would preclude anyone from joining the military. That's where caring comes in.

In 1954, psychologist Abraham Maslow did research on motivation and developed a list of the things that drive people. It was known as Maslow's Pyramid or Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow stressed that these needs were all interconnected and all had to be met. Additional research has indicated that people pursue all these drivers simultaneously. It is typical for individuals to make different selections when asked to opt for what is advantageous for himself versus what he thinks will benefit others. The self-interest in such selections is obvious.

Retired veteran Floyd Lee accepted the job as head cook at the Pegasus chow hall located in the green zone in Iraq. Typical army food is bland and high in calories. But Lee changed that image at the Pegasus where fruit trays were prepared in beautiful arrays and prime rib was prepared to perfection. Floyd felt it was part of his duty to lift the morale of the soldiers. He was expressing the "transcendence" driver in Maslow's Pyramid in which an individual strives to help others realize their potential.

Sometimes appealing to self-interest can backfire. Most people would assume that a proposal to raise taxes on the rich would be voted down by the wealthy. But that's not always the case. In a 1998 study, Donald Kinder, professor of political science at the University of Michigan, found that self-interest paid a very minor role in the thirty years he covered in his research. Self-interest isn't always the main driver – principles like equality and human rights are important factors that motivate people. People also form opinions not only for their individual interests but also for the interest of their group. A group can be defined by religion, race, age, sex or ethnicity. James March, a professor at Stanford, also found in his research that people weigh the pros and cons of advantages for the individual and for their group. If the appeal in a message is perceived as a compromise to one's value it is destined to fail.

Dan Syrek was one of the leaders in anti-litter campaigns across the nation. He was challenged by an awful litter problem that was plaguing Texas and costing the state a whopping \$25 million each year. Syrek figured out who the most likely culprits were, devised a campaign to reach the perpetrators and succeeded in reducing litter by 75% over the five years that the ads ran.



The Murray Dranoff of the Duo Piano Foundation had to be asked three times why it was important to preserve the music of the duo piano. It was difficult for him to get down to the simple message because of the Curse of Knowledge. The IDEO design firm helped improve the performance of the staff of a hospital by making a video from the perspective of a patient and by having staff members role reverse with patients.

Analysis

In this chapter the authors focus on the emotional impact that good messaging delivers. They provide a dramatic example of the role that emotions play in ads and arguments to sell an idea. Two letters prepared by Save the Children were sent out to potential contributors. One letter had the dry statistics about how many kids were starving and in what countries. All dramatic stuff but it was impersonal and the response was just mediocre.

However, when they sent a letter out with the profile of one poor starving girl the response was tremendous. The message hit all the right notes – it had the core issue of “saving the children,” it provided a concrete example, the starving girl was the messenger and had credibility and lastly it was certainly emotional. Needless to say the second letter did much better in terms of contributions dollars than the first.

In another anti-smoking campaign a young teenager was used as the spokesman. It didn't matter that he didn't smoke or have the gravitas of the woman who had developed emphysema. What he represented was a young healthy man. Mothers and fathers alike would watch thinking how horrendous it would be if that youngster began smoking and died from it. It was an indirect appeal but it had the emotional punch that made it a successful campaign.

By this point, the authors are layering the different techniques and approaches in messaging onto the core issue. By becoming familiar with these strategies and tactics, the reader will be come away with the ability to make effective messages that will sell their idea and make it stick.

Vocabulary

vilification, juxtaposition, duplicitous, semantic, profundity, paragon, vanguard

Chapter 6: Stories

Summary

A nurse in a neonatal intensive-care unit was horrified when she saw one of the babies with a blue-black skin tone. She yelled for help. She knew it was a heart problem that needed immediate attention or the baby would die. When the physicians arrived, they checked the monitor and saw that the heart beat was strong. They were prepared to treat the infant for a collapsed lung. But the nurse followed her instincts. She listened for a heart beat with a stethoscope. There was no heart beat. The monitor had malfunctioned. The physicians treated the heart problem and saved the child.

The story is from a collection by psychologist Gary Klein who studies the responses of people in high-stress situations. His book, "Sources of Power" contains this and other stories about the reaction to trauma. The story about the baby is a warning to medical professionals not to rely on machines too much – they should rely on their training.

The stories can be powerful ways of communicating messages and drawing people in. One team of researchers suggested that the line between reader or audience and protagonist may be a thin one. People often envision themselves as the leading character of a story, the hero who saves the day or develops a cure. An audience may not visualize a story as they simulate it. In this scenario, the audience member becomes part of the story and therefore caring about what happens is automatic.

One group of UCLA students were asked to think of a problem they were having that was ultimately solvable. A second group of students was asked to relive, step-by-step how a personal problem they were having evolved. A third group was asked to simulate and outcome for a personal problem they were having. This group was told to visualize how they would feel, their level of relief and their satisfaction that their problem had vanished.

The simulation group that best coped with their problem was the event-stimulation group because recalling events that had occurred was easier than visualizing future events that have yet unfolded. The event-stimulation knew more about the problem and therefore could devise the best way to cope with it.

Mental stimulation works because the brain cannot imagine events without going through the same process of physically carrying them out. A person asked to visualize the Eiffel Tower will probably look up to get a good view. When people drink water and are told to think that it's lemon juice, they salivate more. When people drink lemon juice and are told to imagine that it's water they salivate less. There is a real physical reaction that takes place during simulation exercises.

Simulation is used in treating phobias. Patients learn to visualize the object of their fear and use relaxation techniques to combat their anxiety. The focus is on the image not



how the fear will be conquered. Simulating a discussion with your boss could prepare you for the actual meeting. Simulation even helps hone physical abilities. It's the next best practice to actual physical practice. Telling stories puts knowledge into a context.

Many people are familiar with the ad campaign that Subway ran that focused on Jared who lost 200 pounds by eating the restaurant's low cal sandwiches. The ads were successful because they struck a note with the viewership and it was easy for everyone – fat or skinny – to simulate how Jared had to feel after losing so much weight. A Subway franchise was the first to run a Jared ad because the lawyers for Subway corporate thought the ads were hinting at a medical endorsement. But corporate forgot all about that when the local ads were wildly successful. Subway did not create the story of Jared but their ad agency was clever enough to spot it.

Spotting something useful like Jared's ad isn't difficult but it also isn't natural. Spotting a good idea takes some finesse. Warren Buffett, billionaire businessman, tells the story of Rose Blumkin who manages one of his many businesses. She was a Russian immigrant with no education or money and could not speak English. She started a furniture company with \$500 and fifty years later the business was worth \$100 million. Buffett tells the story in "Chicken Soup for the Soul" which sold 4.3 million books. It wasn't the author's story but he had a keen eye for a good story like hers and dozens of others. He made a collection of them and had a best-seller. He spotted good stories and captured them in a best-selling book.

After reviewing the stories in this series, the authors concluded that there were three types of inspirational story plots: the challenge plot, the connection plot and the creativity plot. The story of David and Goliath is a challenge plot with the weak overcoming the powerful. In order to be effective, the Challenge plot must have obstacles for the protagonist that seem insurmountable. Rose Blumkin was challenged by impossible odds and stood up to them mightily. The story of Jesus and the good Samaritan is an example of a connection plot. A connection plot centers around the unlikelihood of someone from one group being associated with a person from a different group. Romeo and Juliet is an example of a connection plot. A connection plot centers around an individual who invents something amazing or solves a long standing problem. As the title suggests, the protagonist creates something new but highly effective.

Knowing the three types of inspirational stories is necessary in order to spot them. Being savvy enough to spot a good story that will send the message you want is much easier than creating a new story out of whole cloth.

Analysis

The authors describe how stories have a great impact on a target audience. They are convenient for the message creator in that they can simply be borrowed and retold. Just like "The Fox and the Grapes" if the message is good and it works, why reinvent the wheel? The authors point out that the Chicken Soup for the Soul book series are made up of completely borrowed stories. The author's talent was spotting good stories.



The authors provide research that indicates that people not only enjoy reading stories, particularly true stories, they visualize themselves as the protagonist. This is a form of simulation which puts the reader into the story. Simulation makes the story real to the reader and leaves an indelible mark in his memory about the story.

Stories and lore have long been a part of most cultures. And their lasting ability is evidence that they have impact upon those who read the stories. A story about dieting and losing weight has appeal to most people. Subway built an ad campaign around Jared who lost weight – 200 lbs – eating Subway’s low-cal sandwiches. That was a borrowed narrative because Jared had begun his new regimen independently and after his success Subway spotted it and created an entire campaign around Jared that ran for five years and increased their sales. Jared’s story had a core issue and a simple message, a concrete example, credibility, and emotion and the borrowed narrative. Subway’s ad with Jared had all the elements of good messaging.

Vocabulary

neonatal, visceral, phobias, mundane, alliteration, finagled, infrastructure, idiosyncratic, adamant



Important People

Barry Marshall & Robin Warren

In the early 1980s, two young medical research, Barry Marshall and Robin Warren, from Perth, Australia made a breakthrough discovery. They found that ulcers were not caused by eating the wrong foods or stress; ulcers were caused by bacteria. They were positive of their discovery. They had isolated a miniscule spiral-shaped bacteria that was the bad boy. Not only was finding the cause of ulcers phenomenal, learning that they were caused by a bacteria meant that could be cured.

The young men naturally expected physicians and the medical research world to be astonished and grateful for this discovery. But they were wrong. The majority of physicians and doctors didn't believe their research. Most thought it was logical that acid caused ulcers – not bacteria. The second problem that the medical world had with the discovery was the “who” and “where” part of it – who discovered it and what institution are they connect with?. Barry and Robin were young and from Down Under. When has anything been discovered down there?! The elitist attitude that others in their field viewed them with prevented their discovery from having the consideration it deserved. Even after Marshall's daring move of infecting himself with the bacteria and then curing it with antibiotics, no one was buying it.

Ten years after their discovery, the National Institutes of Health gave their work the review it should have had long before. The institutes endorsed the claims of Barry and Robin that antibiotics was the preferred treatment for ulcers. In 2005, Marshall and Warren received the Nobel Prize in medicine. Their discovery was initially ignored because they lacked “credibility.”

Stephen Denning

Stephen Denning worked for the World Bank and was in charge of monitoring Africa's banking operations. After a few retirements and personnel changes, he was asked to leave his African post and do some work on “information.” The job description was vague and he felt he was being demoted. He feared it wouldn't be positive career move. The World Bank possessed volumes of important information about hundreds of countries, their populations, cities, health and safety records and their financial status. But there was no knowledge management and the maintenance of files had become unwieldy if not impossible. By having control of the vast amount of information in one place, a sharing of knowledge and innovations would facilitate advancements and improvements from one country to another.

The man had no luck with studies and statistics that he had presented in the past. So in order to convince his superiors to make knowledge management a top priority, he retold a story he was told about a health worker in Zambia being able to find answers on the



Internet for serious health problems that she had encountered among the population. By tapping into the Center for Disease Control website she found solutions that were literally life-saving. The World Bank executives that he presented the story two were immediately engaged – proper organization could save lives. As he suggested the World Bank soon made knowledge management a top priority.

Denning later wrote, “The Springboard,” a book about his experiences with the World Bank. He called stories like the one about the Zambian health care worker who found important information on the Internet “springboard” stories because they open people’s eyes up about options and potentials.

Masaru Ibuka

Masaru Ibuka was Sony’s lead technologist after World War II when the company was struggling to stay on its feet after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ibuka became interested in transistors. He envisioned a project for his large staff of 50 scientists and engineers that focused on transistors. He made the decision to develop a radio based on the power of transistors. Such a school would be sleek and light enough to carry around and most of all it was pocketable. After first being confronted with some negative headwinds, in 1957, Sony introduced the first portable transistor radio, the TR0-55. It enjoyed sales of 115 million units and put Sony on the map as a leader in electronics.

Colonel Kolditz

Colonel Tom Kolditz was head of the behavior sciences division at West Point. He recognized that all the planning that the army did was generally for naught. As he put it, “No plan survives contact with the enemy.” Experience had taught him that no plan was in stone and that the endless planning that the Army did was usually a waste of time and money. Once on the battlefield and there was contact with the enemy he knew that no plan survived and that all bets were off. He came to understand what made people successful in complex circumstances.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry was a French aviator and author who defined engineering elegance: “A design knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.” The author makes the point that this same concept can be applied to ideas – the simpler and more clarified the better.

Hoover Adams

Hoover Adams established the Daily Record in Dunn, North Carolina, in 1950. The newspaper enjoyed an unbelievable subscription rate that was 110 percent of the town’s



population. He was a stickler for the paper writing articles exclusively about Dunn and using the names of residents whenever possible. Adams focused his entire newspaper on the self-interests of the people of Dunn. His strategy worked beyond expectations.

Too Tall Jones and Willie Nelson

Too Tall Jones was a Dallas Cowboy who, along with musician Willie Nelson volunteered to do anti-litter PSA's for the state of Texas. The ad agency had determined that the litterers were men between 18 and 35 who were kind of slobs and didn't care that they were littering. The ad agency had to figure out how to may these guys care. They recruited athletes and musicians that were popular with young men in Texas – including Too Tall and Willie Nelson. The core issue of the campaign was “Don't Mess with Texas.” The ads ran five years, were popular beyond expectations and reduced litter in Texas by 75% over the run of the ads.

Jared Fogle

College student Jared Fogle was a college student in the 1990s. He was quite obese tipping the scales at 425 lbs. Subway had come out with a new campaign that touted their loc-cal sandwiches. Jared decided to eat to Subway low-cal sandwiches every day and nothing else. In three months he lost 100 lbs. An article in a student newspaper about Jared came to the attention of Subway's ad company. Corporate lawyers put the kibosh on making an ad campaign around Jared because it could be interpreted as giving medical advice. However, after a local distributor ran an ad with Jared, the saga of Jared and Subway caught on fire. Subway decided to ignore their lawyers and created a whole campaign around Jared who lost 200 lbs all together. Sales of Subway's low-cal line of sandwiches skyrocketed.

Abraham Maslow

In 1954, psychologist Abraham Maslow conducted research on what motivates people. He came up with a list of core reasons that people are moved to action. They include transcendence, self-actualization, aesthetic, learning, esteem, belonging, security and physical comfort. Abraham's list came to be known as Maslow's Pyramid or Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The list was very insightful on what compels people had has proven helpful to those trying to convince others to believe in their ideas or innovations.

Jerry Kaplan

Jerry Kaplan was a 29-year-old entrepreneur who was nervous about the presentation he was giving to a group of venture capitalist for the possible funding of his project. Dressed super casually, his heart sank when he saw the young man who was giving his spiel before Jerry. The other young man wore a suit and tie and had a dazzling PowerPoint presentation with charts and graphs that he pitched before the investors. All



Jerry had a pencil and a thin notebook with an empty writing pad. When it was his turn, he went for broke. He threw his pad on the conference table. When it plopped he told the group that the notebook was the size of the next personal computer. The group had very few questions for him but a few days later he got the call that he was being funded for \$4.5 million dollars. Jerry's presentation was an example of keeping it simple and clear.



Objects/Places

Schema

A schema is a set of facts about a certain individual, event or object. Presenting the name of an object or person or event, causes the individual presented with it to call up the schema or set of facts about it. It's like a file cabinet or electronic file in the brain. Schemas are important in messaging because they are used to present a new idea to a group or individual by comparing it to an object with a schema that is probably already familiar to them. The book uses the example of a "pomelo" which is described as like a grapefruit but with a thicker skin. Everybody would have a good idea of what a pomelo is because they called up the scheme of a grapefruit.

The Curse of Knowledge

The Curse of Knowledge is when a person has information overload about a certain topic. The person is so inundated with information and experiences about the topic that he fails to see its core issue because its buried under volumes and years of information. A person has to cut through all that information to rediscover its original purpose or definition.

Subway

By his own volition, college student Jared Fogle decided to go on a diet. He decided to eat two of Subway's low calorie sandwiches a day. He weighed 425 when he started and lost 100 pounds in three months. An ad agency made an ad about Jared for a local Subway franchise. When Subway corporate got wind up Jared and the ad, they jumped on it and created a highly successful ad campaign featuring Jared. He ultimately lost 200 lbs and Subway's sales soared.

The Transistor Radio

After World War II and the bombings in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, a fledgling Japanese company called Sony was struggling to stay alive. Its lead technician, Masaru Ibuka, was fascinated by transistors. He tasked his team of engineers and scientists to create a radio using transistors. Although they met a lot of resistance, four years after starting the project, the team developed a transistor radio that was slim and light and "pocketable." The item sold over a million radios and put Sony on the map.



Nordstrom's

Nordstrom's is a high-end department store. They are known for their superior customer service and their sales reps are known as "Nordies." The core issue for Nordstrom's is to make the customer happy no matter what. "Nordies" are known to have ironed customer's shirts, made personal deliveries to their home and even warm up a customer's car during cold weather. Nordstrom's is willing to sacrifice their bottom line for their customers.

The Sinatra Test

The Sinatra Test is a reference to his famous rendition of, "New York, New York" and the line, "If you can make it here, you'll make it anywhere." When a person or company does the unexpected and the exceptional, he gains credibility – if he can do that job... he can do any job.

"The 8th Habit"

Stephen Covey wrote a book entitled, "The 8th Habit." For the book he conducted a poll of 23,000 people employed by a variety of diverse companies. There were some astonishing results. More than half of those polled didn't know their company's basic goal. Many respondents could not make a connection between their job and the company's mission. There was a huge disconnect which illustrates what happens with a clear-cut, simple and concise message that is shared with all employees.

The NBA Anti-Aids Campaign

After the AIDS outbreak, the NBA decided that telling their new young recruits about the danger of free sex decided to create a concrete message that would impact the players and stay with them. Representatives of the NBA gathered together a group of attractive young women who were HIV positive and had them run into the young men. The players met with the girls and enjoyed some drinks and conversation. They had plans to meet the next night. But the next morning ended their plans. The NBA arranged a meeting between their players and the girls who announced that they were HIV positive. The young players were astonished that the attractive healthy-looking young girls were carrying a deadly virus. The players took the message to heart and stayed on the straight and narrow.

Carnegie Mellon

Carnegie Mellon University conducted research on people's charitable behavior. They used two letters to try to collect donations for Save the Children. One group of subjects received a letter that contained the statistics about the starving children of different



countries. It was all accurate but did not receive a huge response. The second group was sent a letter that told the story of one little girl who was suffering from her poverty-stricken existence. The girl had an identity – a name, a country, culture and back story. That group gave much more generously to the Save the Children campaign. This exemplified making an appeal on a personal level that will evoke emotions and simulations.

Positive Coaching Alliance

Jim Thomas of the Positive Coaching Alliance has focused on teaching young athletes to respect the game. He does not believe in handing out multiple sportsmanship awards because they are really the awards that are given to the losing team. His point is that they may not have been good sports and worse their parents cheering them on may have been worse than the kids.



Themes

Ideal Clinics

The authors create a motif with a series of “Idea Clinics” that are dispersed throughout the book. These ideal clinics are included as a teaching tool to reinforce the ideas that have just been presented. These clinics include exercises and challenges for the reader to bolster his understanding of the topics just covered. The collective goal of these clinics is to provide in simple and clear terms how to make ideas stick.

In the first segment of the clinic, a situation and message is presented that need help. Working with each of the clinics reinforces the material that the authors present about making messages effective so that your ideas stick. It is the job of the student or reader to improve on the messaging. A “punch line” at the conclusion of each clinic captures the core issue that the clinic was attempting to get across. A scorecard is also provided that will rate the original message and the enhanced message.

The original messages in the clinics are not all bad. Some need little changes and others need dramatic revisions. It is the hope of the authors that by providing these learning reinforcements throughout the book, the reader will better retain the theories and methodology presented to them. The clinics are thought experiments designed to help anyone with a good idea that they want to “stick” to understand the process that will most likely allow them to achieve success.

Curse of Knowledge

The Curse of Knowledge, as the authors dub it, is a recurring theme in “Made to Stick.” The Curse of Knowledge is knowing so much about a topic or event that its core issue is buried under years of information and experiences to the point that its original or fundamental purpose is lost on the individual.

The Murray Dranoff Duo Piano Foundation was dedicated to preserving the music of the duo piano. Murray Dranoff was so entrenched in his love and knowledge of the duo piano that he was unable to say why the music should be preserved. He had a reason buried deep down there. But duo music was part of his life. It seemed obvious to him that others would understand how important the music was.

After being pressed three times, Dranoff finally cut through decades of information to answer the question a clear and simple way so that anyone would understand. He merely said that duo piano music created the “sound of the orchestra but the intimacy of chamber music.” That was his core issue – the heart of his message that had been buried for decades. Dranoff had been under the Curse of Knowledge and had a difficulty putting aside all he knew about the music and all his personal feelings about it to arrive at the simple message until someone pressed him to do so.

A hospital asked the IDEO design firm to help improve the work performance of its staff. To do so, IDEO knew that they would first have to convince the staff that they needed to improve their performance. The staff was under the spell of the Curse of Knowledge because they were, of course, dedicated and well trained medical personnel.

IDEO created a video tape from the perspective of the patient. The camera was the patient and saw and heard what a patient saw and heard. Among other problems, the video showed lengthy lapses when the patient was abandoned and was literally staring at the ceiling. IDEO also created role-playing exercises where workers became patients. Both strategies were effective. The video and exercises inspired the workers to improve their performance. They made the staff workers care. IDEO abandoned clever messaging and cut through the Curse of Knowledge and were able to connect to the staff.

Emotional Appeal

Emotions play a huge role in effective messaging, a theme that is referenced throughout “Made It Stick.” By appealing to an individual’s self-interest, integrity, reputation or values the message can penetrate the target audience and have the desired effect. An example of the role of emotions in messaging is captured in the story about an anti-litter campaign.

Dan Syrek is the national leader in research on litter. He has worked in 16 states on anti-litter campaigns. In the 1980s Texas had a huge litter problem. The traditional signage – “No Littering” and “Pitch In” weren’t working. The problem was costing the state \$25 million a year. The typical messages relied on guilt and shame. Syrek determined that the typical litterer was male between the ages of 18 and 35. He also concluded that these litterers didn’t care that they were littering which was why the tried and true messages weren’t working. He referred to these men as slobs and dubbed them collectively as Bubba. Self interest wasn’t going to work. What advantage would these slobs have for non-littering?

Syrek decided on a different approach. He set out to convince Bubba that people like him – tough guys and real Texans – just didn’t litter. For one of his first TV ads, Syrek recruited two Dallas football players to make the pitch. One of the players, Too-Tall Jones, ended the ad with, “Don’t mess with Texas.” He also recruited a Houston Astro baseball player and musicians who were popular in Texas. Willie Nelson altered the lyrics of one of his hit songs in an ad: “Mamas, tell all your babies, ‘Don’t mess with Texas.’” The messaging reached Syrek’s targets. The cool guys that the men in the targeted demographic admired were like them – tough Texans – who weren’t going to “mess up” Texas. Roadside litter decreased by 75 percent during the five-year run of the campaign.

The Power of Simulation

Subway launched a new campaign in the late 1990s. It introduced a line of sandwiches that were healthy and low in calories. The ads featured a college student named Jared Fogle who was extremely overweight. He weighed 425 in his junior year at college. Jared's father was a physician and had been telling his son for years to lose weight. Jared finally got concerned when his feet began to swell abnormally. He decided to go on an all-Subway diet – a foot long veggie at lunch and a six-inch turkey for dinner. He dropped almost 100 pounds in three months.

An article appeared about Jared and his Subway diet and weight loss in a school newspaper. The article quoted Jared saying the Subway saved his life. The owner of a Subway franchise spotted the article and got hold of Subway's ad agency. Word spread around Subway and after verifying the facts of the article, realized they had a fantastic story to sell which would be great for their brand and for sales. Subway's legal department nixed the ads because the ads could be seen as making medical claims that they were not qualified to make.

The ad agency wouldn't give up and convinced some local franchises to run ads featuring Jared. The franchises didn't have any money allotted for advertising so the ad agency decided to make the ads for nothing. After the ad ran the phone wouldn't stop ringing. Everybody from USA Today to Oprah Winfrey wanted to do a feature story on Jared. The national Subway office decided to buck the attorneys and created an entire campaign around Jared and his weight loss.

Simulating Jared's story was easy for the viewership. Everyone would know how joyful it would be to lose two hundred pounds. Although Subway had a campaign that touted the nutritious value of their low cal sandwiches, it didn't strike a note until people could relate to the story through a young man who was living proof that eating Subway sandwiches was a healthy endeavor.

Stories

Using stories to drive home a message about a core issue is an effective method of messaging. One huge benefit in using stories is that they are existing narratives that can just be borrowed and retold in order to get the desired effect rather than having to create new messaging. Creating narratives and concrete examples is a recurring theme in "Made It Stick." A whole chapter is devoted to the topic.

The authors tell the story of a young nurse who discovered a dying baby in the neonatal ICU. She had experienced other newborns with heart problems behaving in the same way as the baby. Physicians were called in and dismissed her claim that the baby was dying of heart trauma. The monitors showed that the baby's heart was beating fine. She stuck to her guns and trusted her instincts. She snatched a stethoscope and listened for a heartbeat; there was one. The heart monitor machine was malfunctioning.

This story was told along with dozens of others about everyday heroes in a book entitled, "The Power of Stories." Stories are part of all cultures. Stories like this heroic nurse who saved a dying baby become legendary and impact society positively. The story is told to medical professionals in training to alert them to the danger of trusting monitoring machines against their own training and experience. Spotting a good story like this is the dream of medical trainers. They don't have to create a story to get their message about being too reliant on technology. The trainer couldn't create a more convincing narrative.

Researchers have also found that stories are powerful because the student or reader digesting the material actually simulates the story himself and becomes the protagonist in the story. The narrative allows those listening to the story to imagine what it would be like to be the person in the story. Would he be as heroic or even more daring? Stories that contain impactful messages stay with those who hear it.

Styles

Structure

“Made to Stick” by Chip Heath and Dan Heath is a non-fiction book, a how-to in getting to the core issue of an idea or innovation and creating effective messaging that will convince others to believe in it. The book is separated into six chapters. Chapter One is entitled, “Simple” and stresses the importance of unpacking your idea or innovation down to its core issue and basing your messaging on that fundamental belief. Chapter Two is entitled, “Unexpected” which explains why surprise and making unexpected remarks can engage an audience or individuals and draw them into embracing your idea.

Chapter Three, “Concrete,” explains why speaking in concrete examples and avoiding abstractions is key to effective messaging. If you want your idea to catch on use numbers in your research but avoid them in your presentation. Chapter Four, “Credible,” explains why a good message may be ignored because the messenger does not have credibility with its target audience. Efforts should be made to select an effective messenger to convey your idea so that your audience pays attention.

Chapter Five, “Emotional” speaks to the importance of appealing to the emotions of your audience. It should not be forgotten that messages can evoke both positive and negative emotions. Chapter Six, “Stories” explains the powerful impact that anecdotal evidence can bring to a new idea. Stories are popular in all cultures and make effective messaging easier since these stories already exist and new narratives don’t have to be created.

The book is structured from the first chapter which is “simple” and layers on the other topics to provide a comprehensive presentation of the topic of making your ideas stick. There are “idea clinics” throughout the book that are comprised of exercises and challenges to reinforce the material presented by the authors.

Perspective

“Made to Stick – Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die” by Chip Heath and Dan Heath is told by the authors with heavy reliance on the statistics, research and anecdotal evidence gathered by the writers. The book is focused on, as the title suggests, effective communication whether in ad campaigns or in one-to-one discussion.

The backgrounds of the brother-authors qualify them for approaching the subject of sociological behavior and relationships with particular emphasis on effective communication. Chip Heath is a professor of organizational behavior at Stanford’s Graduate School of Business. Dan Heath is a consultant at Duke Corporation

Education. He is also a former research associate at Harvard and is the cofounder of Thinkwell which is an innovative new-media textbook company.

The authors break down the elements of both good communication and bad communication. They focus on finding the core issue of the message and the importance of creating a simple statement that encapsulates the core issue, which could also be referred to as the heart of the matter. They are able to draw from a wealth of resources -- their educations, prior experience and research work to provide a compelling guide for making ideas stick. They provide a solid foundation for getting the right message out to the right audience at the right time. The authors don't tell the readers what to do, they show them through concrete examples and heartfelt stories what works and what doesn't.

Tone

"Made to Stick – Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die" by Chip Heath and Dan Heath is written in a straight-forward manner. The tone of the book varies from one subject to another. There is a scholarly edge to some of the segments in which statistics are referenced and research is cited. The authors use a light approach to some areas by introducing funny comments or anecdotes. In the segment about the litter problem in Texas, the authors portray the litterers as oafish slobs who only react to messaging when the anti-littering PSA is delivered by an athlete or singer they admire. A Dallas Cowboy player named "Too Tall Jones" admonishes the litterers in his PSA ending it with "Don't mess with Texas!"

The authors describe the angst that James Carville, Bill Clinton's presidential campaign manager was experiencing with his boss. It is no surprise to hear that Bill talked too much. In fact, he talked way too much to please Carville. Bill was confusing the staff about message so Carville cut to the chase, took a white board out and wrote the now famous words, "It's the economy, stupid!" That message was meant just for the eyes of the staff but things have a way of leaking out and the slogan became one of the most enduring for the campaign.

The book is a teaching tool for effective messaging and communication and ultimately for selling a new idea or way to accomplish one's goals. The authors provide crystal clear presentations of messaging that works and messaging that doesn't work. The authors provide many concrete examples of effective ways to sell an idea or innovation. They also unpack the layers of too much information that create ineffective messages.



Quotes

It's hard to make ideas stick in noisy, unpredictable, chaotic environment. If we're to succeed, the first step is this: Be simple. Not simple in terms of 'dumbing down' or 'sound bites.' You don't have to speak in monosyllables to be simple. What we mean by 'simple' is finding the core of the idea.

-- Author (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 27)

Importance: Finding the core issue of a topic or idea or organization is essential to creating a simple message that conveys the heart of the matter. Providing too much information in an unclear, unfocused manner to a new audience is a sure way to lose them.

A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.

-- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 28)

Importance: This quote from the French aviator and author underscores the importance of having a goal to be "simple" in everything from building designs to military orders.

It's the economy, stupid.

-- James Carville (Chapter 1 paragraph Page 33)

Importance: Carville was the campaign manager for Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. He wanted to make things simple for his campaign workers so they would stay focused on the core issue. Carville was combating his boss who talked too much and made things overly complicated.

... A secondary effect of being angry, which was recently discovered by researchers, is that we become more certain of our judgments. When we're angry, we know we're right.

-- Author (Chapter 2 paragraph Page 67)

Importance: The author stresses the connection between emotion and behavior which is important in the impact that messages have.

Abstraction makes it harder to understand an idea and to remember it. It also makes it harder to coordinate our activities with others who may interpret the abstraction in very different ways. Concreteness helps us avoid these problems.

-- Author (Chapter 3 paragraph Page 100)

Importance: The author stresses the importance of providing concrete examples versus abstractions in messaging. It is difficult to visualize "bitterness." Aesop's fable about the "Fox and the Grapes" provides a visual of bitterness. When the fox can't reach the grapes high up on the vine after repeated attempts he runs off saying he didn't want them anyway because they were probably sour.



Concrete language helps people, especially novices, understand new concepts. Abstraction is the luxury of the expert. If you've got to teach an idea to a room of people, and you aren't certain they know, concreteness is the only safe language.

-- Author (Chapter 3 paragraph Page 104)

Importance: The author stresses the importance of communicating in simple, uncomplicated terms so that new concepts are easily understood.

A commercial claiming that a new shampoo makes your hair bouncier has less credibility than hearing your best friend rave about how a new shampoo made her own hair bouncier. The company wants to sell you shampoo. Your friend doesn't, so she gets more trust points. The takeaway is that it can be the honesty and trustworthiness of our sources, not their status that allows them to act as authorities. Sometimes anti-authorities are even better than authorities.

-- Author (Chapter 4 paragraph Page 137)

Importance: The author makes the point that an authority is not necessarily considered a credible source if there is an ulterior motive underlying their contention. A personal friend can have more credibility because a trust is already built up with that person.

When it comes to statistics, our best advice is to use them as input, not output. Use them to make up your mind on an issue. Don't make up your mind and then go looking for the numbers to support yourself—that's asking for temptation and trouble. But if we just have statistics to help us make up our minds, we'll be in a great position to share the pivotal numbers with others.

-- Author (Chapter 4 paragraph Page 147)

Importance: The author advises the reader to use statistics in conducting his research not to use them in a presentation. Numbers and statistics are abstractions that may be accepted as credible but will not have the impact that a concrete example will have. People accept new ideas that they can relate to on a personal level – numbers do not have that impact.

If I look at the mass, I will never act. If I look at the one, I will.

-- Mother Teresa (Chapter 5 paragraph Page 163)

Importance: The quote makes the point that looking at the goal is more daunting when assessing a mountain of problems instead of just one at a time.

Research conducted at Stanford and Yale shows that this process – exploiting terms and concepts for their emotional associations – is a common characteristic of communication. People tend to overuse any idea or concept that delivers an emotional kick. The research labeled this overuse “semantic stretch.

-- Author (Chapter 5 paragraph Page 173)

Importance: The author points out how references to Einstein's theory of relativity or to



phrases like quantum leap can blunt the true effectiveness of the terms. Messages contain such dramatic phrasing to add gravitas to their words.

As I see it, I am not just in charge of food service; I am in charge of morale.
-- Floyd Lee (Chapter 5 paragraph Page 186)

Importance: Floyd Lee was head chef at Pegasus the chow hall in the green zone in Iraq. He dispelled the myth that army food was bland and high in calories. He presented food that was beautiful and prepared to perfection. The author points this out as an example of transcendence as described in Maslow's Pyramid.

Subway helped save my life and start over. I can't ever repay that.
-- Jared Fogle (Chapter 6 paragraph Page 219)

Importance: When college student Jared Fogle decided to eat nothing but local Subway sandwiches. He weighed 425. In three months he lost 100 pounds. The quote is from an article written about him in a student newspaper. It is what caught the eye of Subway who then featured Jared in their own ad campaign.



Topics for Discussion

Topic 1

Describe what the two steps in making a sales pitch or idea “stick” are. What does “burying the lead” mean and how is it compared to the concept of “core issue?”

Topic 2

Why did James Carville, Bill Clinton’s presidential campaign manager, say, “It’s the economy, stupid”? What issue did Carville have with Clinton that was becoming a detriment to the campaign?

Topic 3

What are the two emotions generated by effective and compelling messaging? How are these two emotions connected?

Topic 4

Why is beginning a story or lecture with a mystery an effective way to gain the attention of the target audience? What is situational interest and why does it spark curiosity?

Topic 5

Describe how teacher Jane Elliott explained the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. to her third-grade class. Why did she decide on the approach she took? Describe the pros and cons of her methodology.

Topic 6

Why was Jerry Kaplan apprehensive about presenting his idea to a group of venture capitalists? Why did the presenter before him make him feel inadequate? Why was Kaplan’s presentation successful after all?

Topic 7

What did medical researchers Barry Marshall and Robin Warren discover? Why was their discovery initially ignored by the medical research community?



Topic 8

What is a “testable” credential? Why did Wendy’s “Where’s the beef?” campaign fit into this category. How did Ronald Reagan challenge the nation with a testable credential?

Topic 9

What are the overarching downsides of using historic figures like Albert Einstein or messages like “quantum leap” or the “butterfly effect?” Describe messaging that could appropriately use a famous figure like Einstein or important event like the moon landing.

Topic 10

What was the “Truth” campaign waged by the American Legacy Foundation and why did they choose a teenage boy to be their spokesman? Why was the ad campaign effective?