

Chip and Dan Heath propose that there are six core qualities or aspects that make ideas and concepts sticky or more likely to remain in the public consciousness than others. These core qualities can be summarized by an acronym: Simple Unexpected Concrete Credible Emotional Stories, or SUCCES.

## **#2 The Simple Quality**

The first major sticky quality is simplicity. The vast majority of sticky or interesting ideas are not necessarily complex or difficult for the average person to understand. Simplicity does not refer to the length or breadth of an idea, but most great ideas have a core element that can be easily understood and which the concept can be boiled down to if needed.

## **#3 The Unexpected Quality**

The next major aspect is that an idea must be unexpected. That is to say, a sticky idea will be novel and attention-grabbing, as things we are already aware of or comfortable with are simply not that interesting to our brains. Unexpected concepts and ideas can be shocking or simply clever takes on familiar ideas that look at an issue in a new way.

## **#4 The Concrete Quality**

Most people aren't comfortable with doing most of their thinking in the abstract realm. Therefore, sticky ideas must be concrete and realistic. Only ideas that can be properly packaged in concrete language and which can offer concrete results for effects for those considering the idea will have the mental inertia to dig deep into the brain and stay there for a long time.

## **#5 The Credible Quality**

A sticky idea must be reasonably credible. This is why the most crackpot or outlandish theories about Area 51 or other conspiracy theories don't usually get much traction. Sticky ideas have to be reasonably believable such that a normal person can imagine the concept and believe in its realism. Many sticky credible ideas are derived from personal experience, which allows for sympathy.

## **#6 The Emotional Quality**

The stickiest ideas and concepts are also fairly emotional. Even the most logical person is still an emotional being at their core. Therefore, anyone looking to develop a sticky idea should focus on the emotions behind that idea and imagine what emotions said concepts might conjure when the idea is floating around the idea marketplace. The best emotional ideas focus on peoples' dreams, desires, and fears.

## **#7 The Story Quality**

Finally, sticky ideas must also integrate well with a story or storytelling format. In a nutshell, these ideas need to either be easily integrated with the personal life stories of those who hear them or the stories themselves. Sticky stories are the ones that have lasted through generations and are constantly rebooted. Meanwhile, a sticky product might go well with the personal life story of its target demographic or customer base.

## **#8 Curiosity Gaps**

Dan and Chip Heath go over the concept of a curiosity gap, which is an effective way to get your idea into the consciousness of your listener in a particularly sticky manner. Put simply, a curiosity gap is just presenting the idea that there is something your listener doesn't yet know while also providing the way to get that answer in the same sentence or breath.

## **#9 Storytelling Matters**

When you're using the last part of the SUCCES acronym to make your ideas stick, it helps to develop smart stories that utilize key concepts that make those narratives attractive. The first of these stories is about a challenge, which usually has a protagonist that overcomes a daunting physical or mental goal. These appeal to people by appealing to courage and perseverance.

## **#10 The Connection or Empathy Plot**

The next storytelling tactic is to work up a connection tale. This type of story focuses on a protagonist bridging a gap between him or herself and the listener or an audience surrogate. These stories are particularly inspirational for many by appealing to our social cores and challenging us to be tolerant and work with others.

## **#11 The Creativity Story**

The final storytelling framework you can follow focuses on creativity. These types of stories and messages emphasize problem-solving, often by tackling familiar issues in innovative ways. These types of stories are particularly effective for those trying to sell new products that provide novel solutions for everyday challenges that people have to endure.

## **#12 The Curse of Knowledge**

This idea refers to the difficulty we all have of imagining what it is like to not know something already we already know. This can make it tricky when thinking about how to present your sticky idea to those who have no idea what you are talking about.

## **#13 Two Message Stages**

There are two main stages when you try to get a message or idea across your listener. These stages require separate effort and expertise to effectively work on your listener and allow the idea to spread in an appropriately sticky manner.

## **#14 The Answer Stage**

The first of the two stages deals with the answer to whatever problem or idea your concept brings to the table. Whenever you present an idea or problem to a listener, you must have the answer or potential solution at hand, often by using the SUCCES acronym for that aspect of the discussion, as well.

## **#15 The Telling Others Stage**

This second aspect of the message focuses on you delivering the punch line of your idea or framing your concept in an appropriate story that captures the imagination of

your audience or your customer base. It's important that you don't fumble this part of telling your message to your listener, as it is arguably the most important part and the portion of your message that is most likely to stick with the audience long after you're through.

## Top 10 Quotes from Made to Stick

1. "The most basic way to get someone's attention is this: Break a pattern."
2. "Anger prepares us to fight and fear prepares us to flee."
3. "Failing is often the best way to learn, and because of that, early failure is a kind of necessary investment."
4. "To make our communications more effective, we need to shift our thinking from "What information do I need to convey?" to "What questions do I want my audience to ask?"
5. "Knowledge does not change behavior," he said. "We have all encountered crazy shrinks and obese doctors and divorced marriage counselors."
6. "A good change leader never thinks, "Why are these people acting so badly? They must be bad people." A change leader thinks, "How can I set up a situation that brings out the good in these people?"
7. "The first problem of communication is getting people's attention."
8. "The Curse of Knowledge: when we are given knowledge, it is impossible to imagine what it's like to LACK that knowledge."
9. "Fundamental Attribution Error." The error lies in our inclination to attribute people's behavior to the way they are rather than to the situation they are in."
10. "Any time in life you're tempted to think, 'Should I do this OR that?' instead, ask yourself, 'Is there a way I can do this AND that?"