

MADE to STICK

SUCCESS Model

A sticky idea is understood, it's remembered, and it changes something. Sticky ideas of all kinds—ranging from the “kidney thieves” urban legend to JFK’s “Man on the Moon” speech—have six traits in common. If you make use of these traits in your communication, you’ll make your ideas stickier. (You don’t need all 6 to have a sticky idea, but it’s fair to say the more, the better!)

PRINCIPLE 1

A large, black, serif letter 'S' is centered on a rectangular piece of silver duct tape. The tape has a crinkled texture and slightly irregular edges.

SIMPLE

Simplicity isn’t about dumbing down, it’s about prioritizing. (Southwest will be THE low-fare airline.) What’s the core of your message? Can you communicate it with an analogy or high-concept pitch?

PRINCIPLE 2

A large, black, serif letter 'U' is centered on a rectangular piece of silver duct tape. The tape is crinkled and has irregular edges.

UNEXPECTED

To get attention, violate a schema. (The Nordie who ironed a shirt...) To hold attention, use curiosity gaps. (What are Saturn’s rings made of?) Before your message can stick, your audience has to want it.


PRINCIPLE 3

A large, black, serif letter 'C' is centered on a rectangular piece of silver duct tape. The tape is crinkled and has irregular edges.

CONCRETE

To be concrete, use sensory language. (Think Aesop’s fables.) Paint a mental picture. (“A man on the moon...”)
Remember the Velcro theory of memory—try to hook into multiple types of memory.

PRINCIPLE 4

A large, black, serif letter 'C' is centered on a rectangular piece of silver duct tape. The tape is crinkled and has irregular edges.

CREDIBLE

Ideas can get credibility from outside (authorities or anti-authorities) or from within, using human-scale statistics or vivid details. Let people “try before they buy.” (Where’s the Beef?)

PRINCIPLE 5

A large, black, serif letter 'E' is centered on a rectangular piece of silver duct tape. The tape is crinkled and has irregular edges.

EMOTIONAL

People care about people, not numbers. (Remember Rokia.) Don’t forget the WIIFY (What’s In It For You). But identity appeals can often trump self-interest. (“Don’t Mess With Texas” spoke to Bubba’s identity.)

PRINCIPLE 6

A large, black, serif letter 'S' is centered on a rectangular piece of silver duct tape. The tape is crinkled and has irregular edges.

STORIES

Stories drive action through simulation (what to do) and inspiration (the motivation to do it). Think Jared. Spring-board stories (See Denning’s World Bank tale) help people see how an existing problem might change.

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