

MADE to STICK

Four-Week Focus

Welcome to the **Made to Stick Four-Week Focus!** This workbook is a companion to the webinar you participated in with Dan Heath.

The goals of the Four-Week Focus are:

- To dive deeper into the content and concepts of the book and apply them to your world.
- To share your “sticky” message with your team and engage them in a conversation about a strategy or initiative, their role, and the next steps in driving it.

During these four weeks, you will:

- Spend 10 to 15 minutes each week on creating a message that is **Made to Stick**. You can do more, but you should see a great benefit by spending even this small amount of time.
- Use this workbook as a template to capture your thoughts and ideas. You can use it again and again with different messages – but for now, you’ll focus on just one message.
- Ask for feedback from others – a trusted peer, a team member, your boss – every step of the way.

Here’s an overview of your Four-Week Focus:

Week 1: **Simple, Unexpected, and Concrete**

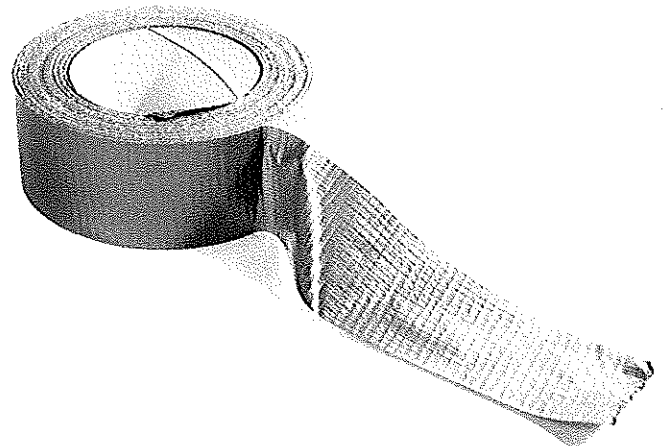
Week 2: **Credible, Emotional, and Stories**

Week 3: **Combining the 6 Elements into a Cohesive Message**

Week 4: **Have a Conversation with Your Team**

Throughout the first two weeks, we’ll follow an example message about Jared Fogle, the man who lost over 200 pounds simply by eating Subway subs and walking.

Now, let’s get started!





WEEK 1

Simple,
Unexpected,
and Concrete

SIMPLE

The Best-Laid Plans...

We've all heard this phrase, and we've likely said it ourselves more than once when we've been disappointed that our painstaking efforts to develop a first-rate plan fell apart when the plan was set into motion. Maybe it was an unexpected customer viewpoint or a sudden change in the market, but the reality is that we simply can't plan for every possible obstacle.

The U.S. Army got it right when they adapted a new planning process in the 1980s called Commander's Intent. By executing Commander's Intent, you might lose the ability to execute details of your original plan, but you can never lose the responsibility to execute the intent.

Let's see how this concept can be applied in business. First, think about a plan or idea that you, as a manager, need to communicate to your team. Briefly note the details below:

Now, use the principles of Commander's Intent to find the core of your idea or plan. Consider, "What is the single, most important thing that we must do?"

Example from Jared:

- Eat Subway subs and lose weight.

The single, most important thing that we must do is:

A second SIMPLE concept to get to the core of your idea is through an analogy.

Hollywood uses analogies in a very powerful way for movie pitches. The approach is to describe the movie by comparing it to one that everyone knows. *Speed* was "Die Hard on a bus." *Alien* was "Jaws on a spaceship." Analogies like these quickly bring meaning to a new, previously unknown concept.

With your team, brainstorm two or three analogies to describe your core idea:



UNEXPECTED

Who Shot J.R.?
The Art of the Cliffhanger

Who shot J.R.? Just ask the 83 million people who tuned into the 1980 season premiere of the ABC drama, *Dallas*, to find out. To put this number in perspective, only 78 million turned out for the Reagan-Carter election a month later. Oddly, the "Who shot J.R.?" question created a pop-culture frenzy that had Las Vegas placing odds on the outcome!

The Gap Theory developed by George Loewenstein at Carnegie Mellon University gives some context for why cliffhangers like this are so captivating. The Gap Theory explains that curiosity happens when we have a gap in our knowledge – a gap between what we know and what we want to know. This gap is painful, and we have a need to fill it. We simply have to know how the story ends.

Made to Stick ideas are unexpected in this very way. They develop curiosity by creating a gap in knowledge, so they "hook" people to stay tuned for the outcome.

Get Attention: Surprise and break the pattern.

Write down a few examples of how Hollywood, newscasters, or other businesses use the unexpected to hold your attention:

Now, consider your core message. What does your team expect you to say? If they planned a betting pool on how you'd articulate your message, what would they bet on?

Next, let's turn that around. How can you contradict their expectations? Think about how you can surprise them a bit with your message.

Example from Jared:

- *This guy lost a ton of weight by eating fast food! (Fast food is supposed to make you fat, not skinny.)*

What is a relevant surprise you could use to get your team's attention – something that is counterintuitive in your message? (If there's nothing counterintuitive, then why isn't the change you want happening on its own?)

Hold Attention: Create a mystery.

Open the gaps before you close them. Leave people asking questions – make them want to figure out "the how" and "the ending."

Example from Jared:

- *Jared had tried every kind of diet, but nothing worked. Then, he dropped over 200 pounds. How did he do it?*

What knowledge gaps can you create – or already exist – about your core message?



CONCRETE

Success Is in the Details
(or the Devil Is...)

In business, we have a tendency to make simple ideas complex. We coin buzzwords and phrases to get our ideas across. How often do you hear something like this: "We need to take this conversation offline because I've got a hard stop in 10 minutes. Can you send me a soft copy so I can take a deeper dive and decide whether we have the bandwidth to take on this project? I'll ping you when I'm ready."

Concrete is the opposite of this kind of communication. Think about it in this way: Language is abstract, but life is not. When you communicate an idea, you want it to be as real as possible. "Real" means involving the senses and connecting your idea to something that your audience really cares about.

Help People Understand and Remember: Provide context and put people into the story.

Your key message may be crystal clear to you, but not to your team.

Example from Jared:

- *Weight loss and diet are terms that are very abstract.*

What is abstract about your core message that makes perfect sense to you but doesn't to your team?

A sticky idea doesn't tell; it shows. To create an idea that "shows," you need to find the "hooks" in your message that connect to your team's world.

Example from Jared:

- *The oversized pants, the massive weight loss, and the diet of specific sandwiches.*

What are the two or three hooks in your core message? What does it connect to in your team's current world?

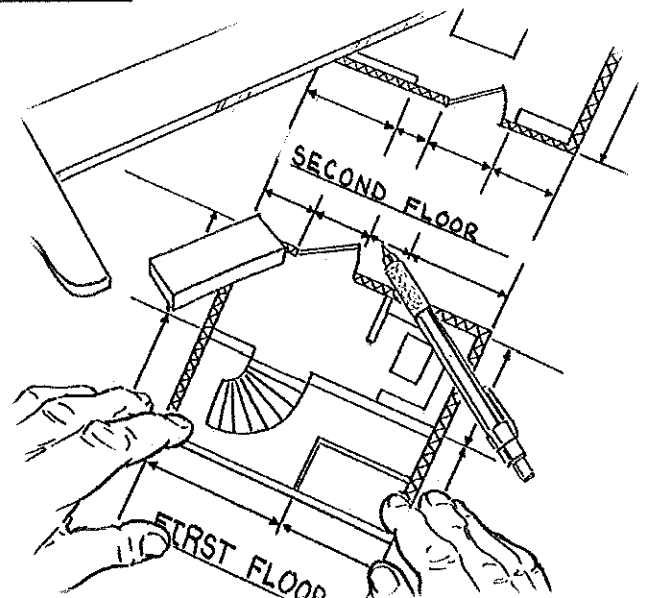
What are existing examples that give context for your core message? What has your team experienced before that is similar to what you are trying to accomplish now?

Help People Coordinate: Find common ground, set common goals, and make it real.

In the 1960s, Boeing prepared to launch its 727 plane with a very concrete goal: the 727 had to seat 131 passengers and be able to fly nonstop from Miami to New York City, landing at La Guardia on Runway 4-22.

Imagine how much harder this would have been if they simply said, "Build the best passenger plane in the world."

What are the concrete goals of your core message?





WEEK 2

Credible,
Emotional,
and Stories

CREDIBLE

I'll believe it when I see it

The truth is out there, but most of us need to see it to believe it. This concept is key to communicating a **Made to Stick** idea. Credibility can be established by using an authority on your idea – or even an antiauthority, such as a lifetime smoker who can speak with great credibility on the harmful effects of cigarettes.

But you can also create *internal* credibility – credibility within the idea itself, not from an external source.

Internal Credibility: Use convincing details and “see for yourself” appeals.

Credibility is enhanced through vivid detail. Details make your idea real and more believable.

Example from Jared:

- Veggie sub for lunch, turkey sub for dinner, and walking wherever possible.

What three or four vivid details will add credibility to your message and help your team connect to it on a personal level?

Credibility also grows when people can link the message to their personal experiences. If your core idea taps into something they've experienced, they can “see for themselves” that your idea is believable.

Example from Jared:

- Almost everyone has dieted, and almost everyone has eaten at a Subway.

What are two or three ways that your core message could link to people's personal experiences?

Statistics can be important in a message, but the key is to bring them to life in terms that are more human and everyday.

Consider what Cisco did when they had to determine whether adding a wireless network was worth the investment. The cost was \$500 per year per employee. Instead of thinking in terms of cost, they took a value-added approach. They said, “If you can improve an employee's productivity by two minutes a day, you've paid back the cost of the wireless.”

Are statistics important in your message? If so, what analogy could help people connect with those statistics in a human way?

External Credibility: Authority and antiauthority.

Someone in your organization is an authority or antiauthority on the focus of your message.

Example from Jared:

- The guy with the 60-inch waistline gives us diet advice!

Who in your organization could be an authority or antiauthority in getting people to believe your message?



EMOTIONAL

Don't Mess with Texas!

Texas had a serious litter problem in the 1980s. The typical litterer was an 18-to-35-year-old pick-up-truck-driving male. Campaigns like "Give a Hoot, Don't Pollute" failed to resonate with this crowd. But appealing to their pride, ego, and behavior did get through. After introducing the powerful slogan, "Don't Mess with Texas," litter declined almost 30% within a year.

"Don't Mess with Texas" is an example of the power of evoking emotion in an idea. Emotion can solicit action – and more important – is an effective tool to deliver results.

Make People Care: Use the power of association.

In their personal lives and at work, what does your team care about most today?

Example from Jared:

- *We are more like Jared, an individual, than like a large group of people. This is about a guy who reached his potential with the help of a sub shop.*

What two or three things does your team care about most today? Consider their personal lives and their work lives.

How is your core message related to these things?

Appeal: Capture self-interest and identity.

Your team needs to understand the benefits they will see by executing on the core message.

Example from Jared:

- *We have the opportunity to lose weight by following Jared's example.*

Why is your team's goal/mission important? And, once you've answered that question, ask yourself, why is that important?

(Hint: Keep asking "Why?" until you get to the core emotional values that your team cares about.)



STORIES

Have You Heard
the One About...?

It may not seem intuitive that story-telling is an extremely effective means to create sticky ideas. In business, our approach is generally to push information in the form of PowerPoints, data, charts, and graphs. We expect our teams and even our customers to buy into these well-intended but uninspiring ideas.

But stories are a way to share wisdom in a captivating, engaging way. Psychologist Gary Klein found that stories illustrate relationships that people hadn't recognized before, and highlight unexpected, resourceful ways in which people solve problems.

Stories show people how they can act.

At Nordstrom, stories of employees (known as "Nordies") acting as customer-service zealots provide a first step in defining what "good customer service" really means for new employees. Here are two examples:

*The Nordie who ironed a shirt for a customer who needed it for a meeting that afternoon.
The Nordie who warmed customers' cars in the winter while they finished shopping.*

Who in your organization has acted recently in a way that's consistent with your core idea? Tell that person's story! Through this story, other people can understand what's expected of them.

Stories as Inspiration: Give people energy to act.

Make your message and your story inspiring!

Example from Jared:

- *Jared overcame big odds in order to triumph. It inspires all of us to do the same.*

What is inspiring about your message and your story?





WEEK 3

Combining the 6 Elements

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Bringing Your Message Together

We focused the concepts of a sticky idea in weeks 1 and 2 and captured key messages and ideas. Now, use this template to add the details from the first two weeks in column 1. Use the SUCCESSs column as a filter to check whether your messages meet the criteria. Then, use column 3 to refine and fine-tune your message.

SUCCESSs	Message Details from Weeks 1 and 2	SUCCESSs Filter	Additions/Changes
Simple		Does your core message go beyond being merely a sound bite? Is your core message both simple and profound?	
Unexpected		Have you generated both interest and curiosity?	
Concrete		Is your message filled with concrete images? Have you explained your message in terms of human actions and sensory information?	
Credible		Have you used an authority or antiauthority in your message? Have you used statistics in a human way?	
Emotional		Does your message use emotion to make people feel something about it?	
Stories		Does your message include a story that both tells people how to act and inspires them?	

Common Challenges:

Check your message against challenges, and rework them as necessary:

The Curse of Knowledge	Is the message clear to me but not to anyone else?
The Gap Theory of Curiosity	Does my team know that they need this message?
Importance of Concrete Language	Are there abstract pieces in my message?
Use of Statistics	Are the numbers relevant to my team? Do they <u>mean</u> something to people?



WEEK 4

A Conversation with Your Team

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A Conversation with
Your Team

Share your message with the team. Be sure to cover SUCCESs. It's OK to walk them through the 6 steps you used to create the message.

Engage the team in a discussion using these questions. This should be a two-way conversation!

1. What is your reaction to this message?
2. What did you hear that was different from what we've talked about before? What is the same?
3. How would you define your role in this effort? Where do you see opportunities to own parts of it?
4. What are our next steps? Let's be specific. (This step will continue beyond this first meeting, but this is a good time to get people thinking about actions they need to take.)
5. What is most exciting to you about this?

Check in with your team often during the execution of the plan. Ask for feedback and continually tweak your message to make sure that it continues to stick.

