



Look At This Book: Made to Stick

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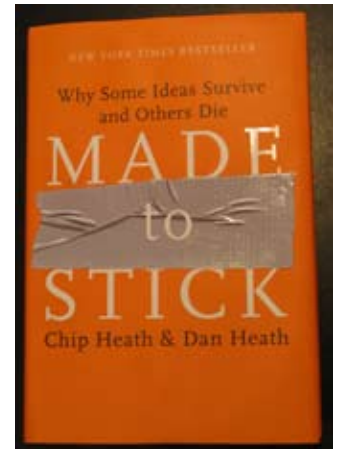
Nearly every business, nonprofit organization or even a school could benefit from some “sticky ideas.” *Made to Stick* explores the question of why some ideas thrive and others die. Sticky ideas represent those that are understandable, memorable, effective, and able to change opinions or behaviors. Chip and Dan Heath explore how companies and organizations can use sticky ideas to persuade people to buy their products, teach people a new skill, or promote a political candidate as examples. While many schools do not have a sticky idea—the potential benefits to a sticky idea can be great.

The six principles that make up a sticky idea: simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotion, and stories are outlined individually in the book's chapters. The chapters explain each principle with examples and discussions about how each one is essential to composing a sticky idea. While all the chapters are interesting, Chapter 1: Simple, is the most relevant to schools. The Heath brothers challenge readers to “find the core” of an idea and strip it down to its most critical essence.

The educational experience offered by schools involves different programs such as academics, athletics, or extra-curricular activities; delivered to a diverse audience such as students, parents, staff or the community. These factors, among others, can make it difficult for a school to articulate a sticky idea. The discussion about the sayings, “if you say three things, you don’t say anything,” and “the more you reduce the amount of information in an idea, the stickier it will be,” is probably worth the price of the book. The importance of the “simple” principle is reinforced, not only because it is the first of the six principles, but because it is explained in the most detail.

The authors claim that using the principles are easy and that possessing a special expertise is not required to apply the principles. To that end, there is not a chapter in the book to tell you what sticky ideas to use for your school. They rather hint that sticky ideas are found, and not manufactured. There is little direction for finding sticky ideas, other than to ask people such as your staff, students, parents, and the community for stories about their experiences with your school. There are some stories of how sticky ideas were found, such as the Jared stories used by Subway, but you are left to your own devices to find your own sticky ideas.

Made to Stick is worth the read because it will make you think about your school’s sticky idea, or lack thereof. To find a sticky idea can pose a challenge, but you will know a sticky idea when you see it after reading the principles outlined in this book.



Source: Heath, Chip, and Dan Heath. *Made to Stick*. New York: Random House, 2007.