

**A Tool:** The SUCCEs checklist is one of the integrating concepts for the selection and implementation of sapient definitions. The brothers, Chip & Dan Heath have defined six powerful principles. This is both a great read and tool. Our reviewer notes from the book *Made to Stick* follow. (900 words)  
Definitions: Mount Hamilton Wilderness, pomelo, Cast Member, Sandwich Artist, and Good Samaritan.

## MADE to STICK

*Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*

Chip Heath & Dan Heath - 2007

### **SUCCEs Checklist – Make it Simple, Unexpected, Concrete, Credible, Emotional, and Story Infused**

Excerpts and the reviewer's *impressions* follow

#### Introduction

Pg. 11 Urban Legends and Conspiracy Theories...

The Great Wall of China is the only man-made object visible from space (think about its width...)

You use only 10% of your brain

16-18 – The six principles in brief

22-23 In 1999 an Israeli research team examined 200 highly regarded ads and said 89 percent fit in one of six templates. Highly creative ads are more predictable than uninteresting ones...

#### Chapter 1 – SIMPLE

Pg. 28 – The SUCCEs checklist

31 Journalist call it the inverted pyramid structure – the most important information (the widest part of the pyramid is at the top).

46 Simple messages are core and *compact*... Easy words are better than hard words. It's a bandwidth issue: the more we reduce the amount of information in a message the stickier it will be.

52 Only ideas with *profound* compactness are valuable... to make a profound idea compact you've got to pack a lot of meaning into a little bit of messaging. You do that by using flags to tap the existing memory terrain of your audience. You use what is already there.

53-4 It is possible to create complexity through the artful use of simplicity. Take the pomelo example... a supersize grapefruit. We have made it easier to learn a new concept by tying it to something you already know.

60-1 Disney calls its employees Cast Members – they audition not interview, onstage when at work, etc. This is a great example of a sapient definition in business.

Calling Subway's employees *sandwich artist* just doesn't work in comparison.

62 Proverbs are the holy grail of simplicity. Coming up with a profound short, compact phrase is difficult.

#### Chapter 2 UNEXPECTED

Pg. 65 How do we get people's attention? How do we keep it? Surprise gets our attention. Interest keeps our attention.

67 Ad Council examples – “Loose Lips Sink Ships”, “Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk”, etc.

68 So Surprise acts as a kind of emergency override when we confront something unexpected and our guessing machine fails. Things come to a halt, ongoing activities are interrupted, and our attention focuses involuntarily on the event that surprised us. Unexpected ideas are more likely to stick because surprise makes us pay attention and think. It gets seared into our memory.

76 An example of an arresting lead might be, “There is will be no school next Thursday.”

Pages 84-5 Curiosity happens when we feel a gap in our knowledge... Lowenstein argues that gaps cause pain. To take away the pain, we need to fill the knowledge gap. We sit patiently through bad movies because it is too painful to not know how they end... The trick is to first highlight some specific knowledge that they (the audience) are missing. We can pose a question or puzzle...

### Chapter 3 CONCRETE

Pg. 99 What the world needs is a lot more fables...

103 Called an important area east of the Silicon Valley “the Mount Hamilton Wilderness” which is a good illustration of the power of a stipulative (made up) and sapient definition.

116 Some Concrete examples...

126 We make ideas more concrete by the needs of specific people: our readers, students and customers.

129 Of the six principles in this book Concreteness is the easiest and it may also be the most effective.

### Chapter 4 CREDIBLE

Pg. 132 What makes people believe ideas? Because our parents or friends believe, because of our personal experience, our religious faith, the trust of authorities – family, personal experience, faith...

134-5 Discusses celebrities and anti-authorities...

136 A citizen of the modern world, constantly inundated with messages, learns to develop skepticism about the sources of those messages. Most of the time our messages must have internal credibility...

146 Statistics are not inherently helpful; it's the scale and context that make them so – read the popcorn story.

### Chapter 5 EMOTIONAL

Pg. 168 Belief counts for a lot, but beliefs are not enough. For people to take action, they have to *care*.

169 the goal of making messages “emotional” is to make people care. Feelings inspire people to act.

171-3 Many ideas use a sort of piggybacking strategy, associating themselves with emotions that already exist... People tend to overuse any idea or concept that delivers an emotional kick – *semantic stretch*.

176 The lesson is that if you want to make people care, then tap into the things they care about.

178 Try to get self interest into every headline to suggest that there is something they want covered.

189-191 Self interest does matter, however, principles – equality, individualism, ideas, human rights, etc. – may matter to us even when they violate our immediate self interest.

## Chapter 6 STORIES

Pages 226-231 Three plot template with universal applicability.

The Challenge Plot – David and Goliath

The Connection Plot – “good Samaritan”

The Creativity Plot – apple falls on Newton’s head

233 A springboard story is a story that lets people see how an existing problem might change. They tell people about possibilities... in addition to creating buy-in, springboard stories mobilize people to act. They focus people on potential solutions... it helps us problem solve and sometimes for ourselves...

## EPILOGUE

Pages 246-7 Making an Idea Stick

For an idea (or an improved definition) to stick... it’s got to make the audience:

1. Pay attention
2. Understand and remember it
3. Agree/Believe
4. Care
5. Be able to act on it

252-257 THE EASY REFERENCE GUIDE - This is the author’s five page summary for making ideas or in our case sapient definitions stick. It is worth the price of this book alone.

## SOURCE

### ***Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die***

By Chip Heath and Dan Heath

**Hardcover:** 336 pages

**Publisher:** Random House; 1<sup>st</sup> edition (January 2, 2007)

**ISBN-13:** 978-1400064281

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