

Six principles for making your message sticky

Why do some messages just stick with you, while others are quickly forgotten?

For example, why do we remember precisely what happened to that guy who was approached by a beautiful woman in a hotel bar and woke up in a bathtub missing a kidney, yet we can't recall that new corporate strategy that was announced last month?

This is the question explored in a book by Chip and Dan Heath called *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*.

This idea of stickiness has always been important to marketers to help ensure our target audience remembers our message. But creating sticky messages is now more important than ever. Social media has turbocharged old fashioned word-of-mouth. Create a good message and it can spread like wildfire, bringing a benefit that is potentially worth millions in traditional advertising dollars. And, unlike a lot of traditional advertising, it will also have a lasting effect on your audience.

So what did the research uncover?

Here are six principles the Heaths identified that contribute to making a message stick:



Simplicity

The core message is both simple and profound



Unexpectedness

It generates interest and curiosity by overturning expectations



Concreteness

The message is put in terms of sensory information and human actions



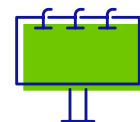
Credibility

The details of the message have to be believable



Emotions

It should tap people's feelings



Stories

The message makes use of a short, coherent story or stories

The more of these qualities the message shares, the more likely it is that it will be remembered and be influential. These apply whether the message is a political platform, public relations effort, corporate communication, B2B marketing or a consumer advertising campaign.

Compared to other disciplines, marketers have always been the most attuned to how a message is communicated and delivered. It's why creativity is so important.