SKILLS & SNACKS SERIES

WORKSHOP ONE

DEVELOPING YOUR RESEARCH PITCH

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FHMRI
Flinders Health & Medical
Research Institute

Flinders
University

WE ARE ON KAURNA LAND

Flinders University acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which its campuses are located, these are the Traditional Lands of the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the South East, First Peoples of the River Murray & Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kaurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders past, present and emerging.

Today, over **400 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS** are enrolled in courses at Flinders University.

Flinders University

I acknowledge the rich oral traditions of First Nations people.

I pay my respects to their mastery as storytellers.

I appreciate that they teach us that colourless stories cannot survive oral memory.

The Pitch

- Who am I?
- What do I do?
- What background information is essential to my audience?
- What problem am I addressing?
- Why is it novel?
- Why is it important?

What is a research pitch?

- Concise statement about your research
- Shared orally formally or informally
- Designed to be convincing and memorable
- Intended to spark curiosity
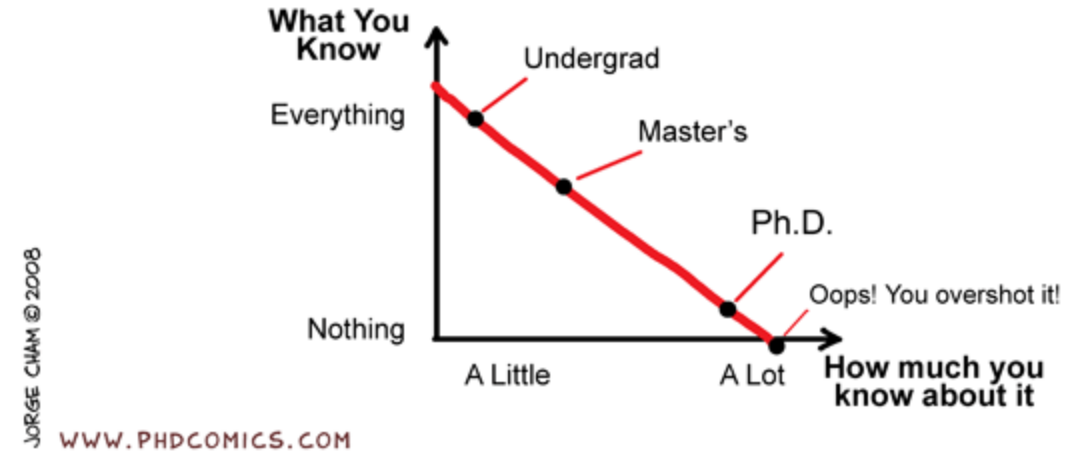- Often a call to action

Who is your audience?

- Family, friends, general public
- Special interest group/consumers
- Conferences
- Media
- Peer-reviewer
- Potential collaborator
- Potential employer
- Industry partner
- Funding body representative, donor, investor
- Competitions e.g. 3MT, Innovate Health PitchFest

What You Know vs How much you know about it

"The curse of knowledge"

Basic Framework for a Research Pitch

- Who Am I?
- What do I do?
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More detailed framework

Pitching Research®

Abstract

"Pitching Research" (Faff, 2015) is a research planning framework (based on a small set of organizing principles – namely, to be **structured, brief, simple, methodical, clear, & focused**). The framework challenges a (novice) researcher to effectively communicate their research ideas to an academic field expert. You have a total budget of 1,000 words ± 20%, to be allocated across 11 items. **(A) Working Title** – 10-12 words. **(B) Research Question** – 20-30 words (1-2 sentences). **(C) Key Papers** – 60-70 words (3 papers). **(D) Motivation** – 150-200 words (4-6 sentences or dot points). **(E) Idea; (F) Data; & (G) Tools** – 100-150 words each (3-6 dot points each). **(H) Novelty; (I) "So What?"; & (J) Contribution** – 50-100 words each (2-4 sentences each). **(K) "Other Considerations"** – 50-100 words (3 dot points). The current paper digs deeper on all these elements, gives practical guidance and, above all, is designed to be an enduring compass for all researchers on the "hazardous" journey of scientific discovery.

Source Pitching Research, Robert W Faff
Accessed: 12th April 2023
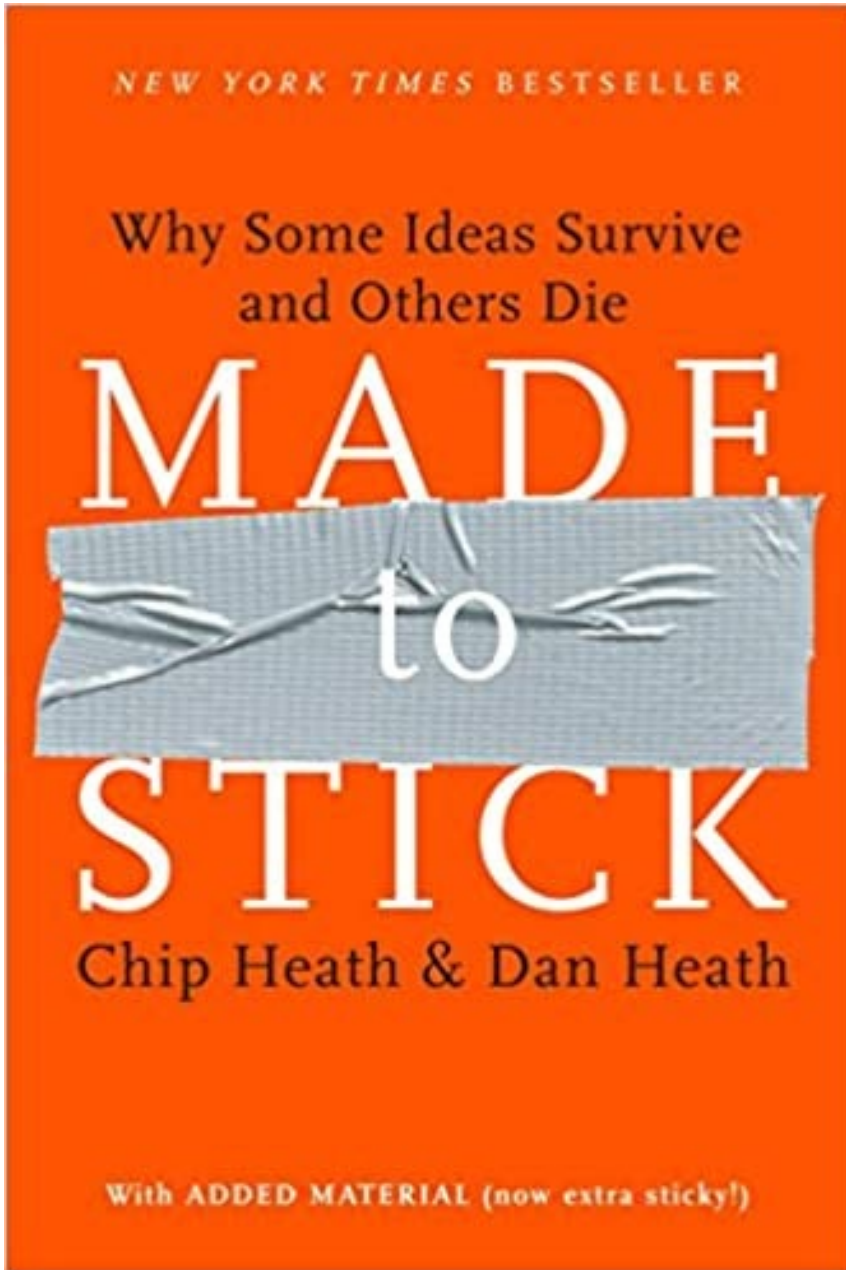Available URL https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2462059

More detailed framework

(1) Research question: capture this in one or two sentences
(2) Key papers: identify the critical foundation stones for your research topic
(3) Motivation: identify the missing piece that your research will contribute to the field
(4) Idea: describe the essential concept/notion/proposition driving your research
(5) Data: describe the data you will collect
(6) Tools: describe the tools will you use
(7) What is new?
(8) So what?
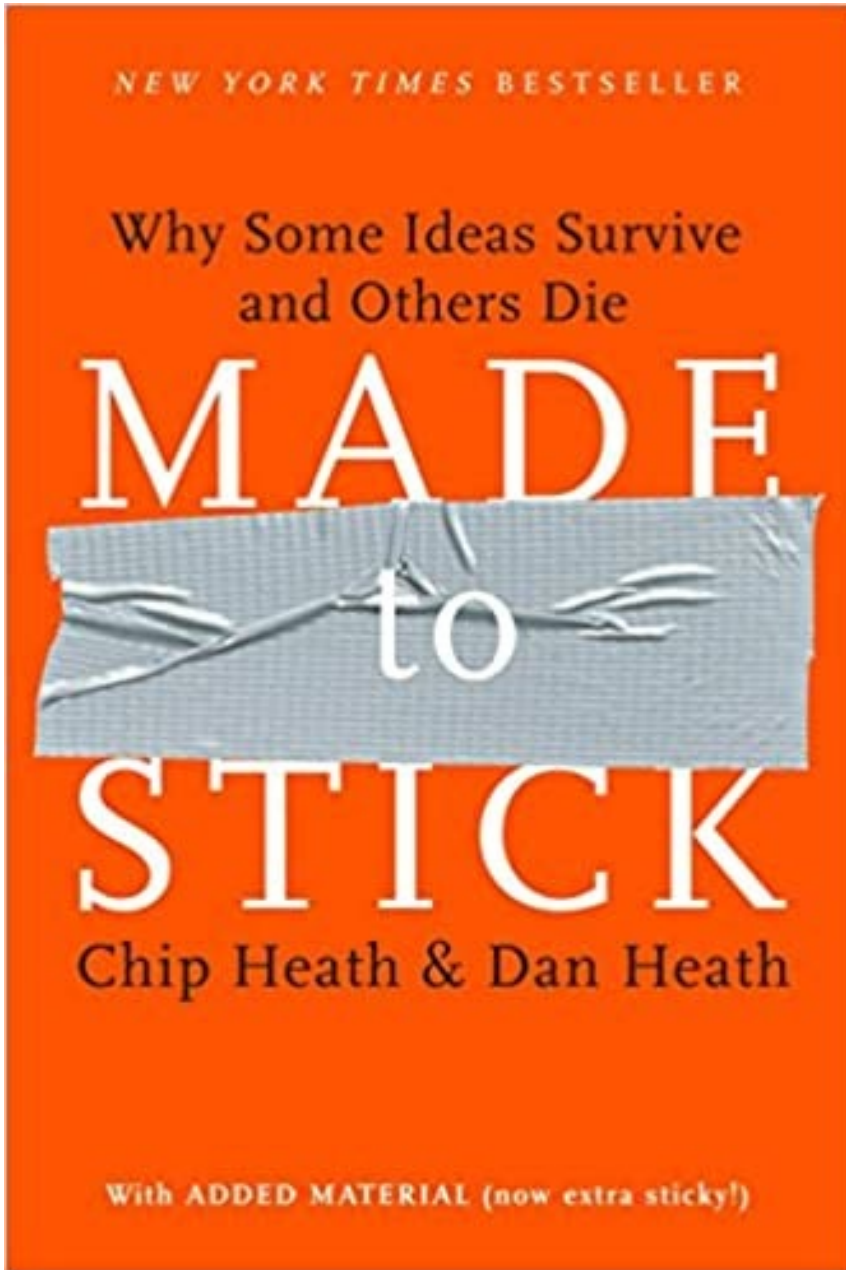(9) What will be your intellectual contribution?

Simple

Unexpected

Concrete

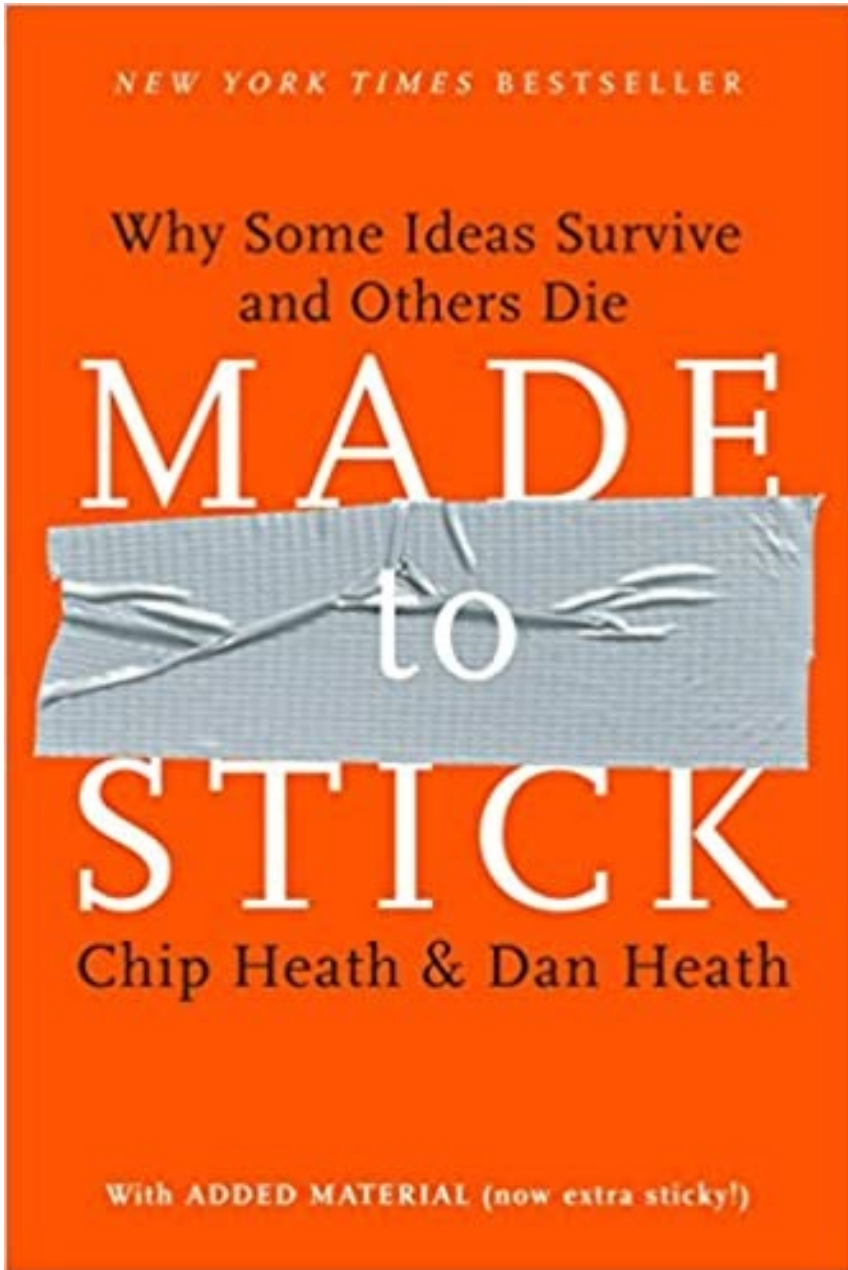**C**redible

Emotional

Stories

Simple

- What is your core message?
- What is essential and what can be pruned?
- Is the language you are using appropriate?
- Could a schema or generative analogy help?

Unexpected
- Is there anything counterintuitive about your idea?
- Generate curiosity.
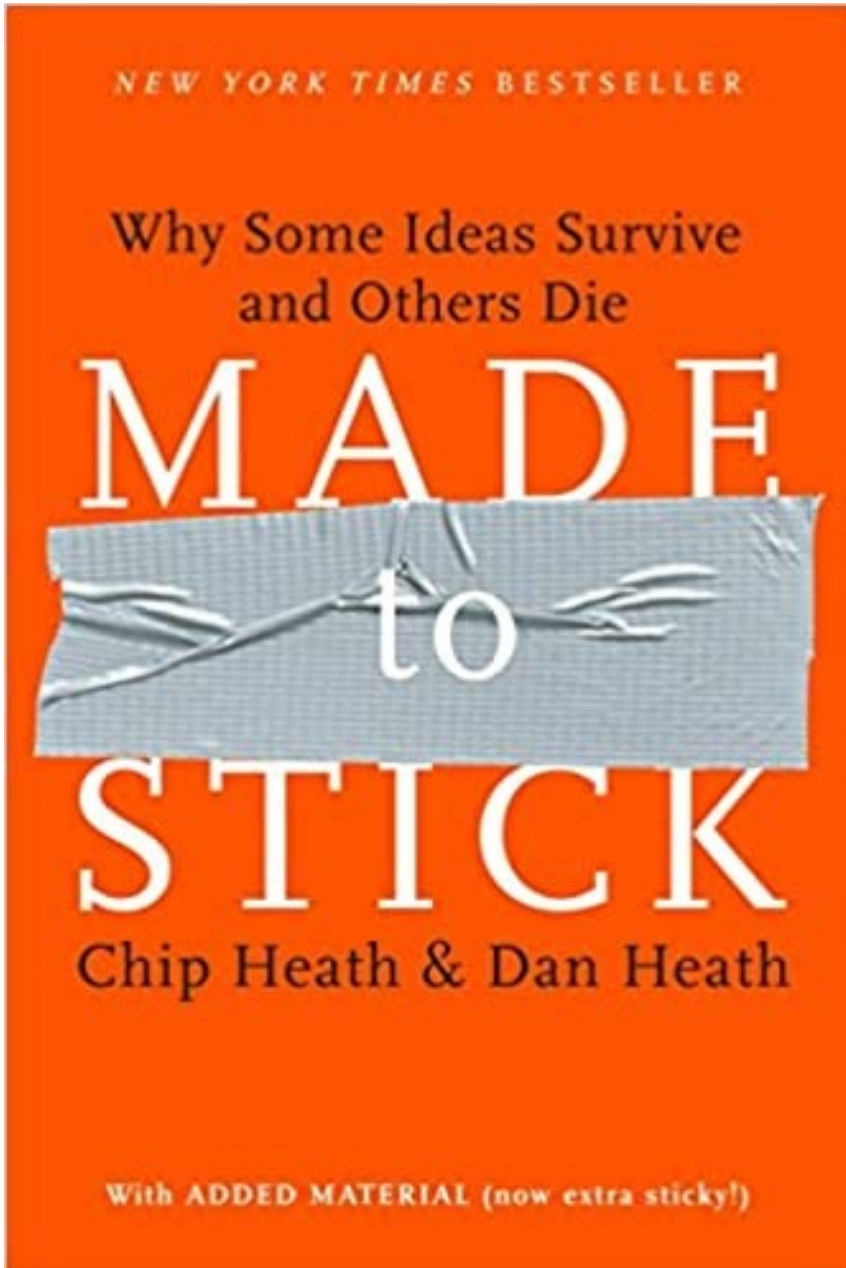- Open gaps in your idea and then work to fill them in.

Concrete

- Include descriptions that can be detected by human senses

"Movie popcorn contains 20g of fat"

versus

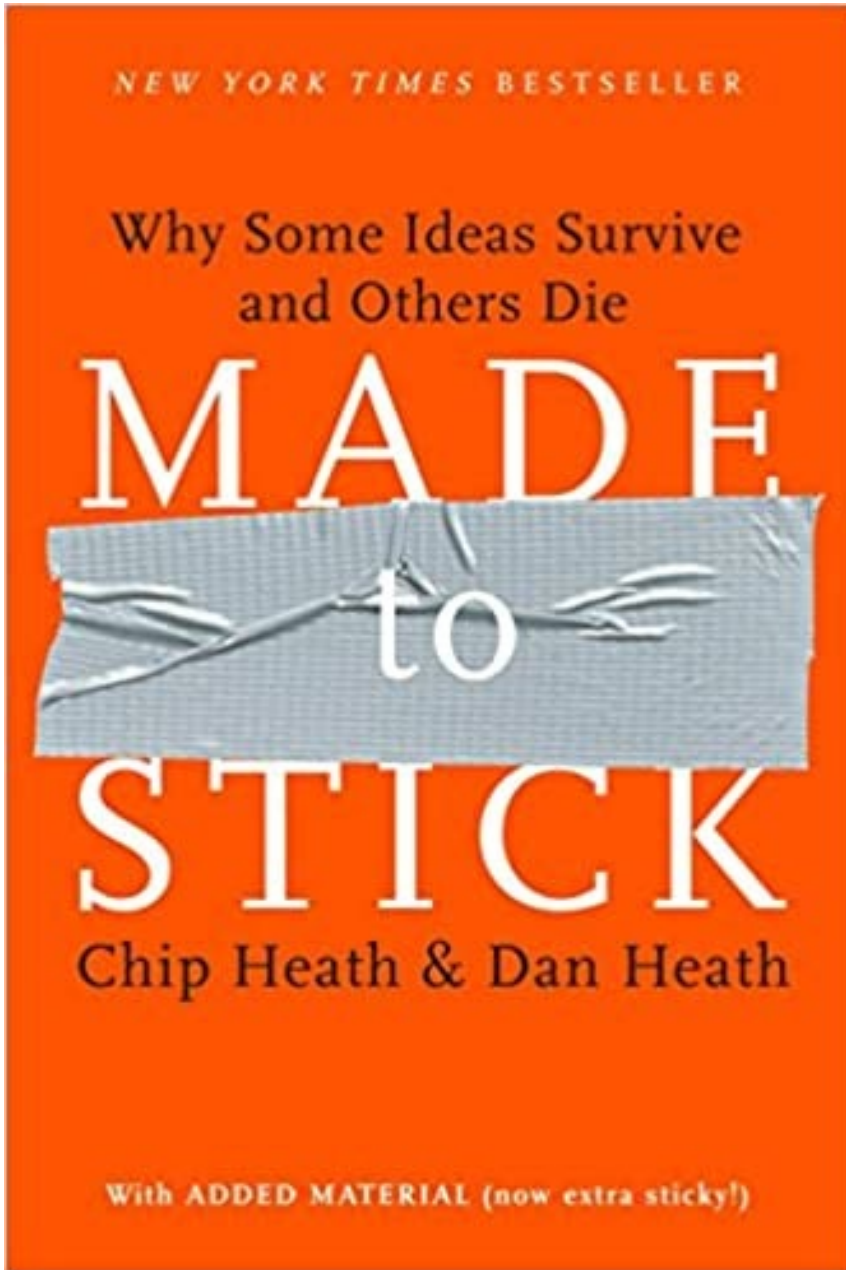"Movie popcorn contains more fat than a Big Mac and large serve of fries"

Credible

- Hard facts, cannot be argued against
- Statistics
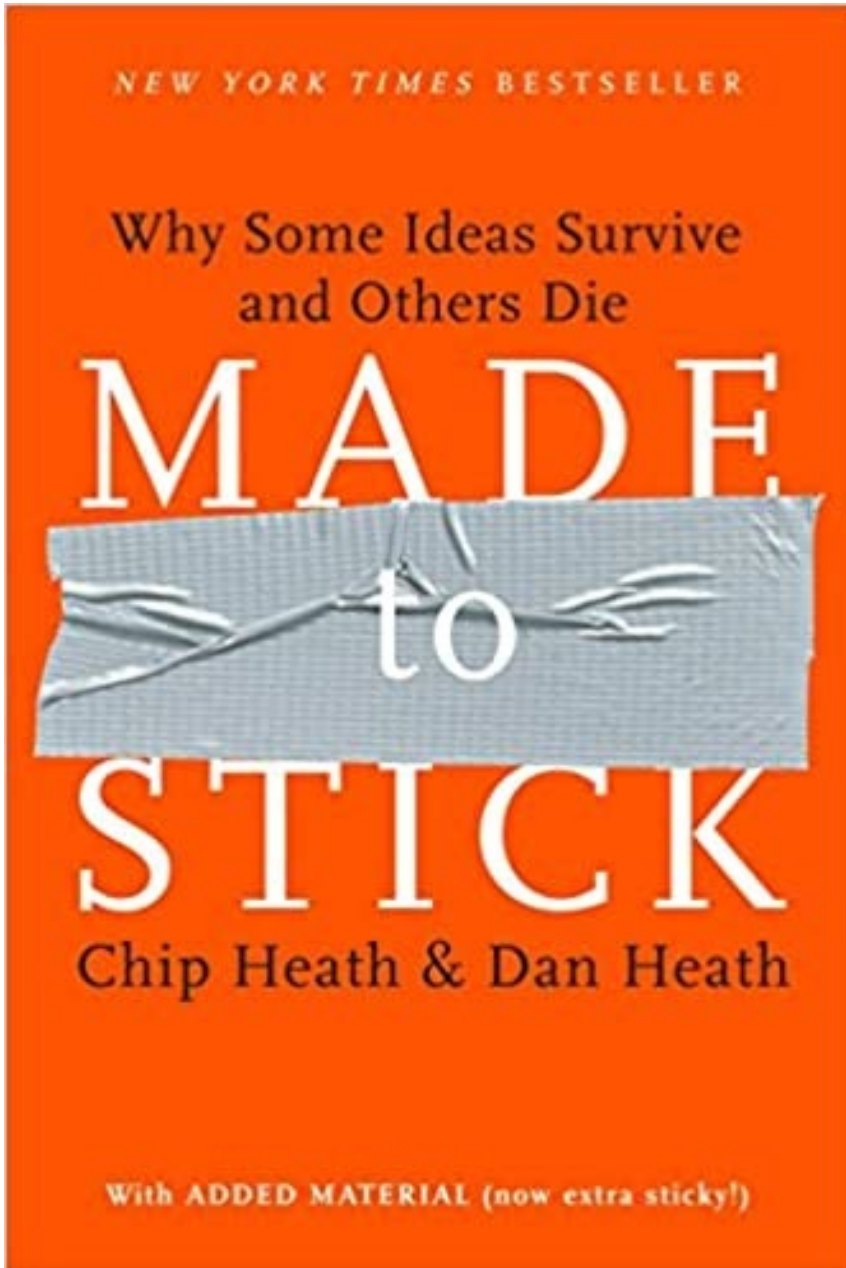- A test case/case study
- Testable idea

Emotional

- Make a connection, form an association
- Appeal to their self interest

versus

Stories

- Is your pitch a cohesive story, or a string of facts?
- Plot ideas
  - Triumph over adversity
  - Relationships that bridge a gap
  - Tacking a problem in a creative way
  - Making a breakthrough
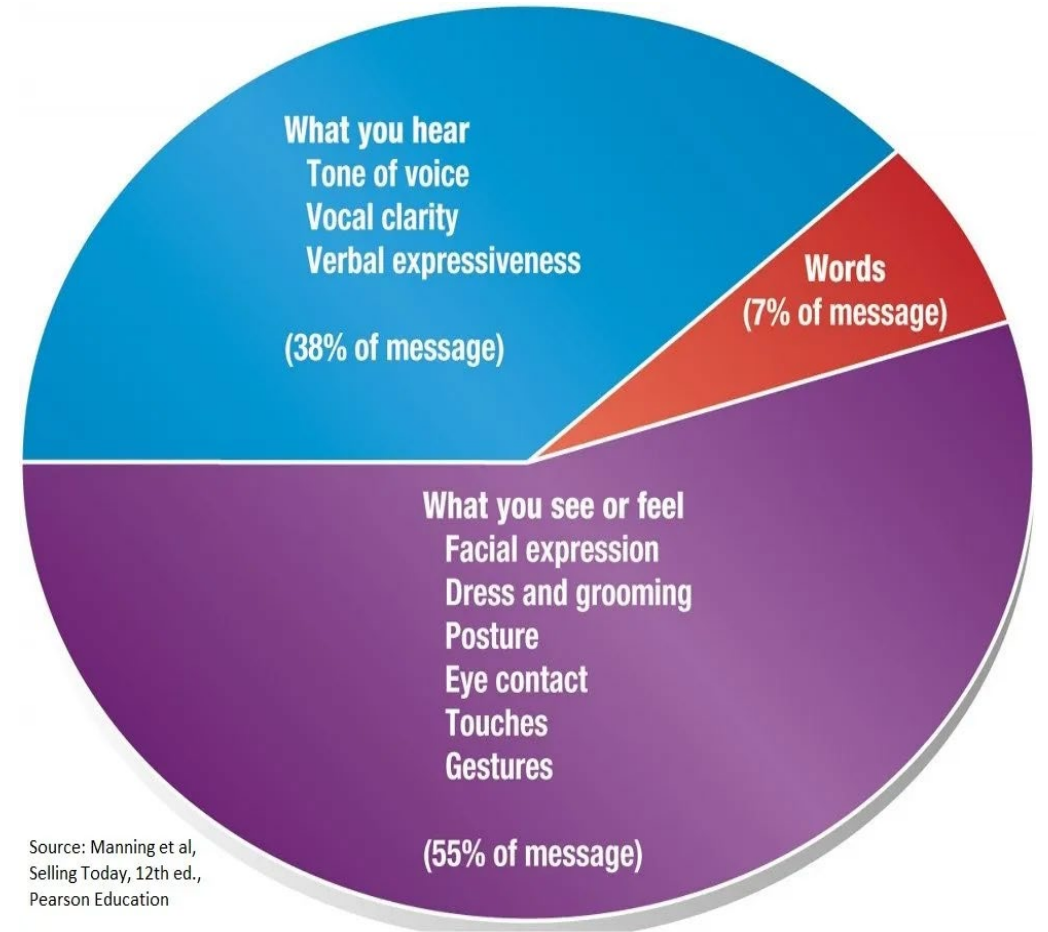
It's not just what you say…

The speed and tone of your voice matters. Excitement begets excitement!

In terms of the overall impact of your message, non-verbal behaviour, such as gestures, facial expressions and eye contact are important.

Non-verbal cues plays a critical role in the coherence and resonance of the pitch.

Non-verbal cues support the integrity of the story.

Find the balance between ad lib and rote memorization - allow yourself some freedom – make it authentic

What you hear
Tone of voice
Vocal clarity
Verbal expressiveness

(38% of message)

Words
(7% of message)

What you see or feel
Facial expression
Dress and grooming
Posture
Eye contact
Touches
Gestures

(55% of message)

Source: Manning et al,
Selling Today, 12th ed.,
Pearson Education

(Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967 and Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967)

Hand gestures are an integral part of human communication.

https://www.scienceofpeople.com/hand-gestures/

People born blind at birth still use hand gestures to communicate.

Practice makes perfect

Ask for feedback:
•What stuck out to you as the most important?
•Did anything in particular spark your curiosity?
•Did you find anything hard to follow?
•Was the emphasis in the right place?
•Were non-verbal cues effective?

Self-reflect:
• Did you get asked what you expected to be asked?
• Did the audience seem engaged?
• Did you feel comfortable?
• Video yourself.

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