

**GET YOUR DUCKS
IN A ROWE**
BOOK ONE

BUSINESS
WRITING & COMMUNICATION
THINK -WRITE -PRESENT -SELL

JIM ROWE

kindle | direct
publishing

FACULTY REVIEW COPY

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“You have to be able to communicate in life and probably schools underemphasize that. If you can’t communicate and talk to other people and get across your ideas, you’re giving up your potential.”

- WARREN BUFFETT

Contents

vii	An Early Review
ix	Strategic Writing – The Missing Link
xi	The Preface
03	Ch. 1 - Realizing It Was Time to Focus
05	Ch. 2 - The First Job
07	Ch. 3 - Duck Hunters & the Promotion to HQ
11	Ch. 4 - Headquarters
13	Ch. 5 - The Marketing Duckpartment
15	Ch. 6 - Quack Tour Lines
17	Ch. 7 - Danny Duck & the Sales Duckpartment
21	Ch. 8 - The #1 Issue Among Duckstomers
25	Ch. 9 - Addressing the Duck Hunter Problem
31	Ch. 10 - The First Draft
35	Ch. 11 - Connie's Secret Formula
41	Ch. 12 - Using the Formula & Getting His Ducks in a Row

Getting Your Ducks in a Row

43	Ch. 13 - Step 1 - Purpose
47	Ch. 14 - Step 2 - Background
51	Ch. 15 - Step 3 - Issues
55	Ch. 16 - Step 4 - Objectives
59	Ch. 17 - Step 5 - Strategies
63	Ch. 18 - Step 6 - Rationale
65	Ch. 19 - Step 7 - Tactics
67	Ch. 20 - Step 8 - Cost & ROI
69	Ch. 21 - Step 9 - Timing
71	Ch. 22 - Step 10 - Next Steps

77	Ch. 23 - Connie—Round 2
79	Ch. 24 - Practice, Practice, Practice
81	Ch. 25 - Storm Clouds Over Marketing
83	Ch. 26 - Presenting to Duck Smith
87	Ch. 27 - Turning it into a PowerDuck Presentation
93	Ch. 28 - Presenting to the Duckexecutive Committee
105	Epilogue
107	Acknowledgements
113	About the Author

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An Early Review

It's hard for me to recall an educational book – business, design theory, composition etc. that grabbed my attention and kept it like Ducks did. It was such a pleasure to read! It was informative, compelling, entertaining, and valuable. You are providing so much more than just teaching your readers how to write. You're telling them how to think, how to plan and how to present in business and professional settings. You are also providing them with the Why – the Gestalt. I thought it may have been more grammar/syntax-centric, but it is not – it is much more big-picture than that. I could see it on the shelves of a bookstore near business, strategy, entrepreneurship. I could also see this becoming required reading for a marketing class, a business writing course or an intro strategy course, even some kind of professional prep course. I love that this book feels like it could be a manual/manifesto/bible of sorts.

- TORI KAPLAN

Creative Director, R2 Companies

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Introducing

Strategic Writing

The Missing Link In Education

ISSUE

Over the past 2 decades a growing number of research studies indicate that while Communication is rated as the #1 or #2 most important skill managers look for when hiring, 50-75%+ continue to rate recent college grads as “below proficient” in these top skills, particularly writing.

IMPACT

It hurts corporate productivity and profits, but more importantly it's hurting a generation of college graduates' job potential and long-term career growth.

CAUSE

There are several factors; first, college students spend very little time writing. One study shows less than half of college students had only 5 classes in 4 years with over 20 pages of writing. Research also shows social media's casual, interactive writing has caused a lack of structured thinking. However, I believe there's a bigger issue. Most college writing is “Academic” (essay's, book reviews, literary and research papers, persuasive writing opinions) without any practical application. Outside of Academia, most students will need to write to specific audiences, to solve problems, and get things done. That skill is not taught enough (or at all) for students to become proficient.

SOLUTION - *STRATEGIC WRITING, THE MISSING LINK IN EDUCATION*

After 45+ years in senior marketing client side, agency side, and agency ownership roles, I have interviewed 100's of recent grads, and trained scores on how to think, then communicate to solve problems and get things done. These are marketers' core skill sets. A foundational tool is the simple, 1-page 10-step briefing document likely created 50+ years ago at one of the major packaged goods companies like P&G. It's a structured approach that helps the executive to think critically and communicate a clear, concise and compelling message to the specific target audience to get things approved and executed. I call it STRATEGIC WRITING. In the coming fable, I call it GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROW. It's the MISSING LINK IN EDUCATION. All students, regardless of field, should learn it. It works.

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The Preface

The purpose of this book is to provide a simple and proven approach for everyone from recent grads to executives at all levels and in all fields to significantly improve the effectiveness of your problem-solving skills leading to better written and oral communication.

It will help structure your thinking. It will make the message you're trying to get across easier to understand and more compelling. It will boost your confidence and ability to think on your feet. You will be viewed more favorably by clients, management, associates and subordinates. Your career will grow faster and higher.

My objective is to help as many people as possible to become better thinkers, problem solvers, writers, and presenters. However, I didn't want to write a traditional textbook or business book. Instead, I wrote it as a fable because people relate to stories and identify with characters and situations.

I also made it a short story with a big impact because we are all busy. I felt it would be a more enjoyable read and easier to remember.

My early reviewers concurred.

I hope it works for you.

Jim Rowe

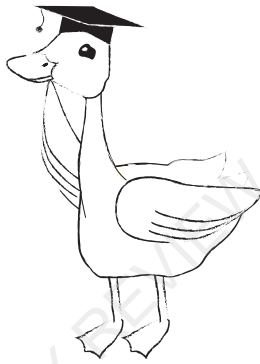
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**GET YOUR DUCKS
IN A ROWE**

- BOOK ONE -

BUSINESS

**WRITING & COMMUNICATION
THINK - WRITE - PRESENT - SELL**



Regardless of the field you choose, you will need to focus and be able to communicate well to succeed.

CHAPTER ONE

Realizing It Was Time to Focus

Once there was a duck named Dappy Duck. Dappy led a pretty traditional life growing up in a middle-class town. Near the end of college, he started to get a little uneasy that many of his fellow ducks were continuing their education studying to be ducktors, duckttorneys, and duckountants. What he came to realize was that they were getting ready to lead a good life making big bills and he realized he wasn't as focused as he should be.

So Dappy Duck — a late flier — decided to focus on making a good living and soar into a successful life with his career when he got out of school.



*Select a field you are good at and where you enjoy the
fundamental tasks and the thought process.
Find people in leadership roles you want to emulate.*

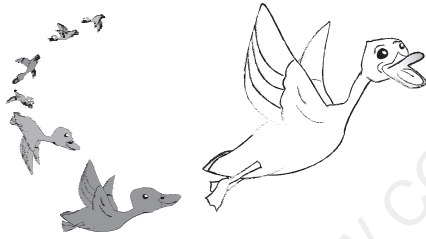
CHAPTER TWO

That First Job

Since Dappy loved flying and had an innate sense of direction, he got a job at Flying V Tour Lines—the biggest tour company in the duck guide business and one of the biggest companies in all of Duckworld.

Flying V Tour Lines' main business was flying the millions of ducks south for the winter and north each spring when the weather got warmer. Unbeknownst to those outside of Duckworld, most ducks had no clue about the difference between north and south or east and west. Therefore many years ago, the great Duck aviator — Flappy von Zeppelin — had the vision to create a tour line company for Duckworld. He saw he could capitalize on this market need and develop a system of maps with landmarks to create routes from different cities north to the nearest cities south and back again. He then trained his young tour guides on how to read the landmarks. Once they qualified with flawless knowledge of their flight-path, they were given accreditation to guide ducks on their migrations.

Dappy had done particularly well on his course and was one of the youngest ducks to be given a route of his own. He started small by leading the Flying V with tours of just 10-25 ducks. But by the end of the first season, he had moved up to handle jumbo tours of 100 ducks or more.



Knowledge is power. Learn everything you can about the industry, your company and competitors. Start macro – then go deep into micro details. Humbly display that knowledge when meeting with coworkers and senior management. Communicate it properly and you will get noticed.

CHAPTER THREE

Duck Hunters & the Promotion to HQ

In just under two years, Dappy's friendly personality, common sense, love of flying, innate sense of direction and overall drive to be successful helped him get noticed by the more senior duck executives at Flying V Tour Lines. What particularly impressed the higher-ups was the extra effort he put into learning about other landmarks and flight paths. This was very beneficial in the event a specific route became unusable due to bad weather, which impacted speed and visibility. Or worst yet, coming across Duck Hunters.

Duck Hunters were humans who dressed like they were wearing leaves and hid in the trees trying to kill ducks. They used long sticks that sprayed hundreds of deadly little pellets that literally shot ducks right out of the sky.

Dappy had heard of tours that were caught in a barrage of pellets and had lost several and sometimes many of their duckstomers. All ducks knew this was the only major risk to migration — it was a fact of life. But the percentage of losses was so small that it didn't stop migrations. In fact, all the major tour lines planned on a certain percentage of losses from Duck Hunters.

Yet Dappy had never lost a duckstomer in almost two years, even though he had been under fire on several occasions. Part of this was due to luck, but the other part was due to his knowledge of other landmarks on contingent flight paths. When trouble arose, he could quickly guide his tour in a different direction to get away from the Duck Hunters' pellets. Once out of the line of fire, he would get his bearings from another landmark and complete his tour successfully.

Based upon this track record, one day a senior duck-xecutive at Flying V asked him whether he'd like to work at HQ in the marketing duckpartment. Dappy had never heard of marketing, but he was soon to find out how important it was, and *that he was good at it.*

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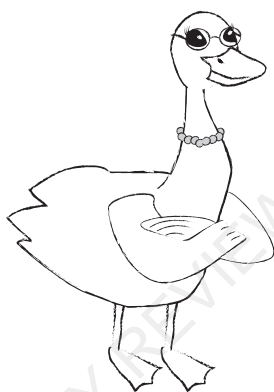
*Why do some ducks rise in organizations
and others get stuck?*

CHAPTER FOUR

Headquarters

Dappy was very surprised at what he discovered at Flying V Tour Lines headquarters. Thousands were involved in a mind-numbing number of projects that required a ton of paperwork. Duckpoyees were divided into many duckpartments, each with their own functions. And while they all worked for the same company, the different duckpartments had to compete with one another for a piece of the company's limited budget. Competition for funds was fierce. Adding to this, funding requests had to be made to the Duckxecutive Committee, made of senior managers from different duckpartments.

Senior managers had many years of experience and were considered the smartest and best in their field. And of course, they all rose through the ranks at Flying V Tour Lines. All the younger ducks were in awe of these managers. Getting called to the top floor to a meeting or an office visit was both rare and frightening. But Dappy also noticed something else. There were a lot of other ducks, some with many years of experience that were middle managers that supervised several levels of younger ducks. What was the difference between these ducks and the senior managers they reported to? Was it their choice of life-style or due to not being promoted? He was soon to find out.



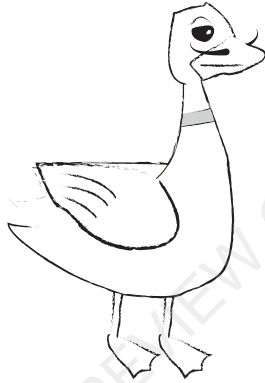
Find a mentor. Someone who's obviously on the rise, smart and well liked. Someone you admire and emulate. Help them as much as possible and they will help you.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Marketing Duckpartment

On Dappy's first day he met his new boss, Connie Duckphrey, the most senior female duck at Flying V Tour Lines. He liked her from the minute he met her for she was not only obviously smart, but she also took time to explain the role of the marketing duckpartment. She told him about the good things and good ducks who could help, as well as the bad things and the ducks to avoid. Dappy quickly learned that Connie Duckphrey was very well respected by senior management, and that he was lucky to have her as his boss.

Once Dappy settled in, he soon learned that marketing was perfect for him. It was an exciting and creative environment. Their role was basically to convince more ducks to book a migration with Flying V Tour Lines instead of the other tour lines.



Every business has competition. Regardless of the duckpartment you work in, you should know who they are and how your company compares to them. If you want to grow, don't be myopic and only focus on your area. You are all collectively working to beat the other guy.

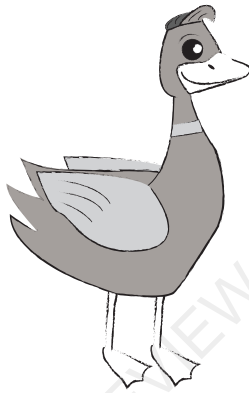
CHAPTER SIX

Quack Tour Lines

Although Flying V Tour Lines was first and biggest, that wasn't to say there wasn't any competition. There were dozens of mid-sized carriers and even more independent tour line operators who all coexisted peacefully and profitably. But recently, one competitor became the number two tour line primarily by stealing Flying V duckstomers – and that competitor was Quack Tour Lines.

Quack was run by a very smart operator named Mallard. He was a real promoter who made lots of noise in the marketplace and offered deep discounts to steal business from Flying V. While Flying V had more experience, more routes, a better image and reputation in the marketplace, an increasing number of duckstomers were willing to sacrifice some of that for a better price.

This had a very negative impact on the profits of Flying V Tour Lines, and there seemed to be no way out of this beak dive. If Flying V lowered prices to compete with Quack Tour Lines, they'd lose money, since Flying V had greater overhead costs from all the duckdepartments they've established over the years to service Duckworld.



*Every organization has a few rock stars of the moment.
Some are well-intentioned and good folk on the rise.
Others are purely out for themselves. Befriend them all.
But choose wisely. At some point, they could be internal
competition if for nothing else but resources.
Or perhaps your job.*

CHAPTER SEVEN

Danny Duck & the Sales Duckpartment

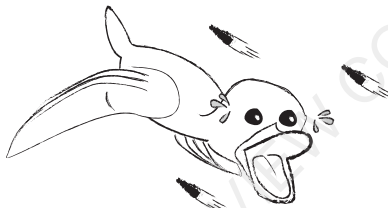
Connie confided to Dappy that she was becoming concerned, because the sales team was starting to spread the idea that they should drop their prices to meet that of Quack Tour Lines'. Danny Duck, their impressive VP of Sales, was promoting that this approach would obliterate Quack Tour Lines and force them out of business. He indicated that he had surveyed many travel agent duckstomers, and they all supported this approach.

Connie was very cerebral and had obviously been thinking long and hard about this, though it looked like she was just staring out of the window. She indicated this was a dangerous move that could result in two major negative scenarios. First, it could eliminate most, if not all, of the marketing duckpartment's funds causing cutbacks. Second, beyond a self-preservation concern, Connie also felt the logic was flawed in that Quack Tour Lines could go deeper and eventually the losses at Flying V Tour Lines would be so significant that the company would be in serious financial trouble.

As Dappy walked out, he heard Connie say to herself as much as to him, “The implications of a price war with Quack Tour Lines could be catastrophic to the future of Flying V.”

Danny wasn't a bad duck. He was well-liked and respected. In fact, he and Connie were both good working partners and close friends. He rose quickly through the ranks at Flying V Tour Lines. Everyone at Flying V Tour Lines was grateful that Danny had helped drive the company to its continued dominance. He was a leader who generated results, and so senior duckxecutives loved him. Danny's price reduction plan was a simple message, and some senior duckxecutives were starting to rally around the idea. He also knew that some of those duckxecutives were getting close to retirement and that if he successfully pulled this off, he'd be a front runner to becoming the next CDO (Chief Duckxecutive Office) of Flying V Tour Lines.

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Identify the core problems where fixing them would be very beneficial to the company or your duckpartment.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The #1 Issue Among Duckstomers

All the duckpoyees were worried there would be layoffs. Connie was right. In his heart, Dappy knew something else was needed for Flying V Tour Lines to get duckstomers back, something that didn't involve lowering prices. If only they could offer something that Quack Tour Lines couldn't offer, they might be able to get their prices back to a profitable level again.

But what was it?

He went in to Connie and asked her opinion. Connie responded with a question of her own. "What was the #1 concern among duckstomers?"

Dappy thought for a second and then looked at her astonished. "Duck Hunters?" he asked. She wants me to think about developing a method to avoid Duck Hunters? *Was she quacked?*

The Duck Hunter problem had been around so long that everyone felt it could never be solved. It was like gravity — if you stopped flapping your wings and tucked them in, a duck was going to fall back down to earth. How could he develop a plan to help Flying V Tour Lines stop Duck Hunters?

But Connie looked over her glasses perched on her bill and simply responded that just because no one had ever done it, didn't mean that it was impossible. She added that some of the greatest inventions in Duckworld were made by ducks who would jokingly say of themselves later that they were too stupid to know it couldn't be done.

Dappy left her office and started to think about what Connie said. How could he fix a problem no other duckxecutive had ever been able to address before? So he waddled back to his cubicle, ready to take on the challenge, to see if he could figure out a way to reduce Duck Hunter fatalities.

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Problem solving requires knowing what and why you want to change and then laying out numerous options, alone or with associates, to come up with the simplest or most innovative solution.

CHAPTER NINE

Addressing the Duck Hunter Problem

The more he thought about it, the more Dappy knew that avoiding Duck Hunters was the answer to Flying V's problems. Duck Hunters were the #1 issue cited by duckstomers every year in the Gallduck Poll – the top research firm in Duckworld.

However, no one had ever been able to figure out how to reduce Duck Hunter fatalities. Currently, the only known way was to fly around them, which cost precious time and money. Connie had even said that whenever she brought this issue up, the duckxecutives just looked at her bemused.

For the next few days, Dappy could think of nothing else but trying to solve this Duck Hunter problem. He thought about how Duck Hunters went about their process and how normal ducks reacted to it, which often ended up in tragedy.

Then, Dappy had an idea. He realized that for the most part, Duck Hunters always hid in the woods near bodies of water where the ducks would rest. They'd make a noise which would lead to a chain reaction of frightened ducks screeching toward the sky and right in the Duck Hunters' line of fire.

Ducks were flying at random, spreading out in a mass, and making themselves an easy target for Duck Hunters, who now only had to aim in their general direction and take a shot. With the spray of pellets, they would surely hit one. Even when they were in the wind-efficient Flying V formation, they provided a fairly large target.

But, what if as soon as there was the hint of Duck Hunters nearby, ducks dove down to the water and paddled right past the Duck Hunters? Even Duck Hunters surely wouldn't shoot sitting ducks. The problem was Duck Hunters used dogs and noise-makers to startle ducks – who were in the water to take flight, as it was more acceptable to shoot ducks flying away in panic.

Dappy had another idea that stemmed from his love of music. What if duckstomers were given dPods and a set of dBuds to listen to music? This way, the ducks wouldn't hear barking dogs or noise-makers, which would keep them from panicking and taking flight. They could remain in the water, paddling past the Duck Hunters safely.

Ultimately, the problem was that while “flying,” ducks were very good about staying in formation, but in “water,” they were more easily lured away from the group by fish, other birds, and wildlife – which created a lot of safety issues.

Somehow, Dappy knew he had to keep his ducks together in order for all of them to not get

distracted and break off from the tour. If only he could link everyone together. But no self-respecting duck would admit to the fact that they couldn't stay in line and also agree to being "tied" to one another.

Dappy worked on this problem from early morning till the wee hours for several weeks. Then one day, while listening to Duck Hop music on his dBuds – which were hooked into his dPod that rested in a holder strapped to his waist – he got up and almost killed himself. The wires had gotten tangled and caught on his chair when he got up.

Wireless Ducktooth headsets had always been out of the question as well, due to ducks' small head size. Many have health concerns from radiation.

It was at that moment that the big idea came to him. One of the major problems ducks had was that wires from the dBuds were hooked to their dPods *behind* their heads – *so they couldn't see* if or when wires got tangled.

But, what if the dBud wires were attached to the dPod of the duck in front of them, so they could keep an eye on it and make sure they didn't get tangled on anything? This would also mean that all ducks would be tethered to each other. They could be told it was for their safety vs. possibly insulting them with the reason that they could get distracted and not stay in a row.

He ran his plan by Connie, who was excited by

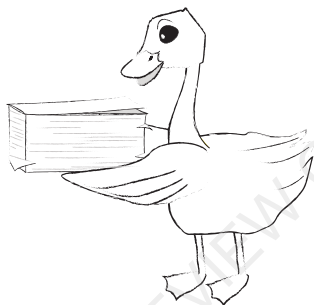
the idea, but worried the Top Ducks would never go for it. The cost of supplying every duckstomer with dBuds and dPods would hurt the bottom line. Thankfully, Dappy had prepared a duckument with a cost/benefit analysis proving how it would be better to keep the current rates and absorb the small amount of added cost for the dBuds and dPods.

He reasoned that since they would need to buy in large quantities, Flying V Tour lines would be the #1 duckstomer of dBuds and dPods in all of Duckworld. They could, therefore, buy them cheaper than anyone else when factoring in bulk rates.

Flying V Tour Lines could market this as a unique value-added service for duckstomers, and also avoid having to meet the lower prices of Quack Tour Lines – something that had the likely potential to spiral down into a *nobody-wins* price war.

Hearing this, Connie was excitedly convinced and suggested that he develop a plan to present to the Duckxecutive Committee.

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Executives don't have time nor do they like to read lengthy documents. It slows them down. You need to write crisply, clearly, and efficiently. Get your pitch across with as few words as possible.

CHAPTER TEN

The First Draft

Dappy spent the next two weeks writing and rewriting until he felt he had thoroughly exhausted all the details from start to finish. Ultimately, he wanted his plan to pass what they used to refer to in school as the “weight test.” The theory was that to achieve better grades, professors wanted to see that ducks knew *everything* about the subject. Since they had the time to read lengthy reports (it was a part of their job, after all), the more that was written, the heavier the report, the higher the grade. It had to be accurate and it took time, but it was a pretty simple formula to ensure success.

He was very proud of his fifty-plus page plan and excited to show Connie, anticipating high praise and compliments. To his dismay, he immediately recognized the look on her face as she asked him to discuss his plan.

He’d seen that look before. It wasn’t an angry look, thankfully, but she had that slight smirk where he knew she was going to expound upon all the things he did wrong. Equally frustrating was that she was usually right, of course.

The main issue Connie expressed was how the “weight-test” was the opposite approach for the Duckxecutive Committee. While she appreciated both the approach and effort, the committee didn’t have the time it would take to read a such a long plan, especially with the excruciating details. In fact, Connie said the real goal would be to present his entire plan on as few pages as possible – ideally even one page.

One page? Just ONE page? Dappy thought to himself. How could she possibly expect him to fit his entire plan onto *just one page?* At this point, she lost him. There was just too much he needed to explain, and her recommendation seemed way too daunting.

Next was how his entire plan was in paragraphs with long sentences. Connie indicated it would be much easier to read simple, one-line thoughts that were supported by a few bullet points to better get ideas across. This makes it easier for readers to scan the content at different engagement levels and still quickly understand the overall intent.

Connie also pointed out that his plan was poorly laid out, making it difficult to follow along without having to refer back to another section for context and reminders. Readers could become confused about the goals, approach, and rationale he was

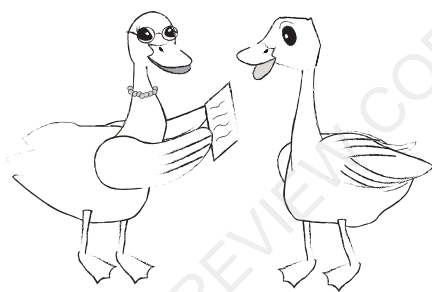
trying to make, all because his plan wasn't clearly organized into logically, sequential sections.

Dappy was crushed. By the time he had graduated, he had become proficient at writing heavily-weighted reports that received top grades. But he also knew that Connie was probably right.

Why would senior duckexecutives want to spend all their time reading dense, long plans? They are very busy with hundreds of projects to attend to – they can't afford to spend a lot of time reading each one.

It then occurred to Dappy why editors of the prestigious business newspaper, *The Duck Street Journal*, have short summaries of their top stories on the cover page – often categorized into Business and Duckworld. This was further supported by the incredible popularity of the new social media platform “Quacker,” where any duck or company could post short comments of 280 characters or less. Ducks just don't have a lot of time to read now, so being brief and concise was important.

Although discouraged, Dappy went back to his office feeling more committed to doing it right this time.



Get Your Ducks in a Row

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Connie's Secret Formula

A few minutes passed as Dappy stared at a blank sheet of paper, struggling to figure out how to do what Connie suggested. He needed to get the basic points to his plan down to one or two pages max.

Just then, he looked up to see Connie smiling in his doorway, waving around a piece of paper. He could tell, even from across the room, that it was not a new sheet. It had notes and it seemed old. Soft and used, with frayed edges, wrinkled, folded and unfolded many times. There were even hints of coffee stains that could be seen.

She indicated that because of his commitment and effort, she was going to share with him her secret formula – “*Get Your Ducks in a Row.*”

Dappy was confused. *A secret writing formula?* To be honest, he had always marveled at how strong, clear and succinct Connie was when communicating, whether in writing or presenting. It's why many felt she advanced so far and so quickly.

Now, she was passing this powerful tool to him. Boy was he one one lucky duck!

When Connie handed him that sheet of paper (that felt like an ancient artifact), his eyes narrowed in confusion.

Get Your Ducks in a Row

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Purpose | 6. Rationale |
| 2. Background | 7. Tactics |
| 3. Issues | 8. Cost & ROI |
| 4. Objectives | 9. Timing |
| 5. Strategies | 10. Next Steps |

That's it? The secret to her communication skills is a simple outline with 10 points? She noticed his furrowed brow and smiled even wider.

“Not very sexy is it,” she admitted. “But trust me – this formula not only helps me communicate, it also helps me *think*.”

She then continued on to espouse its virtues with an evangelical passion he had never heard before.

“Most ducks think they write well, especially if they achieved high grades in school. The problem is that the real world doesn't work like school. In fact, it's almost the antithesis. Everyone is so busy that successful duckexecutives have to think and communicate quickly and clearly. They don't excuse bad grammar and definitely don't want long-winded paragraphs, convoluted thoughts with complicated sentences, and too much unnecessary information.

“Getting your ducks in a row *looks* easy and simple. However, while the formula is simple, ducks don’t adhere to it as often as they should – and that’s infuriating. It’s been going on so long now that millions of duckexecutives struggle with structuring a persuasive letter or presentation properly to achieve their objectives.”

Connie took a pause and continued.

“Many duckexecutives are good at what they do. But, many fall short when having to communicate their ideas, plans, and strategies. From those in duckvertising, duckcountants, to those in information ducknology and duckfacturing – *everyone* still needs know how to develop and then communicate effective plans for funding and resources. It is just alarming how many duckexecutives lack strong communication skills to help convince both senior duckexecutives and the whole organization to approve their recommendations quickly and effectively. This negatively impacts overall corporate productivity.

“Duckworld is constantly changing. Communication moves faster than ever before with the duckternet and duckcial media, but ducks still need to communicate quickly and clearly to achieve their goals.

“Make no mistake about it – business communication skills are awful out there. I’ve had a VP once ask me

the difference between an objective and a strategy – my bill dropped so low he turned red.

“A senior duckrector once tried briefing me on a simple internal communication project, and it took an hour before I could even understand his objectives, budget and timeline.

“There are many top executives and even business school graduates who could really benefit from learning how to *Get Their Ducks in a Row*.

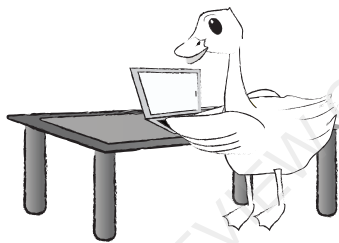
“It’s simply a disciplined process and approach to problem-solving. So Dappy, my friend – learn it, think by it, write to it, and sell it. If you use it wisely, it will change your business life forever.”

By the time Connie finished, her face was red and she was wildly pointing her wings at Dappy, having worked up a lot of excitement of her own. She took a moment and a deep breath, then smiled.

Turning to leave, she looked Dappy piercingly in the eyes and said, “Don’t screw it up this time.”

Then she left.

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The Get Your Ducks In A Row formula is a step-by-step guide to help you lay out your thoughts clearly and succinctly in a logical flow.

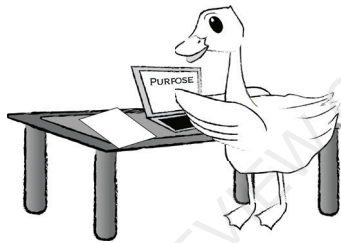
CHAPTER TWELVE

Using the Formula & Getting His Ducks in a Row

Wow. Dappy had never heard Connie speak so passionately. So he sat down and started to do what she suggested, to “fill in the blanks.”

He realized the beauty of the formula was in its simplicity. She was right. It was basically a 10-point structured format that guides the writer to logically think through and communicate plans, recommendations, or problems for almost any business topic. The task at hand was to see if the formula could help present his case for reducing Duck Hunter fatalities to the Duckxecutive Committee. Before long, he was getting the hang of it.

He just went about it in order. What he soon realized was just how important it was to really think about the meaning behind each word to make sure that his *Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan* was quickly and clearly communicated.



The first thing you need to think about when you're about to write a document or presentation is to start with the audience. What do they know?

What is in it for them?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 1 - Purpose*

Connie had indicated that the first step was often done improperly because ducks often confuse the Purpose with the Objective.

The Purpose is the reason for the duckument, meeting or presentation. It answers the question the recipient may have of “*why are we here today*” or “*why am I receiving this?*”

The beauty of this first step is that it forces the writer to think about the audience or recipient and write or present it from their perspective. It requires the author to ask himself or herself whether the audience knows anything about this particular topic or project.

It can also be thought of as party invitation. The Purpose usually refers to the title of the project (or the kind of party). This quickly helps establish the premise and whether the recipient wants to attend or read further. Just like a party invite, the recipient gets a certain perspective of whether they want to attend based upon the occasion or theme, the host, or even the guest list.

It's important to avoid confusing the Purpose with the Objective, which is what the author wants to accomplish through the project's Purpose.

So, he began to fill in the Purpose, and as he did, he soon realized the importance of each word he chose. He initially wrote:

*To outline and receive approval to implement a plan
to reduce Duck Hunter fatalities.*

Technically, the Purpose was totally accurate and 'reasonable'. It summed up the entire duckument's focus. The reader would immediately know the topic that was to follow.

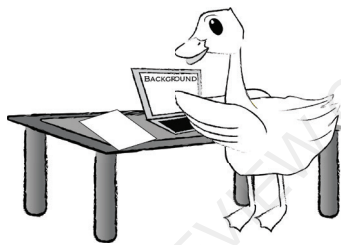
However, he also remembered what Connie had said. Duck Hunters had been such an age-old problem that even the considerable resources and time from some of the brightest minds at Flying V hadn't been able to solve it yet. Therefore, placing a key element of the plan right in the Purpose

may make senior duckexecutives very skeptical, stop reading, or even cancel the meeting, all before he had a chance to present his ideas and rationale.

Therefore, he ended up making the Purpose a bit broader and more general. It would address a topic that he knew everyone would immediately be interested in at least reading to the end of the page:

To outline and receive approval to implement a plan to compete with Quack Tour lines without having to reduce prices.

While he knew his initial Purpose was accurate, he was confident that this modified Purpose was a safer approach. Sometimes, there are reasons to be “less specific” with the purpose in order to have the specific Purpose unveiled later after a proper set-up from the other steps in Connie’s formula.



The Background provides the audience with proper perspective to understand the current situation. It's just the facts.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 2 - Background*

Connie indicated that the Background provides the reader with the proper perspective and foundation to understand the project or plan – which was much needed before diving right into problems it would address. She indicated it was important not to assume that everyone who would be reading it would have the same knowledge or background as he did.

The Background would provide the proper context so all readers could start from the same place.

Dappy wasn't sure where to begin, since everyone at Flying V, particularly the senior duckexecutives, knew more about the history of Flying V than he did. What did he need to put into background? If he was presenting to outsiders, he could provide a brief overview of the company and the tour line industry. However, with insiders he needed to be more specific.

In thinking about what he was going to present, he realized he needed to set up his case to fix the Duck Hunter problem. This was a big deal that impacted the direction of the whole company, and of course, would be different from a Background of another kind of project.

And so he wrote:

- Flying V is the industry founder and by far the largest tour line operator in Duckworld.
- Flying V has created most of the systems and approaches for tour line operators – not only in operations and training, but also by taking care of duckployees – as the largest and most well-respected duckployer in Duckworld.
- However, the unfortunate truth is that being the first and largest tour line isn't enough to offset a cheaper price.
- Now, Flying V share is down to 80% (-11%) from just a few years ago. Despite running more sales and discounts, margins and profits were down considerably.

The thing about the background is that it is factual. It is an irrefutable truth. The senior duckxecutives may not like it but they knew it and there was no arguing it. It also set the stage for what was coming next.

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Issues are the problems or roadblocks that are preventing the company from moving forward or growing in a particular area.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 3 - Issues*

Now Dappy knew what issues were. His mother, Flappy Duck, used to tell him that he was going to have “*issues*” if he got into trouble or didn’t do his chores. These were serious problems and his mom would make him focus on them until they were fixed.

Once, after getting a particularly poor report card when he was in grammar school, she separated his courses into two groups. The first included classes where he excelled, like math, flying and music. These were classes Dappy enjoyed because he was innately good at them so they didn’t require a lot of effort. The second category were classes where he had issues in, such as history and science. He found history and science boring and they required a lot more of his time and effort.

Ultimately, Flappy would make him stay in and study history and science after school before he was allowed to go out and play. He hated that, but by focusing on the two subjects where he had issues with, he was able to turn almost failing grades into A’s.

So, determining the Issues for Flying V was easy:

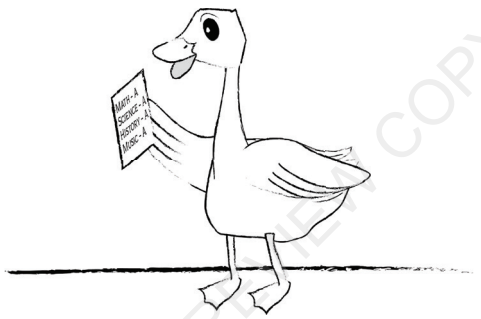
1. Flying V is losing share to competitive carriers due to lower fares with the same level of service.
2. Flying V did not have a unique reason for duckstomers to select them vs. Quack Tour Lines that offered lower prices made possible due to lower overhead.
3. Therefore, Flying V market share and profits were down considerably – 25% over 3 years.

After all these years, Dappy also felt there was an underlying culture of acceptance within Flying V that the duck tour line business had become too commoditized. Duckployees felt Flying V was never going to be able to provide anything new or unique to offer ducks to make Flying V more viable over lower-priced competitors.

However, Dappy knew that writing this could risk being taken the wrong way by senior duckxecutives who spent their lives working for Flying V. He didn't want to appear like a disrespectful young whipper quacker, so he left that part out. He knew to tread carefully to avoid any political trouble.

The truth was that a culture of “accepting that nothing could be done” was a big issue that needed to be addressed. But, that was for the senior duckxecutives to say – not him.

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The Objective is what you wanted to achieve to fix the Issues – in a measurable or quantitative way.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 4 - Objectives*

As Connie defined it so eloquently, Objectives are simply the things that you want to accomplish as a result of your efforts. Dappy also felt that writing the Objectives was easy.

After all, it was really just a direct flow from the Issues indicating what had to be fixed or addressed in some way. He also remembered some of the helpful hints that Connie had given him to ensure he wrote proper Objectives. Each should start with a directional adverb such as “to generate,” “to increase,” or “to reverse.”

He quickly wrote:

1. To reverse the share losses from Quack Tour Lines without having to cut prices.
2. To increase profits back to former levels at the height of Flying V’s share.

Feeling that his thoughts were pretty clear, he started to move onto the next part.

But then, he remembered how his mother used to tell him how she didn't want him to *just pass* his classes.

"I want two A's," he remembered her saying, "or you'll get comfortable with not working hard and settling for C's. To get those A's, you're going to have to get A's on every test, hand everything in on time, and do every extra credit assignment available – and for good measure, I don't just want a year-end target. I want you to set mini goals along the way, Dappy."

Sure she was tough, but he did it, and it worked. As he reviewed the Objectives he had just written, he decided to add specific numerical criteria:

1. To reverse share losses against Quack Tour Lines.
2. To increase profits +12.5%, returning Flying V to its former level of profitability at 90% share.

Adding numerical goals allowed Dappy to provide a concrete, measurable stake in the ground for his goals. He could test the appeal of his concept in a Gallduck Poll before launching and investing millions. This way, duckexecutives could evaluate whether the project would be profitable, and thus, be worth the effort and investment. It also held the project and duckexecutives involved accountable to specific measurable performance indicators. Finally, Dappy felt his Objectives were now much stronger.

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The Strategies are the overarching ideas or concepts that form the foundation for the master plan of how you are going to achieve the objectives.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 5 - Strategies*

Connie spent a good deal of time talking about strategies. If Objectives were “what” you wanted to accomplish – the Strategies were “how” you were going to accomplish them. She explained that the Strategy was really the most important component because it was the big idea or the concept behind the plan to accomplish the objectives. Many duckxexecutives could easily outline their Objectives but it was the Strategies that separated the ducks from the ducklings.

Connie indicated that it was Dappy’s idea of avoiding Duck Hunters that convinced her to encourage and support him on his plan. She also gave him helpful hints to make sure the Strategy is properly written by starting with the words “to utilize,” “to create,” “to develop” or “to implement.”

So Dappy began to write his Strategy:

To implement a *Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan* that:

1. Greatly reduces fatalities and provides a uniquely competitive reason for duckstomers to select Flying V over Quack Tour Lines, despite their lower prices.
2. Accomplishes this:
 - a. Without major flight route changes.
 - b. With a cost structure that would make it hard for Quack Tour Lines to match it thereby securing Flying V's advantage.

Dappy knew that at this point many of the senior duckxecutives reading his plan would roll their eyes because it seemed like an impossible task. This led nicely into the next two stages of Getting Your Ducks In A Row.

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*The Rationale is the reason or support
for why the Strategy makes sense.*

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Getting Your Ducks In a Row *Step 6 - Rationale*

Dappy knew the first point of the Rationale was seemingly obvious, but still stated the irrefutable fact:

- Duck Hunters were the #1 issue cited by duckstomers every year in the Gallduck Poll, the top research firm in Duckworld.

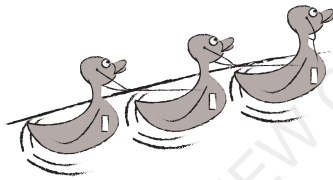
This Rationale fact was “why” the strategy made sense, but he also knew that it would be greeted with skepticism if he didn’t support it with “how” it could be done. His second point was not as obvious and could help rally support for his plan.

- The fact that an innovative and affordable approach to address this major issue has never been found gives Flying V, with all its experience, resources and clout a huge advantage over competitive carriers.

Most importantly, he needed to “deliver,” to gain and keep their interest and secure their future support.

- We have created an innovative approach that will be both successful and affordable.

At this point, Dappy knew he’d gotten their attention.



Tactics are the specific detailed elements that are involved with the plan that can be itemized, quantified, purchased and tracked.

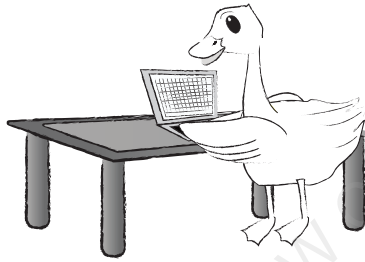
CHAPTER NINETEEN

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 7 - Tactics*

As Connie had indicated, the Tactics were the more detailed elements of the strategic plan. For a duck-executive summary, it wasn't necessary to get into the minutia of every little detail. The focus should be on the major elements of the plan:

1. At the first hint of Duck Hunters, tour guide leaders will dive down, leading tour groups right to the water.
2. Upon landing, each duckstomer will be given dPods and dBuds to listen to music, so they can't hear any barking dogs. This keeps everyone safely in the water, where Duck Hunters won't shoot sitting ducks.
3. Each duckstomer's dBuds will be hooked up to the dPod of the duckstomer in front of them – tethering all the ducks, *in a row*. This removes any potential for distraction and wandering away from the group.
4. After tour guide leaders get their ducks in a row, they will paddle past Duck Hunters to safety. From there, they can take-off and resume flight.

Dappy was amazed how after all the time it took to think of the plan, how simple it looked on paper, distilled down to four simple tactics. But of course, that was the point.



Cost & ROI are financial overviews detailing the budgets required to execute the plan compared to the sales revenue (or cost savings) generated in order to determine if it's a good business decision.

Please note that if this doesn't seem worthy of the investment you will likely need to go back and refine your plan.

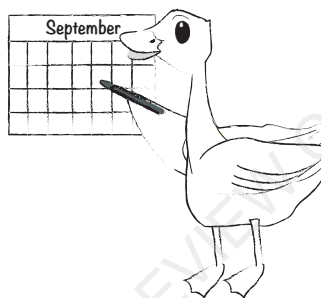
Getting Your Ducks in a Row

Step 8 - Cost & ROI

The cost of the dPods and dBuds were really the only major investment. Sometimes duckxecutive summaries only warranted a cost outline, but as an added measure and to impress, Dappy had also developed a ducksheet with different scenarios as an attachment. Therefore, he just put a few simple numbers with support in this plan:

- dPods and dBuds would be free, so ticket prices wouldn't change. At only \$2.00 each, multiplied by 9 million duckstomers a year, that would result in \$18 million. With the cost of research and advertising, the total plan costs would be \$20 million.
- Orange Inc., the innovative company behind dPods and dBuds, had offered Flying V prices at 50% less per-unit vs. Quack Tour Lines, because Flying V had 9x the volume. The ROI, assuming a return to 90% share, was a huge 5-to-1, since every 1 million duckstomers (at \$100 per ticket) totals \$100 million.

Dappy realized it was safer to show full costs, but he also knew that if he could reuse the dPods and dBuds, the ROI would go up significantly. But to start, he put the full cost into his pro-forma.



*Timing isn't a complicated concept. It's a calendar.
The one note of caution is not "how" you
communicate it, but "what" you commit to.*

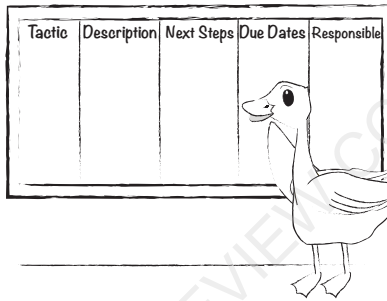
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 9 - Timing*

Assuming his plan would be well-received, Dappy had already created a delivery schedule for Orange Inc. and a roll-out plan with their advertising agency on Maduckson Avenue in New York.

1. dPods and dBuds could be ready in six months from the order date.
2. Advertising would coincide with that date to launch a coordinated campaign.
3. This provides time for a concept test with the Gallduck Poll and training for all tour guides.

It's not a complicated concept – it's a calendar. Start with big picture and macro milestones and have supporting weekly or daily details within each as required. The one note of caution is not just “how” you communicate it, but “what” you commit to. Take the time to research and vet reasonable timelines for each stage. Give yourself a “cushion,” but not too generous of a cushion. Hard work and great thinking can be worthless in the eyes of management if key deadlines are missed.



Time for Next Steps. It seems like obvious project management procedures, but often it just doesn't happen. If you don't write it down with due dates and assign Responsibility, it won't get done right, on time, or at all.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Getting Your Ducks in a Row *Step 10 - Next Steps*

Dappy realized he was close to the finish line, and had to just “ask for the order” and outline a summary of the timetable of events:

1. Receive Duckxecutive Committee approval to proceed (Week 1)
2. Quickly conduct a Gallduck Poll (Week 3)
3. Place the order for dPods and dBuds from Orange Inc. (Week 4)
4. Provide a project brief to the duckvertising agency to create a campaign (Week 5)
5. Begin training (Week 18)
6. Launch (Week 26)

He also had a detailed backup page with a chart for every element with timing and who was responsible.

Tactic	Description	Next Steps	Due Dates	Responsible

Dappy was thrilled and realized he had done what he would have considered absurd only a few days earlier – he had gotten his plan down to just a few pages.

The Quack Tour Lines Defense Plan

PURPOSE

- To outline and receive approval to implement a plan to compete with Quack Tour Lines without having to reduce prices.

BACKGROUND

- Flying V is the industry founder and largest tour line operator in Duckworld.
- Flying V has created most of the systems and approaches for tour line operators – not only in operations and training, but also by taking care of duckploys – as the largest and most well-respected duckployer in Duckworld.
- Unfortunately, being the first and largest tour line isn't enough to offset a cheaper price.
- Now, Flying V share is down to 80% (-11%) from just a few years ago. Despite running more sales and discounts, margins and profits were down considerably.

ISSUES

- Flying V is losing share to competitive carriers due to lower fares with the same level of service.
- Flying V does not have a unique reason for duckstomers to select them over Quack Tour Lines' competitive, lower price
- Therefore, Flying V market share and profits were both down considerably – 25% over 3 years.

OBJECTIVES

- To reverse share losses, increase profits +12.5% and return Flying V to its former level of profitability at 90% share.

STRATEGIES

To implement a *Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan* that:

1. Greatly reduces fatalities and provide a uniquely competitive reason for duckstomers to select Flying V over Quack Tour Lines – despite their lower prices.
2. Accomplishes the reduction in duck fatalities:
 - Without major flight route changes.
 - With a cost structure that would make it hard for Quack Tour Lines to match it and neutralize Flying V's advantage.

RATIONALE

- Duck Hunters were the #1 issue cited by duckstomers every year in the the Gallduck Poll, the top research firm in Duckworld.
- The fact that an innovative and affordable plan to this major issue has never been found gives Flying V (with all of their experience, resources, and clout) a huge advantage over competitive carriers.
- We have created an innovative approach that will be both successful and affordable.

TACTICS

1. At the first hint of Duck Hunters, tour guide leaders will dive down, leading tour groups right to the water.
2. Upon landing, each duckstomer will be given dPods and dBuds to listen to music with, so they can't hear any barking dogs. This keeps everyone safely in the water, where Duck Hunters won't shoot sitting ducks.
3. Each duckstomer's dBuds will be hooked up to the dPods of the duckstomer in front of them – tethering all the ducks, *in a row*. This removes any potential for distraction and wandering away from the group.
4. After tour guide leaders get their ducks in a row, they will paddle past Duck Hunters to safety. From there, they can take-off and resume flight.

COSTS & ROI

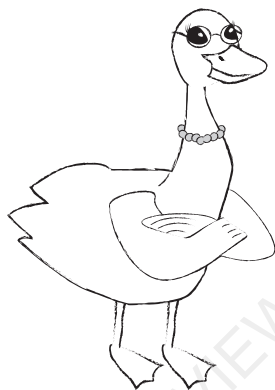
- dPods and dBuds would be free, so ticket prices wouldn't change. At only \$2.00 each, multiplied by 9 million duckstomers a year, that would result in \$18 million. With the cost of research and advertising, the total plan costs would be \$20 million.
- Orange Inc., the innovative company behind dPods and dBuds, had offered Flying V prices at 50% less per-unit vs Quack Tour Lines, because Flying V had 9x the volume. The ROI, assuming a return to 90% share, was a huge 5-to-1, since every 1 million duckstomers (at \$100 per ticket) totals \$100 million.

TIMING

1. dPods and dBuds could be ready in six months from the order date.
2. Advertising would coincide with that date to launch a coordinated campaign.
3. This provides time for a concept test with the Gallduck Poll and training for all tour guides.

NEXT STEPS

1. Receive Duckxecutive Committee approval to proceed (Week 1)
2. Quickly conduct a Gallduck Poll (Week 3)
3. Place the order for dPods and dBuds from Orange Inc. (Week 4)
4. Provide a project brief to the aducktising agency to create a campaign (Week 5)
5. Begin training (Week 18)
6. Launch (Week 26)



A good manager will provide constructive criticism when warranted. They will also praise when improvement comes from the dedication and hard work that goes into making your communication better. Leave your ego at the door and open yourself to learning. You'll get better with time. Someday, you'll be doing the same for others.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Connie–Round Two

Dappy printed his two-page plan and walked it over to Connie’s office. Upon arriving, he saw that she was furiously typing, her back to him. Without looking up, Connie said, “Just leave it on my desk. I’ll read it on the way home.”

Ugh – now he had to wait for feedback. Ten minutes later, as he was preparing to head home, he looked up to a more heart-warming Connie, grin and all.

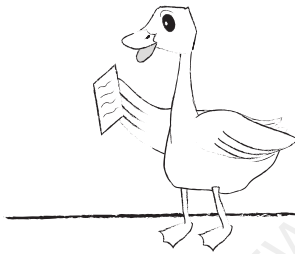
“This is great Dappy!” she exclaimed. “I’ll review it again tonight, but it holds together very well. I’ll get it on Duck Smith’s calendar tomorrow so you can walk him through it. I’ll explain in the morning!”

Then she was gone.

Whoa, he thought. He knew this was a significantly better plan, but now she wanted him to *present it* to the Head of Marketing? He wasn’t expecting that. Many questions flooded his mind. Why didn’t Connie just d-mail it to Duck Smith?

He heard a noise and looked up to see Connie’s head appear again through his office door.

“Read it out loud to yourself tonight. Practice so you don’t stumble – and keep a nice, conversational pace. I want you to come off confident of your thoughts and content. Own it.” With that, she was gone as fast as she came.



There is no better way to determine if your communication is clear and concise than to read it out loud. Are you stumbling over words because of how you wrote it, because of the pace, or from not knowing the material?

When you can be alone and comfortable, read it out loud as if it's a script or like you're singing in the shower. Being comfortable and familiar with the content goes a long way to alleviate fear of speaking in public.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Practice, Practice, Practice

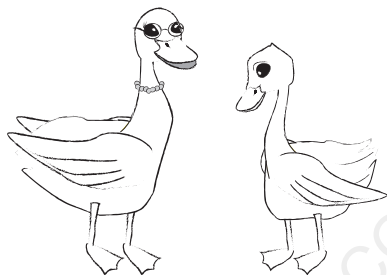
Dappy went home, both proud and uneasy. Proud because he had made quick progress with Connie's *Get Your Ducks in a Row* formula. Uneasy because he had to present to Duck Smith. He had never made a business presentation, and while not shy, the thought of making a presentation to a senior duck-executive was new to him.

What really confused him was her apparent intent to have him simply read it to Duck Smith. The thought of reading a written plan that he could just read by himself seemed... well, rather odd.

Still, he did as Connie instructed and began reading out loud. He soon realized why she suggested it. He stumbled through his first pass. He was reading too quickly and was missing words. He also felt it was coming off more like a speech vs. a one-on-one conversation that he had intended.

With each read-through, he grew more confident, feeling much better about knowing the content. He started using segue phrases between sections to add more flow and strength to his delivery.

He sure slept soundly that night knowing that once again, Connie was right.



Change happens. The great book “Who Moved My Cheese?” defines it better than anything. Just when you think everything is going well, something happens that throws a wrench into it – your boss gets fired, there are cutbacks, the company is sold, your project gets killed, you lose an account.

It happens. Don’t get emotional, get going. Learning how to adjust and deal with change positively with new plans separates the winners and leaders from those who can’t adjust.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Storm Clouds Over Marketing

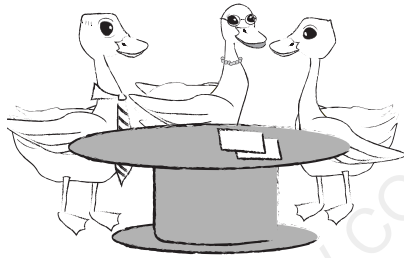
Dappy was pumped that morning, feeling prepared and confident. His plan was already reviewed endlessly; it was Connie-approved, and written down, so he didn't have to memorize anything. He knew he'd nail the delivery.

When Connie arrived, he sensed she was distracted, just like the other day when she didn't look up from the duckputer when he showed up. *What was going on?*

Apparently, right before he had shared his plan with her, Connie had spoken with Duck Smith, who revealed that Danny Duck met with the Duckexecutive Committee to present the Sales Teams' plan – which was to match Quack Tour Lines' lower prices. They provided an analysis that they could crush Quack Tour Lines within 12-24 months by doing so.

Duck Smith argued how Danny's plan would be a never-ending dive that would eventually crash Flying V financials and their stock prices. He even mentioned how the marketing team was working on their own approach, but it wasn't ready yet. Unbeknownst to Dappy, Connie had already briefed Duck Smith on Dappy's *Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan*.

Unfortunately, the Duckexecutive Committee already voted to present Danny's plan to the Board of Duckrectors next week. *Were they too late?*



Several schools of thought here. Some people hate having to read out loud to someone while they read along. They think it's silly and uncomfortable. But you've worked hard to get these thoughts perfect. If written well and practiced, you will perfect the skill of reading it like you are simply speaking to the person. It often becomes a conversation, but read it first just like you wrote it so that all the words are clearly stated. If you don't and ad lib while they are reading it, content and context invariably gets lost or misconstrued.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Presenting to Duck Smith

As soon as they could, Connie and Dappy rushed to Duck Smith's office to present Dappy's plan.

Dappy didn't know Duck Smith very well, but could see that though Duck Smith looked a little tired, he was calm and composed – even with the possibility of his department and career coming to an end in the near future. If Connie trusted Duck Smith, then Dappy would too.

“Ok, Dappy, ” Duck Smith said, gesturing both Dappy and Connie into the office. “Connie tells me you have a plan to *do what no one else has done before*. I'm intrigued, and honestly, we need something to go up against Danny Duck's plan – or we're goners.”

Dappy handed each of them a copy of his plan and began going over it. Duck Smith listened intently, occasionally making notes on his copy. Connie, already knowing the plan, sat back and watched Duck Smith's face. When Dappy was finished, Duck Smith sat back for a few moments in thought.

Finally, he looked up at them both.

“This is an incredibly innovative, well-thought out and presented plan, Dappy!” Duck Smith said. He turned to Connie and beamed. “And well-done to you as well! We need to move quickly. The Board of Duckrectors is meeting in two weeks, and I want to present this to the committee first. We have to get it on the same agenda as Danny’s – there’s no way they will go for his price drop idea after hearing this!”

“But first, Dappy, you will need to give me more data so I have solid support for the rationale,” Duck Smith said, which both Dappy and Connie nodded to in agreement.

“Great - Connie, I need two things,” Duck Smith continued. “First, call Byars Duck down in duckchasing to get another set of eyes on the costs, to make sure they are right.

“Next, let’s get some ducksmer feedback – run some questions in this week’s Gallduck Poll. Ask *‘If you had a choice to book a tour with a major tour lines, would you be more interested in the one with -15% lower prices or one with the ability to avoid Duck Hunters?’*”

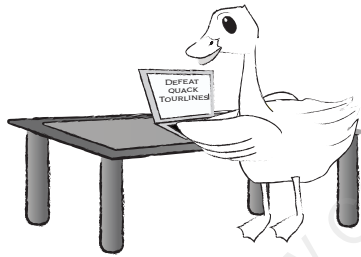
Duck Smith then turned his attention to Dappy. “And you, my good duck, I want you to turn your plan into a PowerDuck presentation. We’re going

to need to present to the Duckxecutive Committee next week. If it goes well, I want you to present at the Board of Duckrectors Meeting that following week. If you can have it done in the next few days, come back and present it to me first. And, a big thank you to you both – *you just gave us a fighting chance.*”

As Connie and Dappy left Duck Smith’s office, Dappy was both thrilled and terrified. Obviously, he was happy about the reaction, *but presenting to the Duckxecutive Committee?* That was a bit overwhelming.

Connie sensed his trepidation and said, “Don’t worry – the thinking is already done. Now all you have to do is shift the format to the new audience and learn how to present on your feet. *You’re already a pro,*” she finished jokingly.

“Right,” he muttered. “That’s *all* I have to do.”



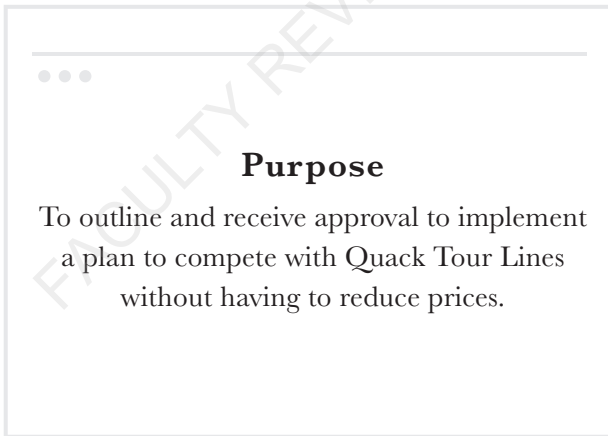
Duck Twain's famous quote: "I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead," is the perfect concept behind the challenge with creating an effective presentation. You need to get your thoughts down to as few words as possible on each slide. First, read it so everyone is with you. Then, elaborate because by now you know your stuff. Your job is to control the room and the message in order to have them buy what you are selling. Practice like crazy so you have your transition or segue words and phrases.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Turning It into a PowerDuck Presentation

Dappy took the concept of just “shifting the format” quite literally and started to just make each section its own PowerDuck slide.

The Purpose seemed to work fine:



However, he did notice that the sections with more words started to get pretty busy:

Background

Flying V is the industry founder and largest tour line operator in Duckworld, with an 80% share – down from 90% just a few years ago.

- Created most of the systems and approaches for tour line operators in operations, training, and taking care of duckploys, as the largest and most well-respected duckployer
- However, the unfortunate truth is that being the first and largest tour line isn't enough to offset a cheaper price.

He decided to check with Connie before going too far.

“You’re absolutely right, Dappy,” said Connie. “I was curious to see how long it took you to realize it. Good for you for not wasting too much time.”

She elaborated, “A presentation to a larger group is a totally different environment and requires a different style of presentation. You can’t stand in front of a dozen senior duckxectives and just read small words on a busy PowerDuck slide. There’s too much to read for them, they won’t see it and you’ll lose them quickly.”

“The beauty is that PowerDuck is the perfect tool to walk ducks through a step-by-step process. The Get Your Ducks in a Row formula *still works* in terms of the content flow. But, whereas for a written duckument the goal was to get it down to one or two pages, for a PowerDuck presentation, you need to get each slide down to as few words as possible, and in large font sizes so the whole room can see it easily.”

Dappy felt somewhat deflated. He didn’t have a lot of time, and now had to re-write his presentation – and this time, using only a few words per slide. He had that glazed look in his eyes and Connie could see right through him.

“Just look at each section and pull out the most important points,” Connie explained calmly. “Forget sentences. Imagine you are the audience – what do you want them to take away from each slide? Everything else is meaningless. You will be speaking and providing context, so they will understand it. You’ll only spend a few seconds on some slides. Sometimes, I put just one big word or thought on a slide for drama. It keeps ducks’ attention. Remember, you’re telling a story. Now you’re using the few words per slide to help you elaborate around the key points they should take away from the slide.”

Once again Dappy went back to his office. This time he thought about it very differently. Same message

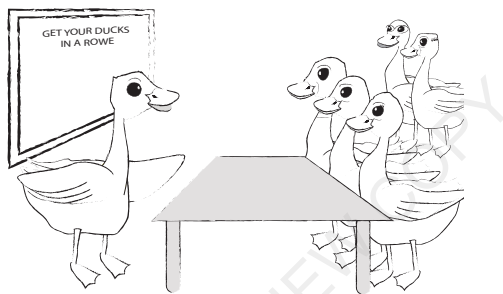
with much less words. Just place the key points or the desired take-aways on each slide. Then verbally, he'd create the sentences around each. This also meant he really had to practice the segue between the points on each slide, and between slides themselves. However, since he had already written the duckument version, and rehearsed it and presented it to Duck Smith, he felt pretty confident that he could do that.

By the end of the day, he was pleased to find himself finished with the first draft. He went to give it to Connie before she left for the day.

She ended their discussion by saying, "Marketing conference room tomorrow, 9 a.m. sharp, Dappy. I booked the room all day for your rehearsal. Duck Smith wants you to run it through with him."

So the next day, he rehearsed in front of Connie all morning, and with a few minor changes, Connie gave her seal of approval, stating how Dappy was able to capture the essence of the plan and convert it into his presentation very well. She also gave him pointers for dealing with the Duckxecutive Committee. By the time Duck Smith came in at noon, Dappy was both confident and more relaxed. Duck Smith only made some comments about being more sensitive to the key players in the room vs. the essence of the presentation.

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Practicing is so critical that it is worth providing additional rationale based upon legendary tech innovator and presenter Duck Jobs. He was known to have rehearsed over and over until he distilled it to its essence.

One of his peers and competitors, Duck Gates, had once said "I was never in his league. It was just amazing to see how precisely he would rehearse." It was performance art. Duck Jobs wasn't a natural speaker. He worked at it really, really hard.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Presenting to the Duckxecutive Committee

By the time the Duckxecutive committee started filing in at 8:55 a.m. with pads and coffee cups in hand, Dappy was ready. He arrived at 7:30 a.m. to make sure the equipment was working properly, and to give himself some time to run through the presentation in the one room that mattered.

When everyone was seated and he had shaken wings with every member, many he had only heard about but never met, Duck Smith thanked everyone for coming. He acknowledged that since he knew they were on a tight timetable, he was going to get started right away. He introduced Dappy with a brief background on who he was and then said, “This young duck has developed an innovative plan that the marketing department fully endorses and so we’ve asked him to present it to you. Ok Dappy – you’re on.”

“Thank you, Duck Smith,” Dappy said. “Today’s meeting is to get your approval on a plan for”... and then read the slide.



Defeating Quack Tour Lines Without Reducing Prices

“As you all know...”



Background

- FV 80% Share -11% vs. 2016 (90%)
- While FV is still the biggest and best
- Doesn't Offset Cheaper Prices

“Unfortunately, the market situation is against us...”



Issues

- QT is cheaper WITH same service
- No unique reason to select FV
- If FV matches QT lower prices:
 1. Hurts FV more
 2. Hard to go back up
 3. Tarnishes quality image

“Despite this, we have an aggressive plan to...”



Objectives

- Reverse share – return to 90%
- Keep +15% higher price vs. competition
- Increase profits +12.5%

Connie had prepared Dappy for condescending smirks and possible expressions of disbelief. She had suggested inserting an ice-breaker to regain their attention and interest. Her suggestion had been to find a way to make them smile. So he said, “I know what you’re thinking,” as he clicked to the next slide.



Is This Young Duck **QUACKED?**

And... it worked like a charm! Connie was right, as usual. Their postures lightened and and smiled. Some even laughed, recognizing that he had indeed anticipated their reaction. Dappy continued, getting into his groove. For his next few slides, instead of just laying out the “strategy,” he lead with a question.

“What if we could...” he started, clicking to the first slide in a sequence that built up with each click.



Strategy

- **Give flyers a benefit that can't be matched**



Strategy

- Give flyers a benefit that can't be matched
- Satisfy a huge desire to innovate so **only Flying V could do it**

Dappy could see them staring directly at him. He clearly had their attention. Some were squinting, greatly anticipating what this young duck was about to tell them. A couple looked skeptical, but the others were intrigued. They knew that Duck Smith and Connie Duckphrey would never let a young duck most had never heard of present such a thing to the Duckexecutive Committee if there wasn't a compelling reason. Some thought this better be good. But those who knew Duck and Connie trusted them and were totally primed for the idea on the next slide. So he said, "*We've created...*"



Strategy

- A viable, affordable Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan

During his rehearsal with Connie, she had warned Dappy that the more skeptical managers may grunt and sit back, shaking their bills, and at this very moment, like she predicted, a few did.

“Don’t pay attention to them,” she had advised. “Catch them off guard with your words and plow through to the next slide.” And he did just that.

“I know that some of you might be reasonably skeptical,” Dappy said. “I would be as well if I were you. But, if you could indulge me for a few minutes, I will demonstrate how this concept can work by...” and with a click, he was off to the next slide.



Strategy

- Greatly reducing fatalities without flight path changes at a cost QT can't match

Dappy immediately saw a few skeptical managers sit up straighter, tails wagging rapidly after this slide. He continued, “Before I show you *how* with our innovative plan, let me reinforce *why* we believe this is critical.” This was a perfect segue into the Rationale section. Fortunately – and not surprisingly – the results from the Gallduck poll Connie implemented (at Duck Smith’s request) were overwhelmingly positive. The poll had posed one simple question with two choices as answers:

Which tour line would you be more likely to choose:

- A tour line with a 15% lower price
- A tour line with a new program that significantly reduced Duck Hunter fatalities
- The results among thousands of duckstomers was that an overwhelming 97.9% selected reducing Duck Hunter fatalities.

Dappy clicked the next slide reinforcing the Rationale behind his plan:



Rationale

- #1 Issue in Gallduck Poll
- 97.9% select vs. -15% price
- The competition can't match our plan

Now came the important part, which was also the most challenging part – making them understand, and believe in his plan, and getting them excited about how his plan worked. This was critical to getting approval, funds, and the company-wide resources Dappy needed to proceed. He wanted to get the key points of his plan all on one slide so he carefully spoke to each key point separately as a ‘building slide’ and elaborated on each so they understood.

He realized as he went through his presentation that faces were lighting up. They were coming around and getting it! And then, something dawned on him. Dappy was *having fun* presenting! It caught him off-guard how relaxed he became as he continued explaining his plan.



Tactics

- See Duck Hunters = dive into water
- dPods & dBuds for all
- Connect dBuds to dPods of the duck in front
- Ducks in a row/paddle past

After presenting his Tactics, the CDO (Chief Duckxective Officer) looked at Dappy, then to the other duckxexecutives around the table. The room was quiet in anticipation, waiting for the CDO to speak. What surprised everyone is that the CDO almost never spoke first. He was very well-respected and would normally ask everyone to share their opinions first. It appeared that he just couldn't contain himself.

As all eyes were on the CDO, he said, "I'm obviously a little concerned about the cost and logistics, but Dappy, I have to say this is a brilliant idea! What does everyone else think?" he asked. Several quacked in agreement, but Danny Duck, who had been sitting quietly and almost amused throughout the entire presentation, was clearly startled to be called on, particularly with the CDO's opinion already known. So he said, "I agree it's clever. But how practical and affordable is it?"

Duck Smith, who had been watching Danny throughout the entire presentation, anticipated something like this and jumped in.

“Danny, I think you’ll see in the next few slides how Connie, Dappy and other members of key duck-departments have done a thorough vetting of the costs, training and logistics.” Duck Smith continued. “It’s not inexpensive but finance has run it through several models and everyone is getting on board with a passion to make it happen, all because they think it’s going to work. Potentially *big time*.”

Danny looked a little deflated, but he also built his career at Flying V. If Dappy’s plan worked, it would benefit him as well.

Dappy continued with his final slides while also fielding a few questions fairly easily. Connie was right. *When you know your stuff...* he was in the zone.

COST & ROI

- Provide 9m free dPods/dBuds
- Cost 9m x \$2 = \$18m + mark = \$20m
- Orange Inc. quantity discount
- Return to 90% share = 5/1 ROI



TIMING

- dPods/dBuds production (6 mos)
- Training (start in 2 months)
- Launch ads (start 6 months)



NEXT STEPS

- Approval – Week 1
- Galduck Poll – Week 3
- Production start – Week 4
- Aducktising brief – Week 5
- Begin training – Week 18
- Launch – Week 26

When Dappy finished, the CDO thanked him for his excellent work. Before he could even respond, the committee started clapping. It was almost too much for Dappy. He stood there, a little embarrassed.

Connie told him afterwards, when it was just the two of them, that she had never seen that happen before.

Dappy responded by saying, “You’ve been an incredible help, Connie – and Duck Smith, and the other duckpartments too! It’s been a big group effort.”

“Thank you both,” the CDO said to Connie and Dappy. “We’re going to discuss this now.”

Dappy and Connie didn’t have to wait too long. Before the day ended, Duck Smith found them both, wings waving and shouting “*It’s a GO!*”

Duck Smith filled them in. After key department leaders were able to validate Dappy’s work, the CDO shared Dappy’s original two-page synopsis to the Chairduck of the Board Debbie Duck, who was excitedly on board. Within an hour, a voting majority was secured after an emergency viduckeo conference was called. Duck Smith was able to present Dappy’s plan, while Debbie Duck verified the vetting by the key department heads.

Apparently, word of Danny’s plan had leaked, and some board members were not fans of it for the same reasons that Connie, Dappy and Duck Smith shared. Additionally, *The Duck Street Journal* had just done an article on the state of the tour line business, which wasn’t very favorable and positioned Flying V as a “*lumbering dinoduck.*”

Debbie Duck was unflappable and proclaimed, “This is the innovation leaders embrace.”

Epilogue

Six months later, Dappy's *Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan* was launched to great fanfare and immediate results. Ducks flocked to Flying V. Everyone loved the peace of mind. Everyone, that is, except Quack Tour Lines, who within eighteen months, had to file for Chapduck 11 bankruptcy protection.

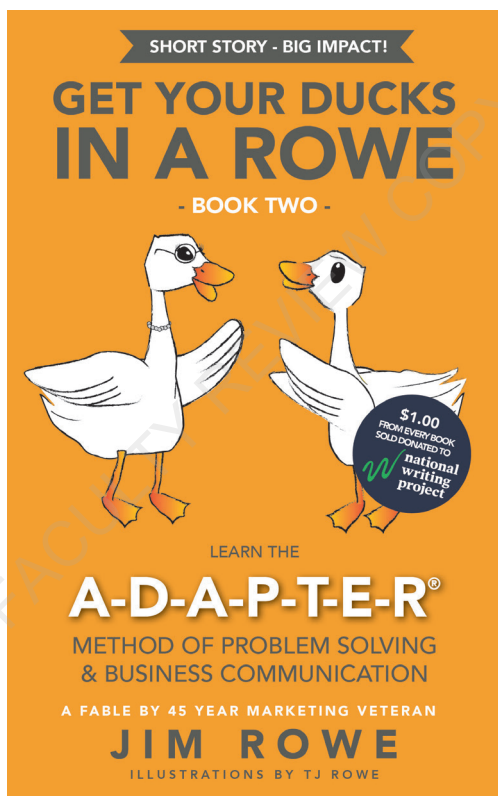
By then, the CDO retired, but not before naming Duck Smith his successor – who in turn, promoted Connie, making her the first female Executive Vice Presiduck of Sales & Marketing for Flying V. *The Duck Street Journal* even wrote a major article on how Chairduck Debbie Duck and Connie were a new breed of female ducks taking over boardrooms and duckxecutive suites with great success.

Danny Duck is still there, now as Senior Vice President of Sales. By Connie's astute handling of the company's new growth and positive work culture, they become even better partners and friends.

And what about Dappy Duck? Well, he was finally announced as the new Marketing Duckrector, a duck who was internally famous, then publicly when he was named "*Marketer of the Year*" by Aducktising Age. All helped along by a simple formula to create a logical, compelling story...*to keep your ducks in a row.*

The End

Look out for Book Two in Getting Your Ducks in a Rowe!



Acknowledgements

Robert R. Rowe, my dad who recently passed away 12 days shy of 94. I was immensely fortunate to have a father who not only had dinner with us almost every night at 6:05pm, he offered dinner table perspectives on everything, including life, and working in manufacturing logistics at Lever Brothers. For 43 years! That just doesn't happen anymore.

In particular, he stressed the importance of treating everyone equally and respectfully. He was most proud of being able to have been one of the first executives to promote 2 women into more senior jobs which was announced in the company newsletter. One that he was still in touch with, credits him with being able to live a much better life. She told my sister, *"You don't understand – this was talked about all over the building."*

My sister was not surprised because her POV was *"I was treated exactly as my brothers so I never knew anything about limitations because I was a girl. He once told me to make myself a career that I loved and not to rely on a man."* He would also say that the end of his career was most gratifying because he was promoted (post 60 years of age) to a position where he *"could do what I like best... help people!"*

The other benefit is that he was crazy smart. While he never talked about being valedictorian of St John's business school, mom told me, (he also got his Masters in Marketing at NYU), he never stopped talking about graduating from Brooklyn Tech High School. Why? Because they taught him how to think! He loved it and all his "smarter" friends. While I didn't inherit "crazy smart" my sister always laughs that I sound just like dad when I start enumerating things to support a point.

Finally, after 3 months of partying like a madman at Fairfield University Freshman year, getting mononucleosis, and realizing on day 1 of second semester that I really didn't want to be a Math major, he said go into Marketing. It suits you. 45 years later he's still right. Mom knew that he almost always was.

Connie Humphrey, my first “brand marketing” boss who became an immediate mentor and lifelong friend. And yes, she's the muse for Connie Duckphrey.

Like my dad, she's also crazy smart. A graduate of Sarah Lawrence which included Junior year at the London School of Economics and Senior year at Warwick University in Coventry England studying Economics. Then an M.B.A. from Columbia University with concentration in Finance and Marketing. She got her classic packaged goods experience at Colgate-Palmolive.

Then she came to Lorillard and became a star. I was the ‘lucky duck’ to have been promoted out of research to fill an open Brand Manager position. The Research Director told me, *“I know I made you promise me to stay in research for at least 2 years before getting into Brand Management, but in good conscience I can't let you miss out on the opportunity to work for her – she's that good.”*

He was right. This was the 70's in the cigarette business. I wince when I think about it now, but it didn't seem so negative back then, even though I never smoked. The executive leaders were very smart, and the company was successful, but it was male-dominated. And even with this, Connie quickly won every one over with her rare combination of strategic thinking, deft executional management, and being an excellent communicator with gravitas, despite her age. Critical thinking and communication, both written and particularly presenting, were highly valued at Lorillard.

I benefited from experiencing her clear, thoughtful style and skillful ability to listen and respond to questions with concise rationale. Frankly, she was just smarter than everyone, and they were smart. But what I also learned, her ability to “read a room” was extraordinary. Pre and post meetings, she would provide me with her thoughts and perspectives into each of the executives. She knew her “target audience.” To me this sensitivity was her secret weapon.

What also helped was everything she touched worked. She launched a line extension that was the most successful launch in the category that year. Therefore, she kept getting promoted becoming manager to peers with more years of experience. Yet they loved her, or at least respected her. I worked for her for about 2.5 years. Early on I remember her working with me on “writing.” This laid the foundation for “Get Your Ducks In A Row.” When I sent her the first word document draft of just that section of the book she responded:

“Jim - I have read your draft and find it innovative, informative and personally very flattering. I hate self-help books but this was like reading my personal Bible.”

42.5 years later it’s still my bible. I was lucky, so I thought I’d share the process so others who were less fortunate could reap the benefits.

Thanks, Connie. For all of us.



TJ Rowe, my youngest son, illustrated all the ducks. My wife and three children can all inherently draw. It just comes naturally to them. I'm jealous, as at best I can do stick figures. When I told him about the book I asked if he could "draw a duck" and sent him some examples of a line art style I thought was interesting, but we needed to make it ours.

Within about 15 minutes I received a color version of the style we use in the book. He did it on a Mac. But he can also do it by hand just as quickly. I find it amazing. A gift. Over the course of several months, I would briefly explain what I wanted, and they would quickly arrive with exactly what I had in mind. I seldom made changes. This is just a hobby as TJ is copywriter, social media and community manager at a social media agency in NYC. However, they have discovered his artistic talents and he is doing more creative concepts and animations to expand capabilities. A thankful and Proud Papa.

Jerry Wong, Creative Director, brought not just a keen sense of how to design it well beyond the often unprofessional "self-published" style, his experience in the book publishing world was an unknown but huge benefit. Jerry and I have worked together twice – once when I was a cofounder and senior partner for 27 years of MME, a NYC based marketing agency, and now again as my Creative Director at my agency, Jim Rowe Marketing (www.JimRoweMarketing.com).

Jerry is a blessing for a marketer. He's very creative, AND he understands that design needs to reflect marketing objectives and strategies, and client considerations. The fact that he listens, is a pleasure to work with and is very fast, are all a bonus.

Anne Rowe, my best friend, soulmate, and bride of 41 years and counting. I am blessed. Her extraordinary creative talents are so well known that in the neighborhood I'm often greeted

with “oh you’re Anne Rowe’s husband.” I think she’s magical as everything she touches turns more beautiful. I am guilty of taking it for granted until someone starts to rave about something she’s done. Yet, she’s as humble as anyone I’ve ever met. That’s a testament to her wonderful parents who also raised 5 sons who are some of my closest friends. I could never have had the career I had without Anne being in charge of pretty much everything else. From raising three wonderful and successful children, grandchildren who run to her first, to handling almost everything to do with the house, finances, schools, homework, while also working either designing curtains and accessories, being a pre-school teacher, as a design consultant in a retail fabric store, she’s in charge. She has also volunteered at a Rotocare facility servicing those without insurance for 18 years, following in her dad’s footsteps.

When I elected to retire from MME, I started my goodbye to the employees on my last day with “I’m going to sound like a dork but I’m doing this for Love. I miss Anne.” During the past five years of assimilating into being home, starting a few businesses and dealing with a pandemic, we have never spent so much time together. I couldn’t be happier. I think she agrees, but she does like to get out more often to see her friends. Hmmm.

Finally, to the rest of the flock - to Matt Brancato, Conor Callahan, Don Davide, Cathy Gallagher, Gary Knight, Jim O’Gara and Tom Rollauer, thank you for taking the time to read the first draft of the story, the encouragement and positive reinforcement, and especially for the very helpful constructive criticism. I might have either stopped working on it or proceeded and made people unnecessarily upset without your honest perspectives.

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About the Author

Jim Rowe has spent 45 years in marketing, and counting:

- BS Marketing, Fairfield University CT.
- Research Project Director, Central Location Testing/DDC
- Brand Manager Newport, Lorillard
- Brand Manager Coke, during Coke Is It! era
- VP Marketing Whitbread NA's Buckingham Wile Div., Cutty Sark and Laphroaig Scotch, Delamain Congac, Sambuca Molinari, and Dry Sack Sherry
- President of two Saatchi-HMG divisions, Promotion and InterMark, Miller Beer, M&M Mars, Hardees, Maxell
- Co-founder/Sr. Partner MME (27 years), a marketing agency. with clients including Denham Hospitality, Febreze Carpet Care, GreenPoint Bank, La Yogurt, Maxell, Minute Maid, Ssips Drinks, 3 B2B SaaS providers, and Victoria Sauce
- Since retiring (2016), founded a small e-commerce brand, then after getting bored, Jim Rowe Marketing (2018).

From the very beginning, Jim has had the good fortune to be in great companies large and small, with strong management where marketing discipline, strategic thinking, writing and presentations to top executives was critical. There always was a focus on driving growth, but with all the steps and weekly presentations leading to it he felt he worked for Presentations R Us. The downside was 45 years of 50-60+ hour weeks. The upside was a broad skillset, expertise, and continued growth/learning to this day for how to think it through, write it and present it better to be more persuasive

Jim is married 42 years, has 3 children and 3 grandchildren. He plays guitar in 2 bands, has written over 100 songs, and is a terrible yet avid golfer. This is Jim's first book.

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Early Accolades For **GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROWE**

- BOOK ONE -

“**LOVED IT!!!** Much more than just communication. A simple quick read that **touches on organizational behavior, politics, ego and relationships.** The story delivers a “how to” on organizing your thoughts and critical/strategic thinking.

- Donald Davide, COO / CMO

“A very practical **business tool that all professionals should know** and use. A readable teaching style that makes the absorption of the thinking and action process **simple and retainable.**

- Gary Knight, President/CFO

“**I’m a fan** of the book “Who Moved My Cheese,” and your decision to apply the fable approach to **your book works very well.**

- Tom Rollauer Sr. Banking Exec./ Board Member

“**I really liked it!** I learn well through **illustrated examples and stories,** so this book was right up my alley. It was very easy to read and I understood each of the chapters clearly. I also think it’s sorely needed. I find executives at all levels and across disciplines struggle writing and presenting, clearly and succinctly. Such a waste of time. Mistakes are made etc. The Get Your Ducks In A Rowe approach is **a perfect simple guide** to help the whole organization become more productive.

- Cathy Molen, Director of Marketing

“It is really cool. I am not someone who is a big reader of business books (for better or worse) so **the fable style definitely works for me.**

- Matt Brancato, Financial Services Manager

“Ducks in a Rowe is a **great tool for educators seeking to help their students develop critical skills.** The insights provided by this book make it a worthwhile read for anyone interested in joining or advancing in the world of business.

- Conor Callahan, Ph.D. Asst Professor
Managerial Studies U of Illinois, Chicago

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