

GET YOUR DUCKS IN A ROWE

- BOOK TWO -

LEARN THE A-D-A-P-T-E-R METHOD

STRATEGIC BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

JIM ROWE

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“Writing is thinking. To write well is to think clearly. That’s why it’s so hard.”

- DAVID MCCULLOUGH

David McCullough is a Yale-educated, two-time recipient of both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. He has been honored with the National Book Foundation’s Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, the National Humanities Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in addition to many other awards and honors.

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An Early Review

What if, as a CEO, you could get your entire organization to address critical thinking and problem solving in a consistent fashion?

Then, what if they could communicate their findings, conclusions and recommendations clearly, succinctly and persuasively in writing or presentations. Think of the time saved and productivity increased.

And in our increasingly data-driven business environment, what if you could do so in a refreshing manner that is remarkably easy to internalize, for virtually every discipline you oversee?

What would that be worth to you? My hunch is a lot . . . maybe even priceless.

In “Get Your Ducks in a Row; Learn ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method,’” Jim Rowe provides a compelling roadmap to mobilize your company around a central operating theme.

But what makes this so special is how Jim conveys his message; he tells a story, he takes us on a journey. And he does so in a way that bridges the generational gaps the information age has fostered.

Good luck trying to find anything that so cleverly allows every facet of your organization to operate in sync. That is so easily relatable to both young and old, both book smart and street smart. That can then serve as a user-friendly reference moving forward.

If you’d like to differentiate your firm from your competition, read this book. You’ll want your whole organization to read it as well.

- DAVE ZILKO

Former Vice Chairman, Garden Fresh Gourmet
Author, “Irrational Persistence; Seven Secrets That Turned
a Bankrupt Startup into a \$231 Million Business”

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Preface

A note about Book Two:

When I finished *Book 1: Get Your Ducks In A Row* fable, which provided a structured approach to writing for business, I realized there were additional thoughts I initially was going to add as an addendum called *Tips & Tools to Get Your Ducks In A Row*.

However, two things happened. First, the more I started to think and write, the more I realized that there was a need to go beyond just a structured/disciplined approach to writing for business. I saw the need to help provide insight and guidance for critical thinking including analysis, drawing conclusions, creating strategies and even tactical execution that could be helpful. Then after doing some research, I found several studies indicating there was a huge perception vs. reality gap between what recent college graduates thought of their skill sets and readiness for business and what managers felt. Two big areas were critical thinking/problem solving and oral/written communication. Managers rated students' abilities about half of how students rated their own abilities. Hence, 'The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method,' and the decision to make it BOOK 2 was born.

The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method

Analyze
Deduce
Author
Perform
Tackle
Evaluate
Refine

Together, books 1 and 2 provide a comprehensive resource for those looking to improve their own or their team's ability to be more efficient and effective in business by improving communication.

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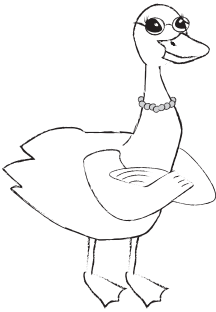
**GET YOUR DUCKS
IN A ROWE**

- BOOK TWO -

**STRATEGIC
BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION**

LEARN THE A-D-A-P-T-E-R METHOD

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PROLOGUE

A Few Years After...

Due to Connie's promotion and her newfound notoriety from her article in the *Duck Street Journal*, she was asked by her alma mater Columbiduck University to teach a course on marketing.

Connie was intrigued by the concept of teaching, but she felt that there were already good marketing courses from experienced professors. She was also concerned about not having time to teach a full course or grade papers. However, she had come to realize that while universities were teaching specific business disciplines, there didn't seem to be a course on the "Holistic Business Process of Critical Thinking" — emphasizing the interdependence of both written and oral communication to ensuring clarity of the message to achieve desired objectives.

In the meantime, she had just developed a training seminar for her team called, 'The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method.' She had seen the progress that Dappy made with 'Get Your Ducks in a Row' formula; however, she had been able to spend a lot of one-on-one time with him. In her new role with a bigger team, she needed a more structured holistic approach — from critical thinking through execution — to train her team. She created it to include many of the tips and tools that she had verbally told Dappy throughout the 'Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan' process.

She shared ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ training seminar with Debbie Duck — the Chairduck of the Board— who loved it and asked Connie to expand it to the rest of the organization.

Just as Connie was leaving, she told Debbie about the offer to teach a course at Columbiduck.

Debbie laughed and said, “Are you going to clone yourself?”

Connie indicated, “Don’t worry, I turned it down.”

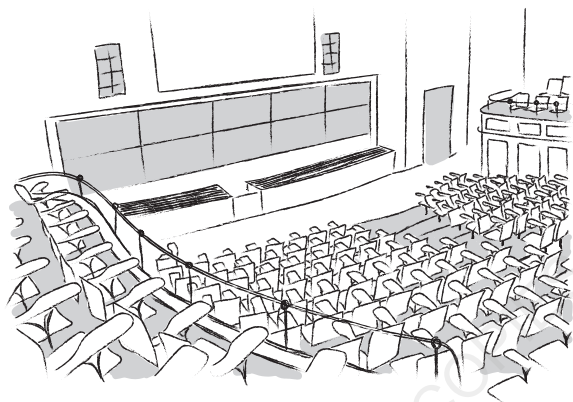
As she started to leave, Debbie asked, “Actually, why don’t you do a one-time seminar to share ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ with the studucks?”

“Hmm,” Connie thought. “That’s a much better idea – I’ll see if they are interested!”

When she contacted Columbiduck, the Dean of the Business School was thrilled with the idea. The Dean indicated she had been looking for something to provide studucks with a holistic perspective of how to think, write, present and sell their ideas within a real-world business context.

Leading up to her presentation and in every spare moment she could afford, Connie worked and reworked her presentation for a studuck audience of ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ at Columbiduck University.

Connie Goes to Columbiduck University



It had been years since Connie walked down Duckmeyer Hall. She arrived early with pre-presentation jitters never dreaming she would be back to her alma mater *as a guest speaker*.

Questions kept popping into her head. Would the studucks relate to her? Would her words resonate? Would anyone even come?

As quickly as her questions filled her mind, the famous hall filled within fifteen minutes. It was show time. The Dean introduced her with an overview of her background and success, and heralded her and Chairduck Debbie Duck as top business leaders of their time. Connie almost felt embarrassed with such a grand introduction. She had better deliver.

Connie thanked the Dean, told the audience how honored she was to be here and began her presentation with the first slide.

“I can’t beat an intro like that!” Connie said, turning to the dean and smiling. “So let’s get right into it! My purpose today is to help you...”

R.A.P.

It was clear the audience was a little uneasy. Some laughed while others just stared in wonder at what she meant. But they all were watching and listening.

Connie smiled and said, “No, not that kind of RAP.” She clicked to the slide and said,



“I want to help you be,” and she read the next slide.

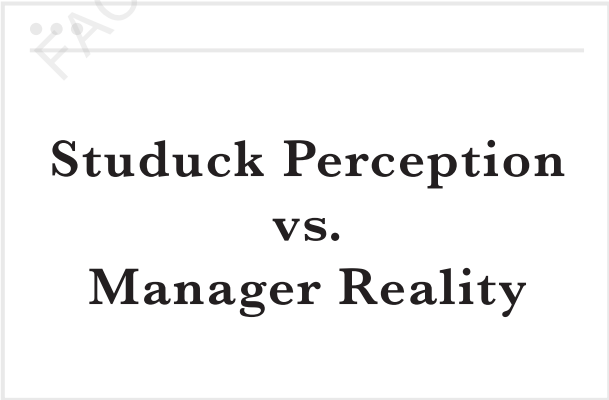


**Respected
Admired
Promoted**

That got the audience laughing and Connie felt herself loosen up and finding her rhythm. And with that, she continued.

“To be respected, admired, and promoted, you need to know the basics of your field. You are all very fortunate to be at one of the top universities in the world. However, you will need many other skills that go beyond classroom training.”

Connie clicked over to the next slide and let the slide linger a few seconds before continuing



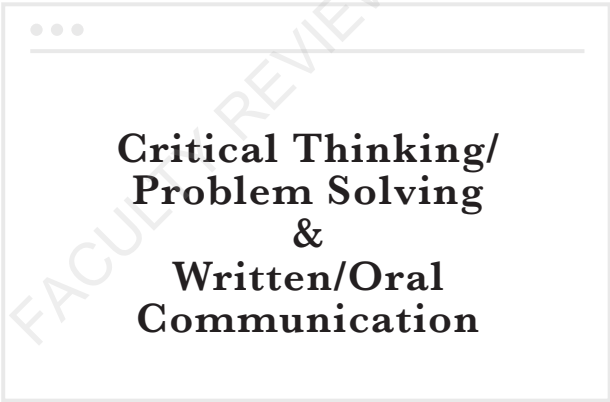
**Stu duck Perception
vs.
Manager Reality**

“National studies recently conducted uncovered a major difference between studucks’ perception of their own skill sets in certain key business areas when compared to their managers’ assessment of recent graduates.”

Connie walked to the edge of the stage to pose a question to the audience. “Can anyone guess what some gaps are from how studucks see their own skills versus how their managers see them?”

She got a handful of responses from all sides of the great hall, from ‘commitment’ to ‘it being so hard to wake up in the morning,’ which drew in a lot of quacks of agreement.

“Let me tell you – it doesn’t get any easier!” Connie said, laughing along with the studucks. “The gaps are actually pretty prominent in two key areas...”

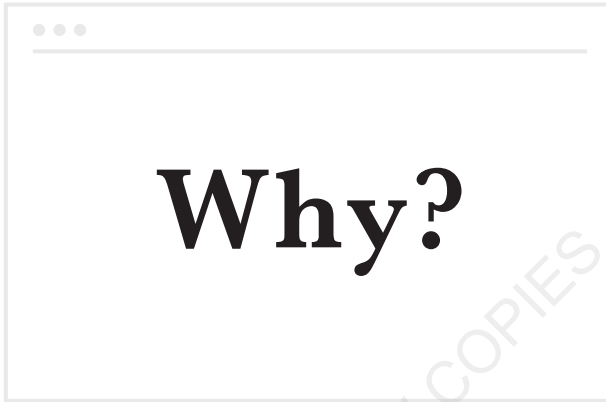


**Critical Thinking/
Problem Solving
&
Written/Oral
Communication**

“I won’t dwell on all the data, but suffice to say the managers’ rating of graduates’ proficiency is about half of how the graduates rated themselves in these two areas. In one study, 80% of studucks rated themselves as proficient in both critical thinking and communication. But only 40% of managers felt recent graduates were proficient in those two areas. That’s a big gap. So, I’m here

to help you close that gap to succeed.”

Before saying anything more, Connie clicked over to the next slide and let it sink in with the audience.



Then she continued with a question: “Even if most of you don’t have these issues, why do you think this is an issue with recent graduates in general?”

The responses came slowly at first, and then flowed more freely.

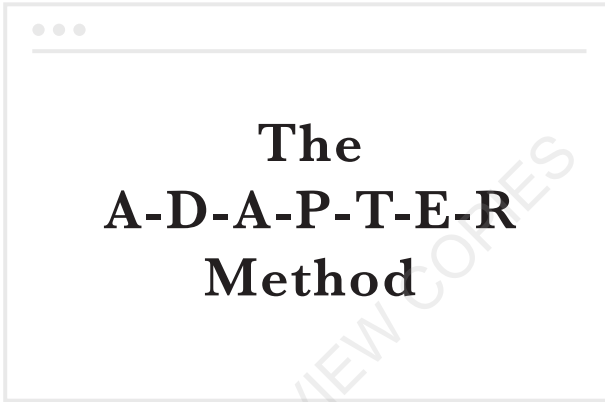
“We spend too much time communicating in duckcial media such as Quacker, DuckBook, DuckTock,” were the first comments.

Others indicated the lack of time between studying and working. Another yelled out “Partying,” which also drew a lot of quacks.

Finally, one studuck said, “We just don’t write very much.”

“Frankly, I think you’re all correct,” said Connie. “Technology has helped us do amazing things faster than ever before. But we still need time to think. As part of the thinking process, you need to write it down because it forces you to think more deeply and clearly.” She could see the audience nodding their bills which gave her positive reinforcement that energized her.

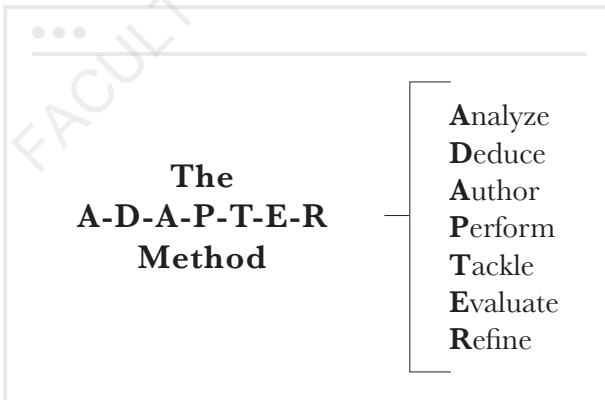
“I have been witnessing some of these gaps at Flying V Tour Lines and have developed a methodology with some tips and tools that I am finding very helpful internally with my team. It has been so successful that the Chairduck of the Board has asked me to expand it to the rest of the organization. So, I’m here to share this with you today. It’s called...



The
A-D-A-P-T-E-R
Method

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“Which stands for...” she clicked to the next slide and read each word that made up her acronym.

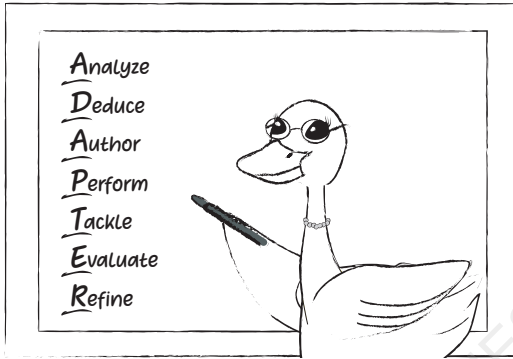


The
A-D-A-P-T-E-R
Method

- Analyze
- Deduce
- Author
- Perform
- Tackle
- Evaluate
- Refine

She then went to the famous wall of chalkboards below the screen and wrote in the key topics of her presentation.

“I’ve always wanted to do this,” she said. “I’ll keep referring back to each section so you can see how it fits together.”



“To start, **‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ is a holistic approach to problem solving.** Starting with analysis leads to critical thinking, then creative thinking, communication, and then execution.

“The beauty of this method is that it is truly holistic. It represents the steps in a typical business process cycle. This is important because while younger duckexecutives are trained in their fields and know specific tasks, they often lack the ‘big picture,’ or perspective of a given situation.” Connie opened her wings wide to help emphasize this point. Here’s how it helps.”

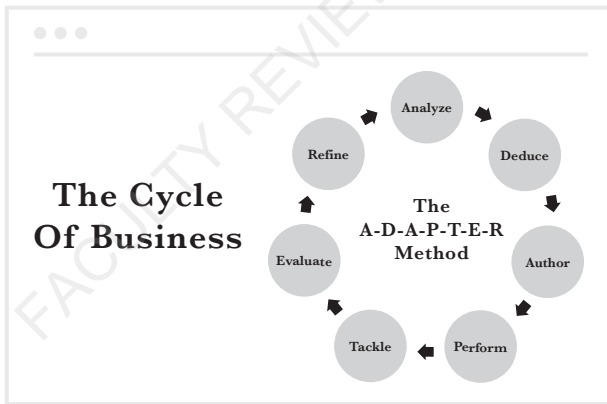
Benefits:

- **Structured approach**
- **Writing = thinking it through**
- **Foundation for plan**
- **Achieve buy-in**

A cartoon duck wearing sunglasses and a necklace is standing with its wings spread.

“It provides structure to develop a well thought out plan. Writing it forces you to think it through clearly, based upon analysis, leading to sound objectives, strategies, rationale, and tactics. It then becomes the foundation of your plan. Do it properly and it becomes a convincing story that generates management ‘approval,’ a client’s ‘purchase,’ or a team’s ‘buy-in.’

“And don’t forget — business isn’t a movie. It doesn’t end with everyone living happily ever after. It continues to operate and either stays stagnant, grows, or declines. Therefore, ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ provides a structure for critical thinking as a continual process of evaluation and refinement through a typical business cycle. Since reality seldom matches the original plan, it also gives you the ability to adapt as time goes on.”



“Finally, as you go through each step in the process, writing your thoughts down forces you to think! Hence, the underlying premise of ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ is that writing and thinking are inextricably linked.”

She paused and went on to the next slide.



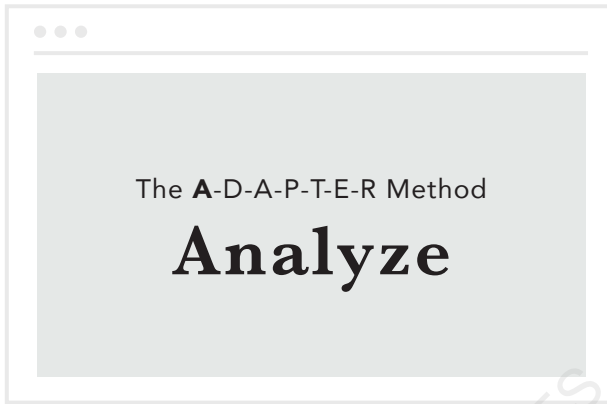
“In essence, *to write is to think!*” she exclaimed.

“Now, let’s get deeper into it.”

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Analyze

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“As we go through ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method,’ I’ll include tips and tools that my team and others at Flying V Tour Lines found helpful to their growth. Feedback and results have been amazing, and you guys are the first ones outside of Flying V to be hearing about this!

“Analyze – this is the first step. It may seem obvious from my big slide, but you’d be surprised how many duckxecutives don’t do it right... or at all.

“To develop a plan and set direction, you need to go through the rigor of analysis. Otherwise, it’s just guesswork that can be easily refuted with opposing views. You need to understand the situation of your induckstry, business, duckpartment, organization, and brand as the background before moving forward.”

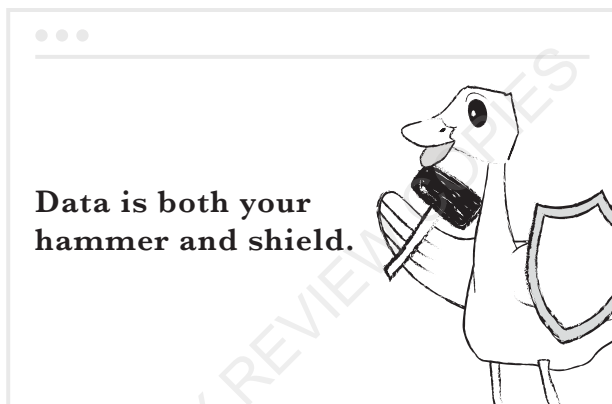
Connie paused, walked to the center of the stage and asked, “So, what is the one word that is the very essence of analysis?”

All she got was silence before someone yelled out, “Facts!” and another shouted, “Information!”

She smiled and said, “Good. *All very close...* but not quite it.”

Connie was waddling back and forth and waved her wing down, playfully dismissive as more responses were called out. This sparked a round of loud quacking. Finally, from way up in the back she heard, “DATA!”

“Bingo,” she said, clicking over to the next slide. “It’s all about data.”

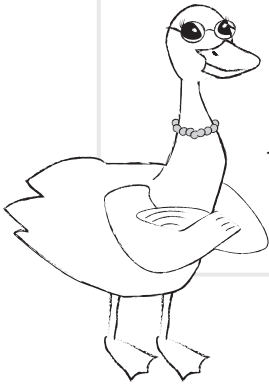


“Data is both your hammer and shield. Without it, all you have is a point of view on paper to forge ahead with.

“I can’t stress enough how fundamental it is to recognize how data is king for outlining the rationale that supports a plan’s objective, strategy, or tactics.

“Data can silence critics, empower advocates, and entice those on the fence to jump over to your side.” Connie was on a passionate roll. She knew it and her audience knew it.

“Without data, what do you think happens?” she questioned, and without waiting for an answer, she read aloud the next slide.



**Without data,
the duck with the
biggest title or the
biggest mouth wins.**

Connie looked up into the seats and studucks that filled the hall to see smiles and nods. Confidently, she knew her point was made.

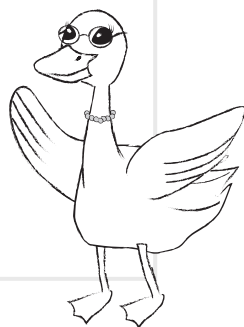
And so she continued to the next slide.

How to Analyze Data

“As business majors, you may all be great at analyzing data. But, not everyone is great and can be intimidated by it – including many talented duck executives I know. They are great at many things I can’t do, but when it comes to this, they say math isn’t their thing, and charts and graphs are confusing.

“While developing this method I was speaking with a head of a math duckpartment. When I spoke about the lack of analytical skills some duck executives were experiencing, she mentioned a teaching technique that’s proved very successful at helping with analytical skills. It’s called...”

Notice and Wonder



“This just means you write down what you ‘notice’ in the data — any observations based upon interesting facts. Then you ‘wonder’ what those observations mean. Your teacher then would write everyone’s thoughts on the board. Sounds simple right?”

A studuck raised her hand and asked, “Can you elaborate more on this? Perhaps an example to clarify the two thoughts.”

“Sure,” said Connie. “Let’s say you’re looking at a chart comparing profitability of various Flying V routes. You ‘notice’ that for the most part, the profitability-per-route is similar — say within +/-10%. However, two routes are very different from the rest. Both fly to Duckllas, Texas, one from Ducktroit, Michigan, and the other from Philaduckphia, Pennsylvania.

“You then ‘notice’ that the Ducktroit route is the most profitable of all system routes and almost doubles that of the Philaduckphia route – which happens to be the least profitable. This kind of scenario should get you to start wondering why. So, you need to dig deep into the data and try to uncover the potential reasons for this anomaly. Having been through this I can tell you what you’ll find.

“Philaduckphia is on the East Coast, so most ducks fly directly south to Floriduck. However, we found that Philaduckphia to Duckllas had too many scheduled tours a day based upon the real market demand. Tours were only half full. So, we cut back the number of tours a day, which increased revenue per route to be more in line with the average.

“The Ducktroit route remains the most profitable because with both cities in the middle of the country, it is by far the easiest and most popular destination. So, the prices are highest and number of tours per day are the largest.

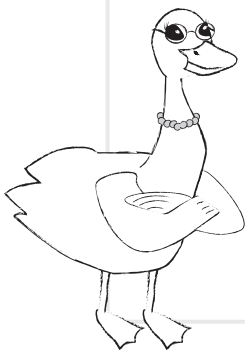
“‘Notice and wonder’ provides an important foundation for strategic problem solving. It’s particularly effective when done in a group, as everyone sees different perspectives and can also draw different conclusions. This leads to being comfortable with the process and learning how to do it better.

“Next, I’ll go through some tips and tools on how to maximize the ‘Notice and Wonder’ process,” she said.



Go from Macro to Micro

“Going from Macro to Micro means go big, and then go small. It helps to understand the simplicity and will also reveal complexities of any situation.



**When starting analysis, use
a wide-angle lens from the
highest point you can find.**

“Start with the macro – or big picture – the economy, market category, trends, or the organization’s history. Know the landscape before diving into details of a product, brand, function, or service. Having a proper perspective helps reduce time wasted on solving the wrong problem.

“Next, I have a photo that I absolutely love,” Connie continued.



“One of our guides took this of Dappy Duck, our now famous Marketing Duckrector. Not only does he have a great smile here, but it’s a great representation of what we are talking about, which is starting from a macro perspective.

“Before becoming CMO, Dappy started as a tour guide who took a big picture perspective from high above to acquire knowledge of other landmarks for contingent flight paths. This led him to change routes and avoid duck hunter casualties.”

She then continued with a the history of how they solved their Duck Hunter problem. “When Dappy asked me how he could address Quack Tour Lines’ price discounts, I went right to the heart of the matter and asked back, ‘What’s the number one concern among every duckstomer?’

“He was stunned when he realized I meant ‘Duck Hunters.’ I didn’t get into smaller issues like analyzing competitive price positions, or coming up with promotions, or clever advertising. The trend was bad. The competition was hurting Flying V and I wanted to solve our big issue with a big idea. I tried to come up with something for a long time before Dappy came along, so I give him a lot of credit. His creative thinking and perseverance were the key to the entire success of the project.



Segment Your Thinking

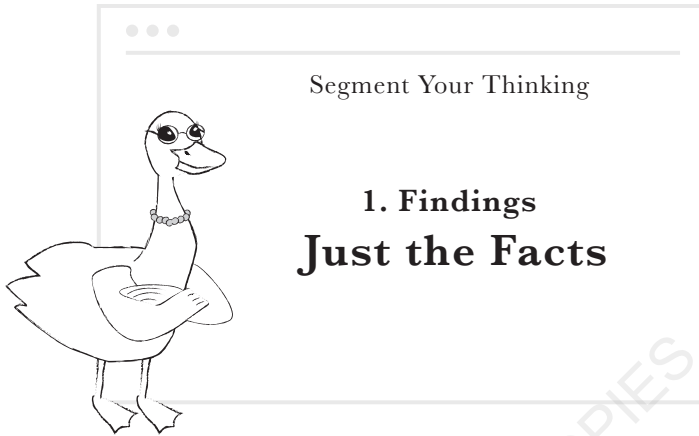
“Next, during analysis, you need to clearly ‘Segment Your Thinking’ into three steps...



Segment Your Thinking

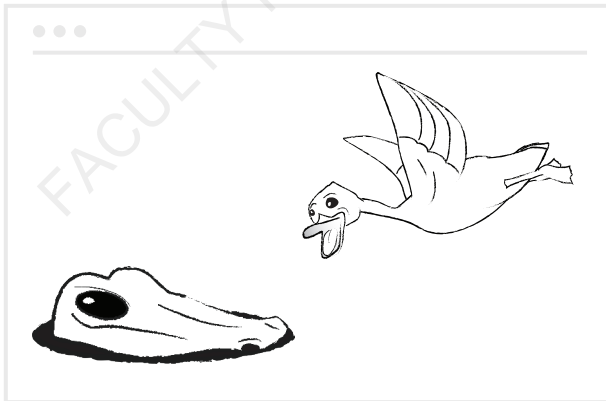
- 1. Findings**
- 2. Conclusions**
- 3. Implications**

“Let’s start with ‘Findings.’ Simply said, they are...



“Findings are the facts based upon observation of the data. They often contain points that could lead to major insights. Let me give you an all too familiar analogy.

“**Conclusions without analysis of facts...**” she said as she clicked to the next slide.



“**...is like landing in dark waters without checking to see if alligators have dinner reservations.**” This elicited nervous laughter.

Connie smiled and proclaimed, “And that, lady- and gentle-ducks, is why Flying V Tour Lines was created, and why we have certified tour guides on all flights—especially going south,” she added. “Flying V’s data on which bodies of water contain alligators led to conclusions on route planning.”

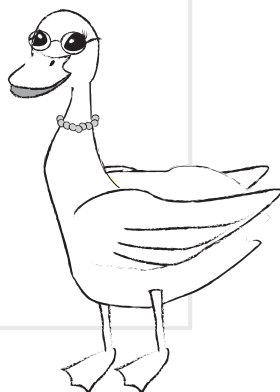
Still laughter. Less nervous. More smiles and wings waving.

“But seriously,” she continued. “As I indicated at the beginning of analysis.” She emphasized the next phrase, “**Data is a critical first step.** The right data can provide the foundation and rationale for your strategic direction.”

“However, the problem is that too often ducks do analysis of a chart by noticing the findings, or merely restating in the form of ‘data.’ They write or state, ‘This went up,’ ‘this went down,’ ‘this group is bigger than that group.’” And then they move on. That is not ‘critical thinking.’ Findings are critical, but what do they mean to your situation, project, plan, or rationale? Findings are only part of the story. Where is the wonder, the interpretation? This brings us to the second step of segmenting your thinking, which is Conclusions.

Segment Your Thinking

2. Conclusions Where Does It Lead?



“Analysis requires understanding the findings then drawing a conclusion. Ideally, the findings lead to conclusions that are similar to the premise behind simple logic: If $A = B$, and $B = C$, then $A = C$. For example, I knew the findings of the GallDuck Poll were that the number one issue with migrations was Duck Hunters. So, I concluded that if we could solve that problem with something innovative, it would offset the price discount advantage of Quack Tour Lines.

“Let’s also go back to the example I used before. The analysis of the data indicated the Ducktroit route is the most profitable and almost double that of the Philaduckphia route, the least profitable. That was the finding we ‘noticed.’ It was only by wondering why and digging deeper into more ‘data’ we found that Philaduckphia to Duckllas had too many scheduled tours a day based upon demand, so the tours were only half full. Therefore, our conclusion was to cut back the number of tours a day, which increased revenue per route to be more in line with the average.

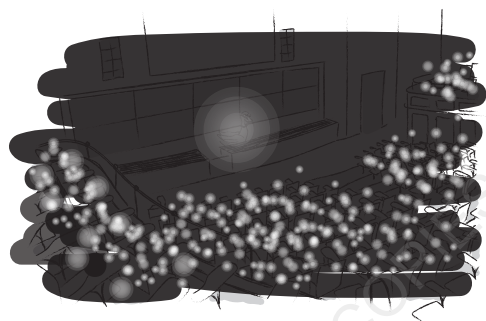
“Got it?” she said to the crowded hall.

The response was gratifyingly affirmative. “Now to the third step in ‘segmenting your thinking.’”

As soon as she clicked to reveal the ‘implications’ slide, the power in the hall went out. They were thrown into total darkness.

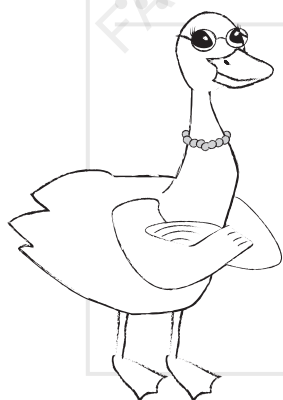


There was initial laughter and then a cacophony of voices. Connie heard the Dean tell everyone to stay in their seats, so no one got hurt and to stay calm. There were a few safety lights that came on with backup power. And then one by one everyone began to turn on their dPhone flashlights.



Connie stood in the darkness, wondering how she was going to get through her presentation. Just when she was thinking it would probably need to be rescheduled, pop, the lights came back on. Her slide appeared, and her lapel mic was working again!

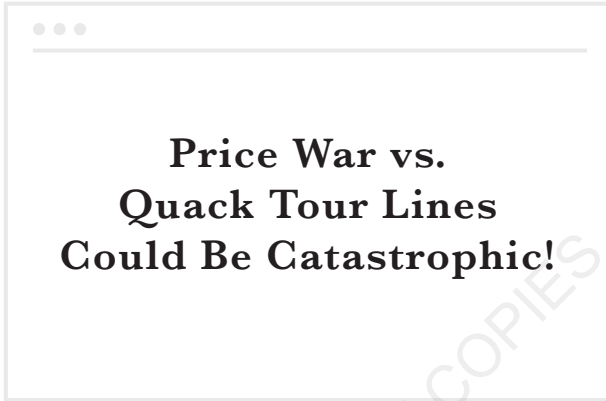
“Just as I planned it,” she joked. “What better way to provide a perspective of *implications*.” The crowd erupted with applause.



Segment Your Thinking

3. Implications What Does It Impact?

“Well, that was interesting,” she said. “Okay, so let’s finish the third step in ‘Segmenting Your Thinking’ – ‘Implications,’ as she clicked the next slide.



“It all seems silly now, but I can tell you that before we launched the ‘Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan’ that saved the company, there were many forces that felt we should meet or even beat their prices. The ‘implications’ from the marketing duckpartment’s point of view, was a potential never-ending beak dive in profits which could have decimated the company. I remember thinking this for months prior to getting Dappy involved. It terrified me.”

“As you know, our conclusion that the best way to address the issue of declining profits, and what I viewed as the existential threat from Quack Tour Lines discount rates, was to come up with a plan to address Duck Hunters,” she explained.

“The ‘implications’ were the amount of time and effort Dappy put into it, and then once approved, eventually the time and costs for the entire organization. Not to mention that he had to deal with the inherent bias among most of management that this couldn’t be done.

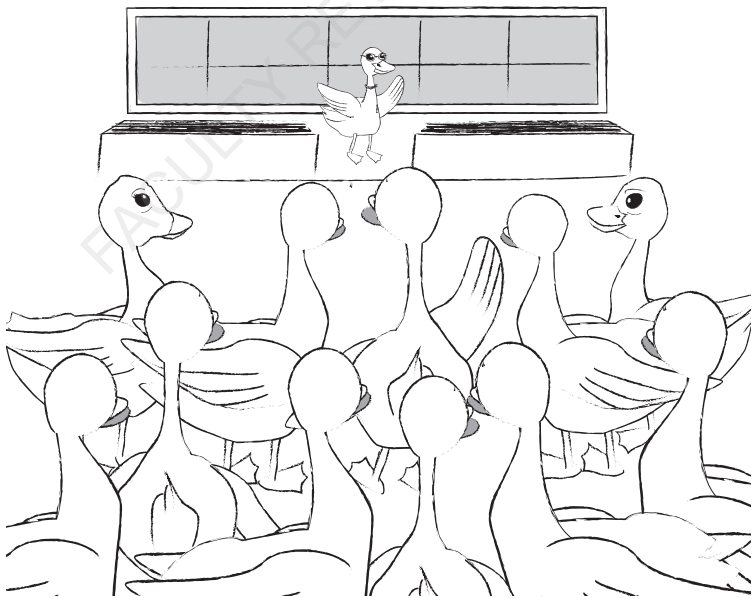
“Going back to the example with the Philaduckphia to Duckllas route. We improved profitability by cutting the number of routes per day. What do you think the implications were?” she asked the studucks.

“Tour guides had to be let go?” suggested one studuck.

“Well, that’s the right thought process,” she responded. “But fortunately, we were able to reassign them.”

“I’ll conclude this section by pointing out it’s important to recognize that not all conclusions, even if accurate, lead to related action due to the financial or resource implications on an organization.

A young duck up front raised his hand and asked, “What if you don’t have data? Perhaps there isn’t any time or money – or it doesn’t exist?”



“Great question!” said Connie. “It’s like you were a plant. You anticipated my next tip for conducting analysis. If you don’t have any data you need to,” she advanced to the next slide as she read it out loud.



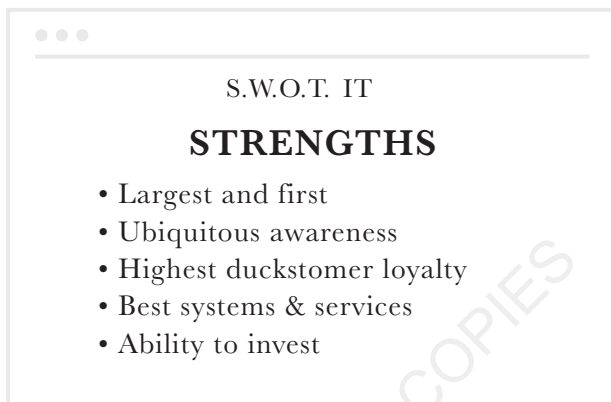
“Can anyone tell me what S.W.O.T. stands for?” she asked.

She heard a few people from around the hall yell out: “Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats.”

“Right,” she replied. “Whether you have data or not, one of the exercises — ideally with a knowledgeable team — is conducting a S.W.O.T. analysis to ferret out a company’s issues and/or opportunities.”

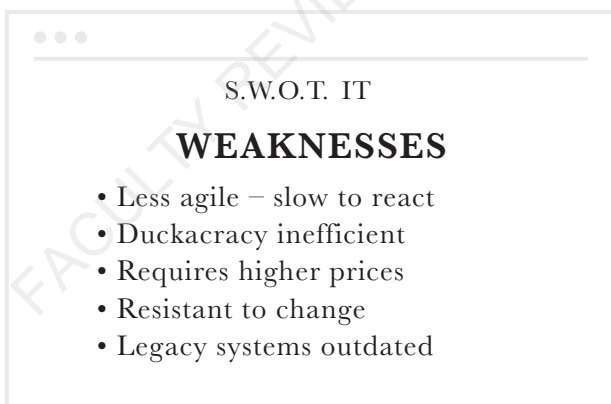
“For example, back then, I already knew Duck Hunters were the number one issue. To his credit, our VP Sales Danny Duck, had developed the following S.W.O.T. analysis of the Flying V situation.”

Connie walked the students through the following slides that broke down Danny's Flying V S.W.O.T. analysis to provide a perspective:



Slide titled "S.W.O.T. IT" with the sub-heading "STRENGTHS". The slide contains a list of five bullet points: "Largest and first", "Ubiquitous awareness", "Highest duckstomer loyalty", "Best systems & services", and "Ability to invest".

- Largest and first
- Ubiquitous awareness
- Highest duckstomer loyalty
- Best systems & services
- Ability to invest



Slide titled "S.W.O.T. IT" with the sub-heading "WEAKNESSES". The slide contains a list of five bullet points: "Less agile – slow to react", "Duckacracy inefficient", "Requires higher prices", "Resistant to change", and "Legacy systems outdated".

- Less agile – slow to react
- Duckacracy inefficient
- Requires higher prices
- Resistant to change
- Legacy systems outdated

As Connie moved to the Opportunities slide, she added, “Danny actually had ‘avoiding duck hunters’ but he always added an educki graphic to get a laugh.” And as expected, this reveal did get the studucks to all join in on the laughter.

...

S.W.O.T. IT

OPPORTUNITIES

- Beat Quack Tour Lines prices
- Frequack Flyer program
- Avoid Duck Hunters 🦆

“We laugh now, but before Dappy’s idea and plan, no duck thought this was possible,” she said. “And finally, let’s address –”

...

S.W.O.T. IT

THREATS

- Low price competition
- Match it = lower profits/viability
- A competitive innovation

“Data can certainly help strengthen the S.W.O.T. up front, but conducting a S.W.O.T. analysis with an experienced team often highlights areas that need to be addressed.

“A S.W.O.T. analysis also has many uses beyond broad direction. It can be helpful for analyzing any facet of a business or company — a product, service, team, department, or project. It’s also great for inclusion, team building, and even leading those from other teams or disciplines to different perspectives.

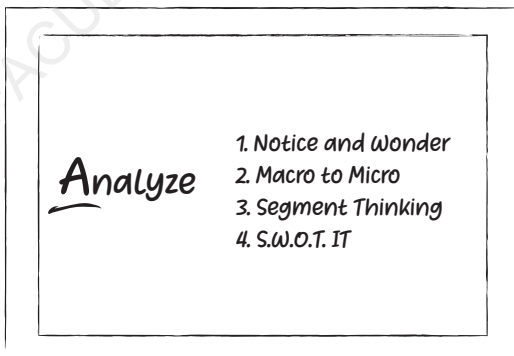
“I’ll leave you with two tips when conducting a S.W.O.T. analysis...



“First, prioritize to set the proper direction. S.W.O.T. is a tool to identify and select possible directions based upon experienced judgment towards the most important conclusions.

“Don’t sugarcoat it either. Gather input from different audiences so you have a clear understanding of perspective free of bias. And, make sure you’re sensitive about addressing things that may not be working – you want to have supporters, not enemies.

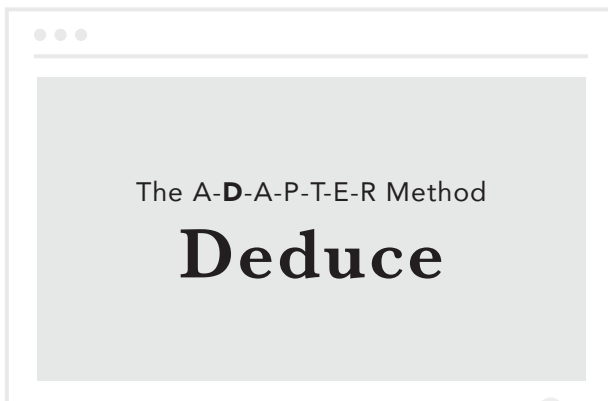
“Does this make sense?” Connie asked. With wagging tails and nodding heads of agreement, she continued. “Let’s quickly recap.”



“Now, let’s move on to the next step in ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ – Deduce!” And with that, she clicked to the next slide.

Deduce

FACULTY REVIEW COPIES



“So, you have just collected all your data and started to notice things from a big picture macro perspective. You’ve delved into the details by segmenting your thinking and you’ve done a S.W.O.T. analysis. Now it’s time to deduce. I’ve broken how to deduce into four steps,” as she clicked onto the next slide:

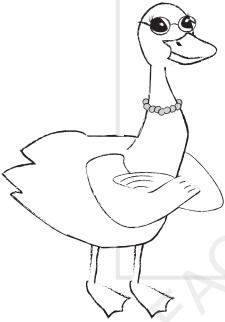


“It’s important to start with the macro perspective of what you’re doing before getting into the details,” Connie indicated. “When you finish, the result of your deducing is establishing the direction your company, brand, or project will take,” she said. “Deducing Sets Direction.” She clicked over to the next several slides and started with the premise.

“The important first step is to...”

Deducing Sets Direction

- 1. Define the Vision**
2. Set Objectives
3. Develop the Strategy
4. Creative Thinking



Vision sets the direction, the reason why, and the very foundation for everything you do for a long-term end result.

“Whether you are just starting or already running a company, or even if it’s just an internal project, it’s important to step back and imagine what success will look like over time,” she explained. “For example, in one, three, five, or even ten years — will it transform the company? Your place in the industry? Or will it create a new one?”

“This may seem obvious to business majors, but in speaking with an owner of one of our advertising agencies, she indicated that about half of her clients didn’t have a long-term vision of

where they were headed or what they wanted to be – in three, five, or ten years from now,” Connie stressed. “They were just trying to keep their beaks above water, service duckstomers, make payroll, and generate profits for the owners.”

“The good news is that by utilizing ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method,’ you will be able to provide these businesses with great value,” she said, knowing how appealing that would sound to the studucks concerning their future employment prospects.

One studuck raised her wing with a question. “I’m a little confused – doesn’t the Vision come first?”

“Just because the Vision sets the Direction, it doesn’t mean that’s where the process starts,” Connie replied. “Creating a vision requires some, if not significant knowledge of the induckstry and the category they compete in. Most of the time the Vision comes after Analysis. However, it could be as simple as recognizing a void that could be filled by a new product or service.

“You need to understand the issues to be solved or opportunities to be exploited. This goes back to looking at things from a macro perspective. Consider Flappy von Zeppelin’s vision to create a tour line to service all of Duckworld. He saw how ducks were getting lost during migrations south, and envisioned a company of trained tour guides to help. With that insight, Flying V was born. It’s what most entreduckneurs do – they see a need or void and start a company to address it.”

A studuck asked, “But how many of us will deal with the vision? Isn’t this for the big ducks at the top of an organization?”

“You are right,” Connie replied. “Creating a vision is a big deal that most do not deal with daily. However, the concept of creating a vision for many projects is an extremely helpful exercise in thinking about the end result as a checkpoint to see if the plans

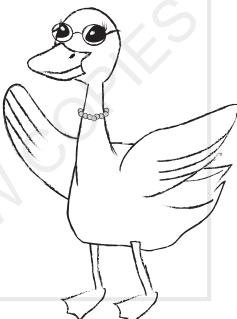
you are working on would be relevant to this long-term goal.”

Another studuck asked, “How do you do it? What’s the process?”

Connie replied, “I’ll be detailing the process in the next section about creative thinking, but in closing the Vision section of Deducing, I’ll leave you with one final thought about crafting a Vision...”

...

**Let your
imagination
envision your
destination.
Start with
“What if...?”**



“And with that, now we’re ready to move on!” Connie exclaimed.

...

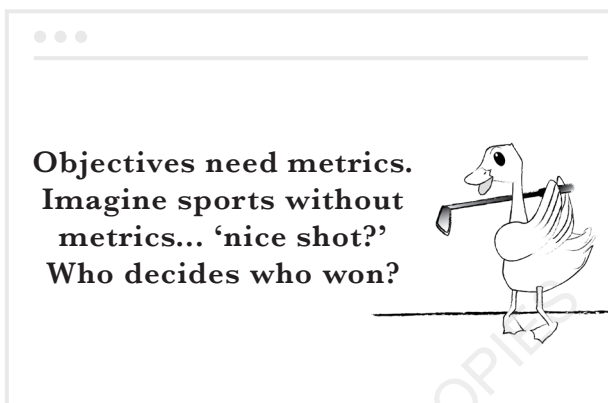
Deducing Sets Direction

1. Define the Vision
2. **Set Objectives**
3. Develop the Strategy
4. Creative Thinking

“So, let’s recap. Objectives are what you want to accomplish. However, with apologies to our dear cousins, too often ducks

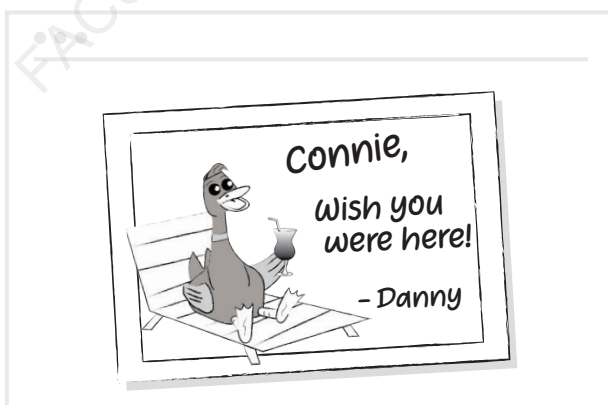
establish objectives that are, shall we say, ‘loosey goosey.’”

Smiling, Connie clicked to the next slide and the crowd roared.



“Numbers — dollar or volume sales, profits, cost cutting savings, inventory levels, new leads, business cards collected, health scores up, target dates. Otherwise, goals are just words and vague accomplishments that are in the eyes of the beholder.

“Additionally, as much as it’s a cliché, it’s true — you need to set your objectives to something beyond what you’d obtain if you didn’t do much.” She knew her next slide would get a lot of smiles.



“Yes, that’s my dear friend Danny Duck, Senior VP of Sales. Every year, he sends me a photo text of himself by the beach or pool at the Annual Sales Incentive Achievers Trip with the phrase: ‘Wish you were here,’ as a playful, on-going joke between us.

“But I digress.” She paused for a second. She then continued, “Incentives to hit stretch goals work. The rewards were deserved and well-earned.”

“An aggressive goal makes ducks work harder. That’s why organizations, particularly with the sales team, have incentives for achieving numerical goals. Those who hit this aggressive number get a larger bonus or that trip to the tropical island.

“Now let’s turn to the third step of setting the direction.” And with that, Connie read the title of the next slide.

...

Deducing Sets Direction

1. Define the Vision
2. Set Objectives
- 3. Develop the Strategy**
4. Creative Thinking

“For perspective,” she said as she walked across the floor, “the fact is objectives are relatively easy to —” she paused to emphasize the final word of the sentence, “—set!”

“Grow revenue, share, profits by x% all require time and reasonable consideration to set, but they are not conceptually hard. Curing a disease, changing the financial markets, becoming a top influencer, or even flying to the moon — though they

are all immensely hard to accomplish, they are fairly easy objectives to establish.”

She walked to the center of the stage for emphasis as she provided an overview perspective of strategy.

“Strategy is how you plan to achieve your objectives. They can be tried and true, safe or trail-blazing. Pick the right trail and you could change history.

“Make no mistake – strategy can be very hard,” she stressed. “The plan dictates where the resources of time, ducks, and investment dollars will be allocated both short- and long-term. Those resources can be invested elsewhere so they also represent potential opportunities lost if the direction you select fails.

“I’ve seen a lot of definitions and dissertations about business strategy over the years. Maybe it’s me, but they’re too basic or too long – I couldn’t grab onto one cohesive thought. I wanted something that my entire team, and frankly the whole organization could both remember and embrace to help guide them.

“So, if you remember nothing else that I say, try to memorize this acronym. The way I think about the role of strategy is: **‘Strategy is the plan to F-O-C-U-S the organization.’**

Fixate on vision & objectives
Orient allocations of resources
Customer centric
Uniquely differentiate
Simple to communicate

“First, you need to **Fixate on the vision and objectives**. If you could look into the future and imagine the ideal scenario — what would it be?” she asked. “What are the numerical objectives required to get there? It helps to determine feasibility or the obstacles you’ll need to overcome.”

“Next, **Orient the allocation of all resources**. You can’t just say ‘here’s where I want to get to’ and not consider implications on your financial, personnel, and other investment resources.

“Your plan also needs to be **Customer-centric** — whether external or internal. All successful initiatives happen when your customer buys in and drives it.

“The best way to gain customer buy-in is to offer something of value that helps to **Uniquely differentiate** your products or services versus your competition, or the current industry.

“Finally, your strategy should be **Simple to communicate** so all stakeholders, employees, stockholders, and Board of Directors, immediately grasp & support it.

Connie knew she had been presenting for a while and it was a lot of new information to absorb, so she felt an example would help crystallize the concept.

“Let me take you back to what we did at Flying V to put strategy into perspective. This slide summarizes the thinking for how we got to the two potential strategies. This was before Dappy came up with his creative idea.”

Analysis = Flying V declining

Issue = Quack Tour Lines' Prices

Vision = Global Leadership

Objective = Reverse Trend, Grow +25%

Strategy = Price or Duck Hunters?

As she clicked through her slide builds, Connie said, “**We analyzed the data** and knew our **sales and profits were declining.**”

“**The issue was sales were declining** due to the lower-priced competition. We couldn't provide a stronger value versus Quack Tour Lines' discount prices.

“Unbeknownst to me, the Board of Duckrectors had a **vision to take Flying V global**, so this had major implications for future investment potential.

“We knew our **objective was to reverse the decline** and grow +25%.

“**But what was the right strategy?** Sales felt we could win a price war. While I thought it could be catastrophic. I knew the number one issue tour lines customers had was Duck Hunters, and if we had a strategy to avoid Duck Hunters, we could also avoid a price war. The problem was, I had no idea how to do it.

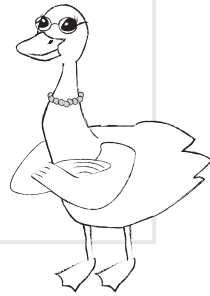
“Is that clear?” Connie scanned the crowd to gauge the mood of her audience. She saw a lot of nods and proceeded.

Deducing Sets Direction

1. Define the Vision
2. Set Objectives
3. Develop the Strategy
- 4. Creative Thinking**

“I knew the overall strategy was right, but it was Dappy who did the creative thinking, of applying the strategy and making it come to life.” She then took a breath and stressed the following.

Creating an innovative strategy by using creative thinking is what separates the ducks from the ducklings.



“Creative thinking is a part of the critical thinking process that often gets overlooked when giving ‘how-to’ advice. Many will say ‘I’m more task-oriented, so I’m better at project management,’ or ‘I’m a numbers duck, so I’ll do financing.’ While it’s true that ducks have different skill sets, I’ve seen great ideas come from these task masters. Being creative is like many other things – it requires training, discipline, and practice.”




Connie's Seven Sparks

“I’m going to provide you my thoughts on how to optimize your creative thinking capabilities. I call them my Seven Sparks.

She then smiled and said, “I know, I know. Clearly, I’ll now be inducted into the creative hall of fame!” The crowd quacked out loud at her self-deprecating style, which made them like her even more.

“Out of curiosity, I’ve done a bit of research on what makes ducks be more capable and successful at being creative. There will always be some ducks better than others, but we can all step up. I’ll take them one at a time, then summarize at the end.”



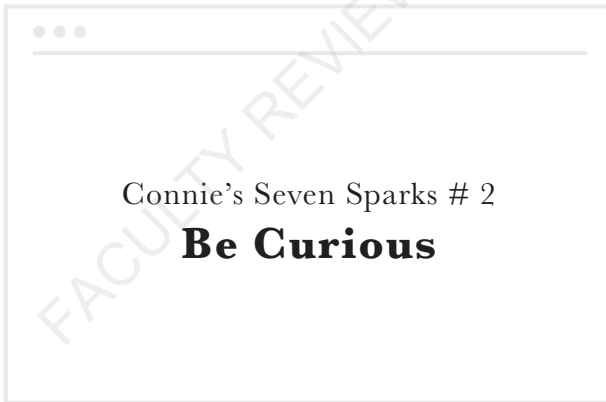
Connie's Seven Sparks # 1
**Address the Issue
& Relentlessly Focus
on the Objective**

She started with an overview thought.

“Problems ignite creative sparks. Keep stoking the sparks until you have a raging fire.

“Embrace the problem with a vengeance and a competitive spirit to tackle and solve it. The hunt is on. It’s fun, scary, and exhilarating all at the same time. But like in sports, never take your eye off the ball. Stay focused and don’t lose sight of the problem you’re trying to solve. Brief a group of relevant ducks to think about it, and have them come back with ideas. Then debate them. Take all the ideas and then curate them. Evaluate them not just for being creative — but for solving the problem you’re trying to address.”

As she waddled back and forth across the stage, she continued.

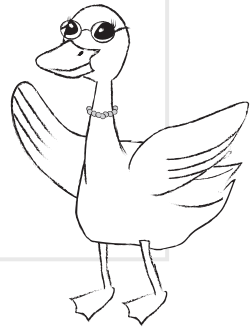


“Be curious. Regardless of which source you check out for skills, behavior and traits you need to be creative – being ‘curious’ is a strong trait of very creative ducks such as Duck Jobs and Leonardo Duck Vinci. Being curious about everything stores up vast amounts of knowledge over time, and this helps connect random thoughts to solve problems.

“As we know, not everyone is curious by nature. Studies suggest ducklings are curious for a plethora of reasons. But that diminishes as we age due to a variety of factors from peer pressure, to dealing with the stress of learning, work, and life.

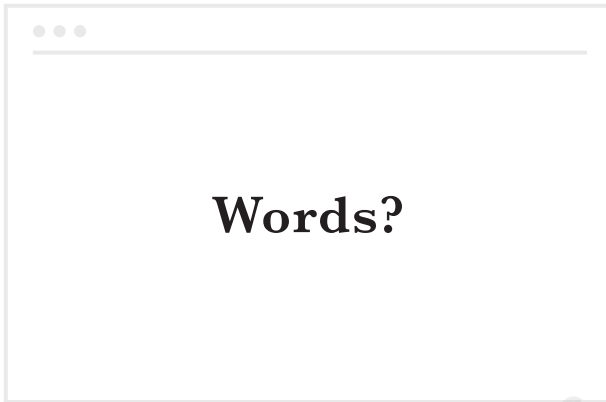
“However, if you have a project to deal with immediately, it’s hard to draw upon it if you haven’t done it since you were a duckling. Yet, not being curious by nature doesn’t mean you can’t be passionately curious about the problem at hand. Look at the problem from every POV: the duckstomer or target audience, the team, the organization, the competition, the world at large.

**You got problems?
Solutions are found
by starting with the
right questions.**



“Curiosity starts with questions: The ‘what ifs,’ ‘where did this originate?’ ‘what’s it made of?’ ‘what are the key features?’ ‘what’s the major benefit?’ ‘who is it for?’ ‘do they need it?’ ‘what would make them desire it, or even better – yearn for it?’

“Let me give you some examples of a thought process. For general marketing concepts, I often begin by going down two paths — ‘words’ and ‘images’ that would directly address or solve the problem.



“What words would apply to address the problem? Then use the thesaurus, which I love, for alternate words that might better apply or lead you down another interesting path.

“Next, search for key words and see what comes up. Maybe something rhymes with the brand, company, or product name that makes it fun or memorable. Even check the ducknet for sites that have famous ‘quotes’ for key words. I also find alliterations can work as well, such as...”

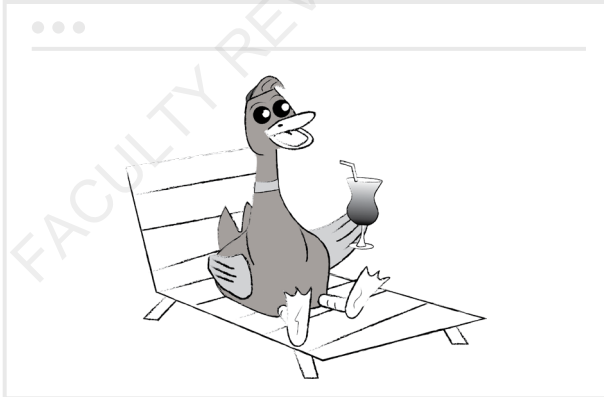


“Everyduck loves a good alliteration!” Connie exclaimed.

“Alternatively, images can be just as powerful and spark that creative idea.”



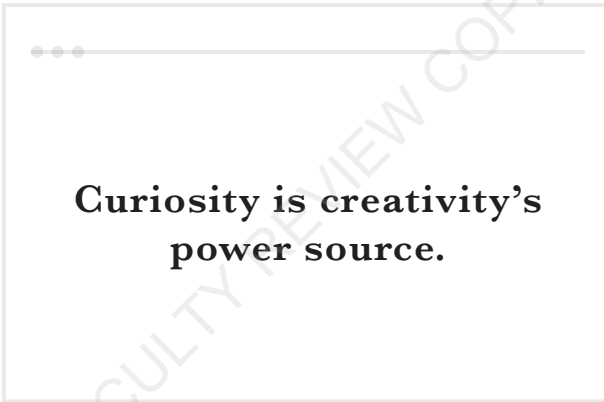
“Images connote ideas reflected in words. Just search key words in Google Images. You’ll see relevant images, like this next example.”



“Relax results in images of ducks at the beach, floating in pools, lying in lounge chairs etc. You’ll probably see a picture of Danny Duck on there too,” she said with feigned disgust, followed by quacking. “Fear... well...” Connie trailed off, letting the next speak for itself.



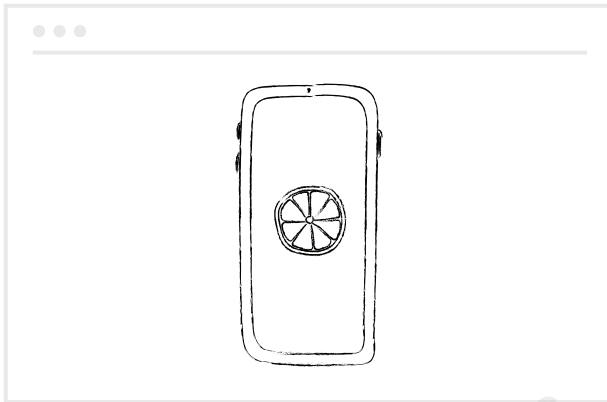
“The point is,” she said as she read the next slide...



“Now, I know that those were simple example approaches to demonstrate creative thinking to generate marketing or advertising concepts.

“However, creative thinking goes beyond marketing concepts. Think of the impact creative thinking has been on our world and lives just from technological innovation. An idea can lead to something unique and better than anything else in its category – or it creates a new category altogether.

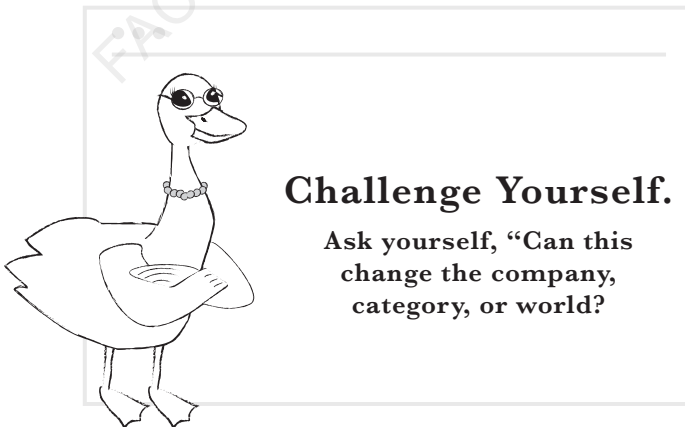
“And, no duck has done this better than Duck Jobs of Orange, Inc.,



although it appears that Elon Duck could be his successor...” to which the audience nodded along.

“It starts with a pursuit to solve a problem, or to create something that never even existed. Duck Jobs used his team for constant input to conceive of new approaches and new products – then made those *even better*. While his duckputers were user friendly and fun, he changed the world with the dPhone. And now, we can’t live without it. Thousands of apps for communicating, learning, playing, and staying healthy, all in such a small device.

“I’ll leave ‘curiosity’ with one last thought...

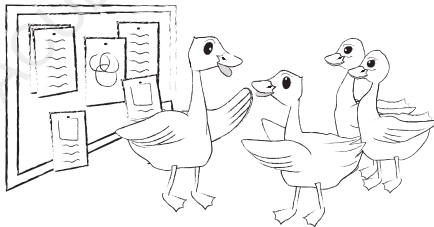


Connie's Seven Sparks # 3

Two Heads Are Better Than One

“Spark number three. I've seen brilliant creative ducks come up with an idea while reading them a brief, sometimes before I'm finished! Yeah, they do that. But often, it takes a team of ducks with different skill sets working at it on their own and then in small groups. Ideas get molded over time with input from different perspectives.

“So, while I agree that different perspectives are critical, I feel...” she started, then read the next slide aloud.



**Brainsharing Beats
Brainstorming.**

“Everyone knows that brainstorming is getting a flock of ducks into a room to throw out ideas. While it certainly works some-

times, from my experience it's hard to 'group think' from scratch. And as much as 'all ideas are good ideas,' some will participate while others will be observers.

“Too often, **brainstorming** fails as bigger titles and personalities prevail. With **brainsharing**, now everyone first comes prepared to share their thinking, get team reaction, hear other ideas, and build from there. This is important and uniquely different from a typical brainstorming session. There is more investment into the process. Ducks are further along in their thinking and you start from a higher plateau. Brainsharing allows shy ducks to develop a great idea in advance making it easier for them to deal with being called upon to present it. Multiple sessions that build upon ideas from the first session are the most successful at moving the process along to success.

Connie's Seven Sparks # 4

Fail Your Way to Success

“The great inventor Thomas Educkson said it best – **‘I have not failed; I have just found 10,000 ways that didn't work.’** There are very few great ideas that just popped into someone's head and were an immediate success. Most go through the process of failing to get it right.

“Creative thinking to develop innovative ideas generates lots of

bad ideas – it’s just the process. Don’t give up. Keep new thoughts coming in from every duck, direction, and point of view. Here are some of my tips to keep your drive to succeed.”



The slide features a title in a bold, serif font. At the top left, there are three small grey circles above a horizontal line. A large, light grey watermark reading 'FACULTY COPY COPIES' is oriented diagonally across the slide.

Learn and Build Upon Your Mistakes

“Be a scientist researching for a cure. Devour all the information you can. Doogle options as if you’re in a race to save civilization. Okay, that’s a bit over the top. The point is, you need to consume knowledge for inspiration. Read. Observe. Listen, carefully. Get another idea and try it. Accept they’ll likely fail but they’ll help you narrow down possibilities.”

She then read the next slide:

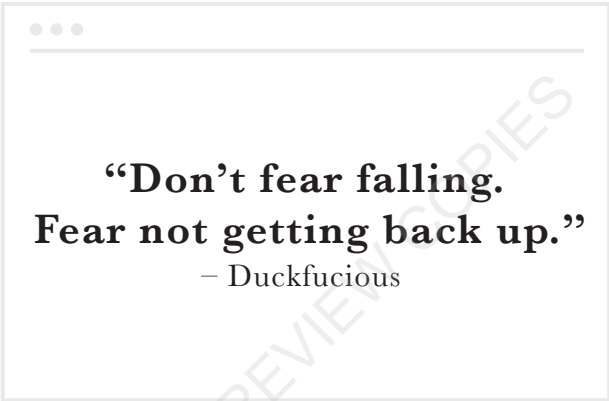


The slide features a title in a bold, serif font. At the top, there is a horizontal line. A large, light grey watermark reading 'FACULTY COPY COPIES' is oriented diagonally across the slide.

Honing is a Skill

“You are now the curator. The more you see what isn’t working the more you’ll be inspired to think differently about possibilities that could work. You’ll be more experienced and knowledgeable to ‘know it when you see it.’ Do not lose hope or get discouraged. If you’re lucky, you’ll be in an organization that understands.

“I’ll end this tip with one of my favorite quotes, which sums up the tip nicely.”



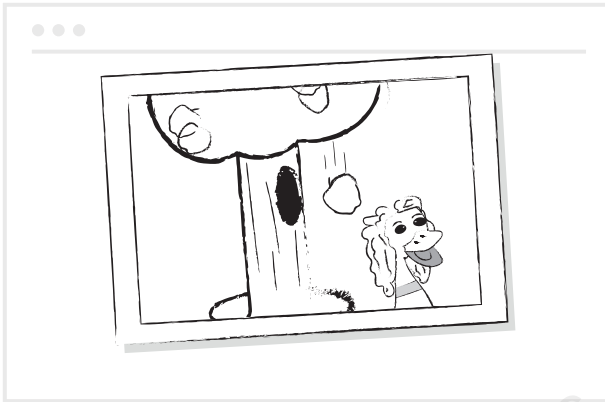
**“Don’t fear falling.
Fear not getting back up.”**
– Duckfucious

“Okay, let’s keep our pace going and move on to the next spark!”



Connie’s Seven Sparks # 5
**Develop Creative
Processes and Habits**

“Isduck Newton was inspired when an apple fell on his head. The rest of us have to work at it,” Connie stated.



“Creative thinking is fun, but it’s hard work. It can consume you. You’ll be thinking in the shower, on your commute, even when your significant other is talking to you.” She smiled and said, “*Be careful* — that’s a dangerous habit.” They quacked with laughter.

“Be disciplined about creative thinking. Using the following habits establishes processes to practice and to see what works best. Build upon and refine those that work. They are a combination of my thoughts and some I’ve read in articles on good creative habits. All have some merit, so try to see what works for you,” Connie said, clicking to the next slide.

- 1. Private Time**
- 2. Creative Space**
- 3. Be Your Own Devil’s Advocate**
- 4. Search for Inspiration**
- 5. Take a Break**

“First, **ensure you have private time.** Some of us do better when we create or think alone. Where, when, and how can you avoid any possible interruptions?”

“Next, **find your optimal creative time and space.** Inside or outside? Early morning or late at night? While you’re walking? Bathing? With music or in silence? Genre? Once you find that sweet spot, leverage it.

“Third, **be your own devil’s advocate.** It’ll either make or break your ideas.

“Fourth, you need to **search for inspiration.** Don’t wait for it to come to you – you may be waiting for a while.

“Finally, **take a break.** Walk away, take a breather, and come back to it later. Your brain needs to rest and recharge every 45 minutes. It’s amazingly very helpful.

“Next, let’s move onto Number Six,” she said. And with a flick of the remote, she clicked to the next slide.



Connie’s Seven Sparks # 6

**Research as Part of
the Creative Process**

“In marketing, creative needs to strike an emotional chord. It must work for the right audience to be worthwhile, or it could be

a disaster. Therefore, the decision is either based upon collective judgment or getting some audience validation. I started in marketing research, so I have seen the benefits of weeding out weak creative ideas to help narrow down the possibilities and prevent catastrophe. But it doesn't work all the time. It is much less effective, or utilized in the fashion industry or duckmatics, which are more image driven. It can also be overused as a crutch in DPG (Ducksumer Packaged Goods), resulting in new products taking years to launch, at which point the market has changed."

Connie admitted, "I know I've got a marketing background, so you may be thinking research is more useful in just marketing. But that's not true as..."




**Testing to Verify Happens in
All Industries and Fields**

"Validating the results of creative thinking happens in almost every industry, not just in marketing." Connie held up one feather on her right wing for each point she was about to make.

"For example, software testing to evaluate new functionality vs. specifications and finding bugs. Banking for viability of new financial products. Manufacturing tests effectiveness of new machinery.

“The point is that you should view research and testing as an important component of the creative process to improve chances of success. *Why?* This goes back to ‘Analysis.’



**Research Provides Data
with Rationale to Support
Your Strategy**

“I wanted to provide you with a few additional thoughts on research as part of the creative process.

- 
- 1. Interview Right Target**
 - 2. Focus Groups Test Wide Range**
 - 3. Quantitatively Test Best Options**

“First, make sure you screen and interview the right target — both users and competitive users for different perspectives.

“Second, show a wide range of creative ideas via ‘qualitative’ research such as focus groups among a few targeted ducks to

help refine the creative and narrow down your options.

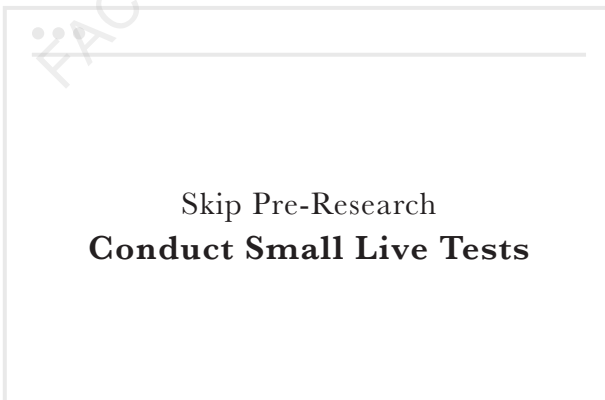
“Third, use ‘quantitative’ testing among hundreds of ducks to select a winner.

“Before we move on, here are two other valuable key points.



“I’ve moderated hundreds of focus groups. They don’t create — they react. Reaction is extremely helpful for insight, narrowing down options and refinement. Creation comes from the insights from their reactions. But, they can’t create them for you.

“Finally, in this digital age, you sometimes don’t need pre-research.”



“You can easily create different options, ideas and scenarios, and dive right into low level spending to see which approach works best among the target — all before focusing on the options driving the best results. Regardless of the approach, from my point of view, research and testing is the best way to validate the results of your critical and creative thinking.

“Regardless of how, **doing research minimizes risks, adds confidence, and silences critics. But the foundation is you still need a good idea, service or product,**” Connie said, adding an emphasis to signify her closing point.

“This brings us to my last of the Seven Sparks for Creativity,” as she started reading number seven.



Connie's Seven Sparks # 7

**Innovation
Takes Courage**

“Let me stress that the hard part about creative thinking is after coming up with that great idea, having it rejected is deflating. They could be right. Or you could be right. At the end, unless you are so passionate about it and you love it more than any other option and you're willing to go up against everyone else — it may not be worth falling on a sword.

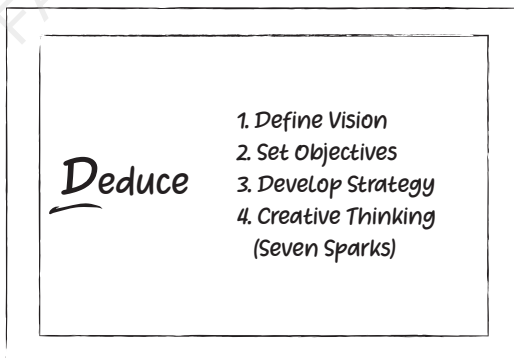
“To be safe, you may want to put it to the side for a bit. Procure other options. Get insight and see if you can become enthused with another direction. If you’re in the agency business and the client flat out rejects your creative idea, are you going to give up the account or passionately work to save it with another option? While some agencies owned and run by creative purists have resigned businesses, the vast majority ‘adapt’ and come up with another solution. Oftentimes, that new solution is even better.

“Only you can judge where your idea fits in your situation.

“Yet, while many fail, there are those who believed and went on to become heroes. So, be prepared for rolling eyes, blank sympathetic stares and snickers behind your back. Ignore them. Prove them wrong. If not this time, next time.

“I’ll wrap up my Seven Sparks with this last thought. **As time and technology marches on, the concept of ‘it’s impossible’ is often rendered obsolete.**

“Let’s bring it all into perspective again and go back to our chalk boards,” she said as she walked to the back of the stage.



“We just finished deduce, where after all the analysis and data collection we outlined the vision, set objectives, and developed the broad strategy. Then we used the ‘Seven Sparks’ to guide us through creative thinking to conceive of the best approach, then test it to optimize the chance for success.”

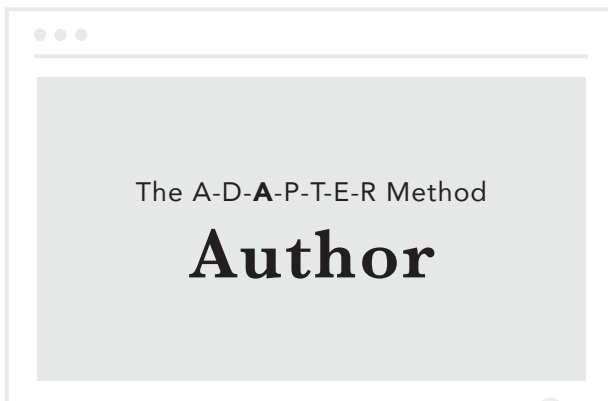
“Are there any questions?” she asked.

With no one lifting their wings, she said, “No one? Perfect. Let’s now move on to show you the best approach to communicate it via the next step in ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ – Author.”

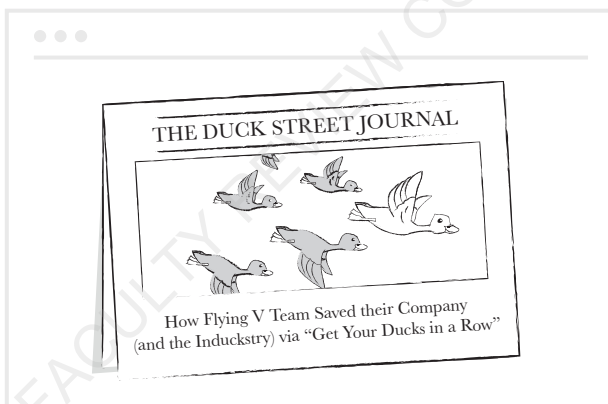
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Author

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“So some of you may have seen this article in the *Duck Street Journal* ...”

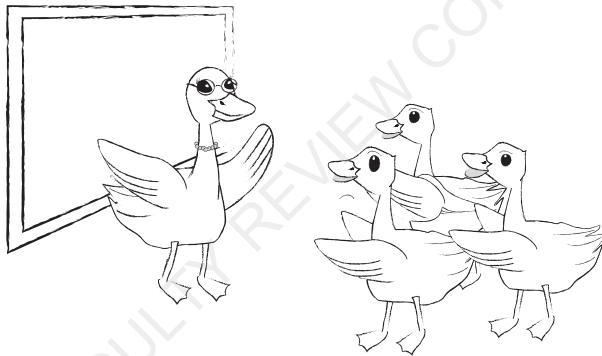


Connie noticed the vast majority of the studucks in attendance were nodding their heads and smiling that they were indeed aware. Just then the Dean stood up and starting speaking:

“Connie, one of the reasons you are here today is that every business studuck is aware because we’ve made the article required reading for business majors. We’ve also held seminars on the overall success, and importantly the processes that you, Dappy,

and the rest of the team employed. It is a classic case study of, and please forgive me for the phrase, how a lumbering giant can be so nimble, and innovative, to turn around. Additionally, the *Get Your Ducks in a Row* story and disciplined process that you guided Dappy through is now the adopted process we teach for our Business Writing and Business Communication courses. So, everyone is absolutely thrilled to have you today.”

With that, the entire room started clapping and gave her a standing ovation with fanfares and cheers. Connie began to blush — overtaken and overwhelmed with the uproar of positive responses.



Finally, she said, “Well my goodness, I didn’t expect that. Thank you so much but obviously, this was accomplished with a lot of ducks throughout Flying V and never would have happened without Dappy’s creative idea.”

When the studucks sat back down, she began again.

“So, I’d like to start the ‘Author’ section by briefly reviewing the ‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ formula by just highlighting the ten steps with some context. Afterwards, I’ll provide some additional tips and tools.”



Get Your Ducks in a Row

“The ‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ formula becomes your story outline for whether you are developing a written brief or a presentation. It also becomes your **AGENDA** for the meeting which helps duckxecs know what’s being covered.”

And with that, she began reading through each step.

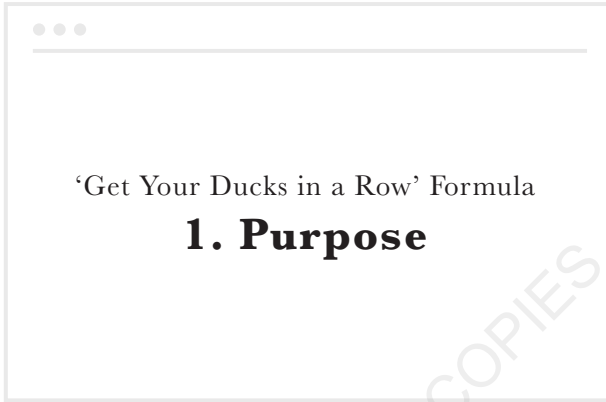


‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ Formula

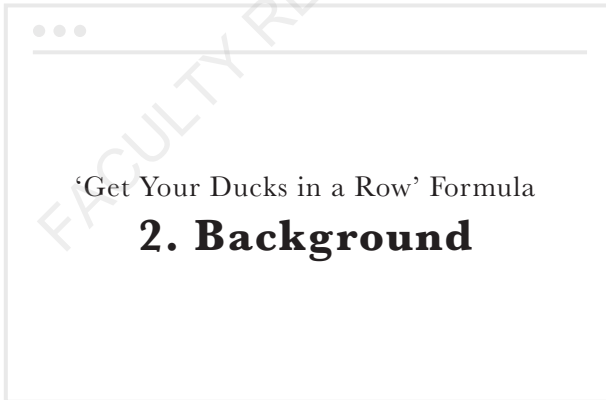
- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Purpose | 6. Rationale |
| 2. Background | 7. Tactics |
| 3. Issues | 8. Cost |
| 4. Objectives | 9. Timing |
| 5. Strategies | 10. Next Steps |

“I admit that while marketing and aducktising executives have likely already recognized it as a basic ‘creative brief’ – that’s why it was created in the first place. To distill all the analyses and deductions down to the overarching goal to author a concise, clear document to get the point across quickly. But to those

non-marketing ducks, its use, and therefore potential value, drops off considerably. Since you are already familiar with the story, I'll briefly hit upon a few points with each of the ten steps.



“**Purpose is the reason** the audience was sent the document or invited to a meeting. It is not an objective, which is what you want to accomplish.



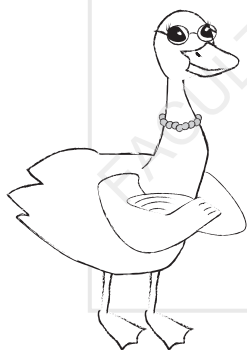
“**The Background helps your audience understand the situation.** The proper perspective is needed to evaluate your recommendation accurately. The proper perspective helps them to understand the current situation to put things in context.

“It’s just the facts that set up the story. It varies depending on the audience, and what they already know. It is an irrefutable truth. The senior duck executives may not like it, but they know it, and there is no arguing it. It sets the stage for what was coming next.

‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ Formula

3. Issues

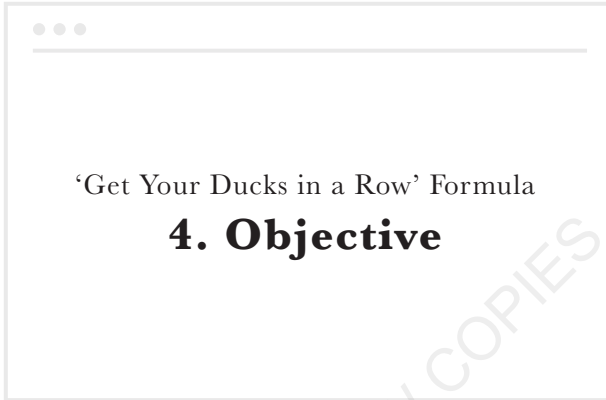
“What are issues?” she asked rhetorically, clicking to the next slide.



Issues are problems
or roadblocks that prevent the organization from achieving key goals or moving forward in a particular area.

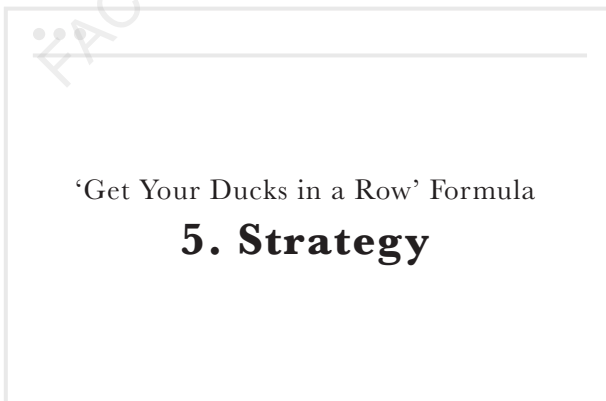
“For example, sales or profits are declining overall or for a business unit. Competitors stealing share or launching a new concept such as a lower price strategy; raw material costs going up; or health insurance rates skyrocketing, to name a few.”

“You can’t offer solutions until you understand the core problems.” Connie knew she was moving quickly, but they already saw the *Duck Street Journal* article. This was just a quick refresher.



“Objectives are measurable goals you want to achieve to fix the issues. Each objective should start with a directional adverb such as ‘to generate,’ ‘to increase,’ or ‘to reverse.’

“Set numerical goals, so your results and success can be measured and verified. For example, set goals with revenue, volume of cases sold, improvement in production efficiency or cost reduction.



“As I indicated earlier, **the Strategy is the overarching idea or concept that is the foundation for the master plan for how you are going to achieve the objectives.** For example, as I indicated there were two major strategic approaches being evaluated, the ‘Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan’ versus a price war.

“However, if the board rejected the ‘Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan,’ perhaps Dappy would have created a third or fourth innovative concept such as a Frequack Flyer strategy, or even an offer to buy Quack Tour Lines. These are all strategies.

“Be careful not to state tactical elements such as dPods, or the process of the ducks linked together. Finally, some helpful hints to make sure the strategy is properly written is to start with the words: to utilize, to create, to develop, or to implement.

‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ Formula

6. Rationale

“**The Rationale is the reason or support for why the strategy makes sense.** These should be relatable, relevant, and reliable based upon facts. The rationale was our best support for the approach since ‘avoiding Duck Hunters’ was selected by 96% of duckstomers as more appealing than a lower price at 4%.

‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ Formula

7. Tactics

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

“For example: the iPhones and the aducktising plan.

Get Your Ducks in a Row Formula

8. Cost & ROI

“**The Costs and ROI is the financial overview detailing the budgets required to execute the plan compared to the sales revenue (or cost savings) generated.** This helps determine if it’s a good business decision that generates a return of X profits on the investment.

● ● ●
‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ Formula

9. Timing

“Timing. It’s not a complicated concept — it’s a calendar.

Start with the big picture and high-level milestones. Have supporting weekly or daily details within each as required. The one note of caution is not how you communicate it, but what you commit to.

“Take the time to research and vet reasonable timelines for each stage. Give yourself some cushion but not too much as to be seen as sandbagging it. But overall, be sure to remember that all the hard work and thinking can be worthless in the eyes of management if you miss key deadlines.

‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ Formula

10. Next Steps

“Finally, **Next Steps** seems like the obvious project management procedure. But oftentimes, it gets overlooked. If you don’t write down due dates and assign responsibilities, it won’t get done right, on time, or even at all.

“I have my teams use a project management chart for our weekly status meetings. As we get closer to the launch date, we actually do it daily. I can tell you that these five categories — tactics, description, next steps, due dates, and responsibility — properly managed, will work at keeping everyone together and on track.

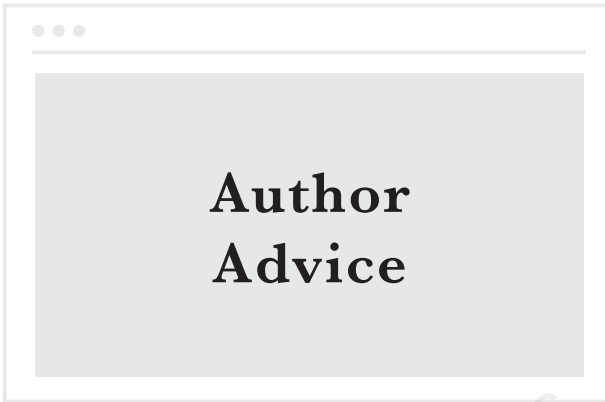
“Before moving on, let’s quickly recap,” Connie said, switching to her closing slide on this section.

...
**‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’
Formula**

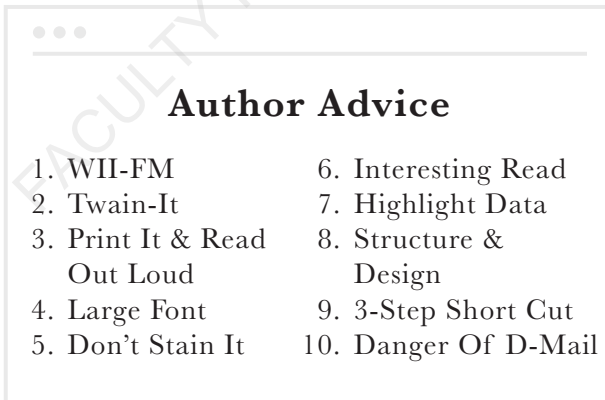
1. Purpose	6. Rationale
2. Background	7. Tactics
3. Issues	8. Cost
4. Objectives	9. Timing
5. Strategies	10. Next Steps

“So, those were the ten steps of the ‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ formula. It’s the structured approach to write it down once you’ve thought everything through.

“However, there is a lot more to this Author section than just these ten steps...



“So now, I’d like to shift now to some Author Advice,” Connie said as she clicked over to the next slide. “Let me give you an overview of author tips and tools to optimize your final written document to be as efficiently and effectively written to generate approval,” she read each as she went through her building slide.



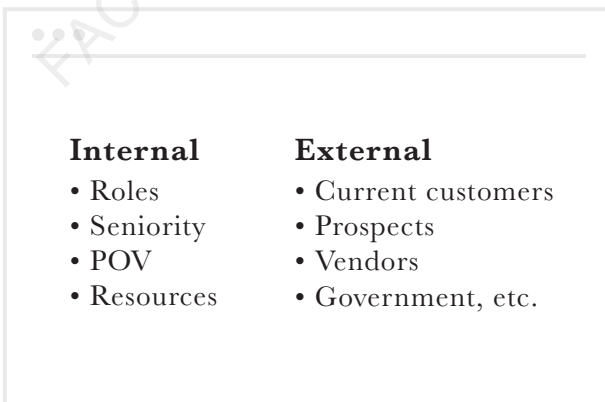
“Now, who here can tell me what WII-FM means? Is it a radio station here in the city?”



“What’s **In It For Me?**” a few of the studucks answered.

“Right,” responded Connie. “**Start with your audience – they listen to WII-FM.** A big mistake duckxecutives make in communication is trying to explain or sell from their own point of view without understanding that of their audience.”

“The main considerations every marketing campaign does is to define, understand, and profile the optimal target audience for a service or product. As you communicate or get your ducks in a row, know that there are two ways to profile your target.



“Ask yourself some key questions. For example: Who are the key decision makers among those who received the duckument or were invited to the meeting?

“Are there other duckxecs who should be included?

“Or, are there those you’d rather not include?

“Do you know their position, history, or bias towards your project?

“Finally, it’s critical to take some time and role play. Look at it from their perspective. Put yourself in their webbed feet.

“If the audience buys what you’re selling — what is the impact on them, their team, their time, their career, their bonus, their priorities?

“Have you addressed known issues someone may have with the project or with your proposal? Will they agree with your issues? Objectives? Strategies? Tactical timing and cost?

“Do you have supporters who can be helpful and influential with the decision maker?

“If someone disagrees with a point, does your whole recommendation fall apart?

“Are you prepared with counterpoints to their arguments that do not offend but gently help others see another point of view?

“How important is your project in the audience’s life? Are there competitors or opposing points of view?

“It’s not what the author is writing, it’s what the reader is understanding or feeling that’s most important,” Connie said.

And with that, she clicked over the next slide and continued.

Author Advice # 2

Twain-It

“What do I mean by ‘Twain-It?’” Connie stated. When she just saw bills shaking back and forth unknowingly, she continued onto the next slide and said, “You’ll see. I love this quote.”

“I didn’t have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead.”

– Duck Twain



“Lauded as the greatest humorist this country has produced, Duck Twain recognized the importance of the time and rigor involved with crafting what you write. While we all get better and faster with experience, I still find that before I hit ‘send,’ I review and edit several times. Time permitting, I step away from it and come back to it to ensure I cover the ‘7 C’s.’”

Connie heard the studucks groan and smiled.

Connie's 7 C's

1. **C**ontext
2. **C**larity
3. **C**oncise
4. **C**omprehensive
5. **C**ohesive
6. **C**ompelling
7. **C**onvincing

"I know, I know," she said with a laugh. I do love lists. However, I try to make them memorable. I'll be sharing a copy of this presentation so that you can always refer to it as needed."

That generated a lot of smiles, and she began her next section.

"We begin with **Context**. Imagine you are the target recipient to ensure you would fully understand the message from their perspective, avoiding offending or misinterpreting.

"Next is **Clarity**. Avoid vague writing. It can create confusion. Get a third duck to review it for their unbiased perspective.

"Be **Concise**. Keep it short and sweet! Edit out unnecessary words to get to the bare necessities.

"Number four is **Comprehensive**. Be sure to cover all major points and factors – not every unimportant minutiae or detail.

"Keep it **Cohesive**. Ensure the message holds together as one thought with everything related to a core idea.

"Be **Compelling**. The goal is to persuade recipients to act or provide approval.

"Lastly, aim to **Convince**. You need to close the sale. Did you do

everything to get to a resounding yes?” She concluded with, “Remember, duckexecutives don’t have a lot of time. The quicker you can get your point across, the better.”



“I used to close my door because I didn’t want anyone to see or hear me practicing. I’ve since learned many do it. It helps to hear yourself saying what you’ve written out loud. You’ll likely find unnecessary words and convoluted lengthy sentences. Imagine you’re presenting it and say it with feeling (with a professional tone, of course). You’ll find out just how comfortable you are with the content. I do it with simple d-mails, too, particularly with sensitive subjects or going to important duckexecutives.”



The studucks started quacking as soon as she clicked to and read this slide. “Get the point?” she asked. Heads nodded.

“Another excellent Twain-ing tip for editing down is to **start by getting it all down on one to two pages.**

“Dappy had initially presented me with a 50-page deck, thinking more was better. **Remember, in business, brief is good.**

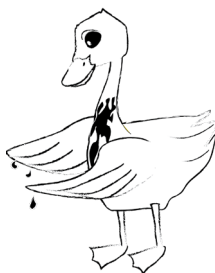
“I start by just writing everything out. Then, I **Twain-It by making the font size very small to fit on as few pages as possible.** Next, I gradually weed out unnecessary words, cutting out major portions or even full sentences as I rethink my approach to be more concise without losing the message.

“Then, I **make the type gradually larger so that no single thought takes more than one line.** Well-crafted documents can be clearer, easier to quickly read and grasp by using a combination of:

- Bullet points establishing the key thought:
 - Followed by sub-bullets or numbers
 1. That support the top bullet point
 2. Or provide a list of options or steps in a plan

Author Advice # 5
**Twain-It,
Don't Stain It**

...
You wouldn't go to work, or out with friends, with a stain on your clothes, so why would you leave typos and bad grammar in a duckument?



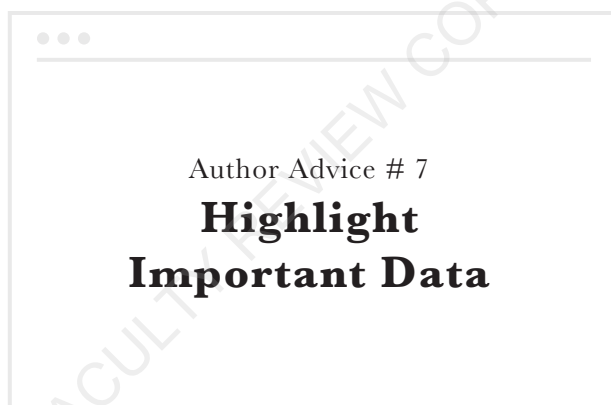
“This one is a big pet peeve of mine. **Poor grammar and typos are like stains on your clothes.** It says, ‘I didn’t spell check’ – which is bad, or ‘I don’t care’ – which is worse. If you have ‘Sent on my dPhone – please excuse typos’ in your d-mail signature, that’s not good enough.

“If I sound like a stiff ’ole duck, it’s because it seems to be getting worse. I spoke to a duckttorney who had said written submissions from new associates are littered with errors. It wastes time to go through, and reflects poorly on those new duck-employees. **So, no — typos and poor grammar are not okay.**”

Author Advice # 6
**Make It An
Interesting Read**

Connie read the slide with extra emphasis. “After all, many times the implications of a presentation or plan requires investment and resources, financial support, employment, as well as personal risks and rewards. That tends to impact a duck’s emotions one way or the other.”

“From small d-mails to major programs, your thought process must be that every document should not be just written, but crafted. While not a dramatic thriller or a tug-at-the-heart bestseller, all major plans should be well thought out, compelling, interesting, and maybe even exciting to the audience.”

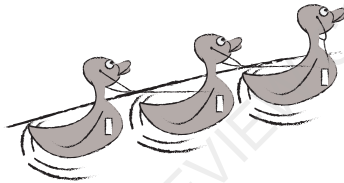


“When you’re looking at a chart with a lot of data the author or presenter needs to address, speak to the key numbers, and point them out!” she said with exasperation.

“It’s amazing so many duckxecutives do this incorrectly. Use circles, stars, a different color — anything to highlight what you’re speaking to. Don’t make the reader work too hard finding what you just referred to, or they will miss your next points.”

Author Advice # 8

Structure & Design Make a Big Difference



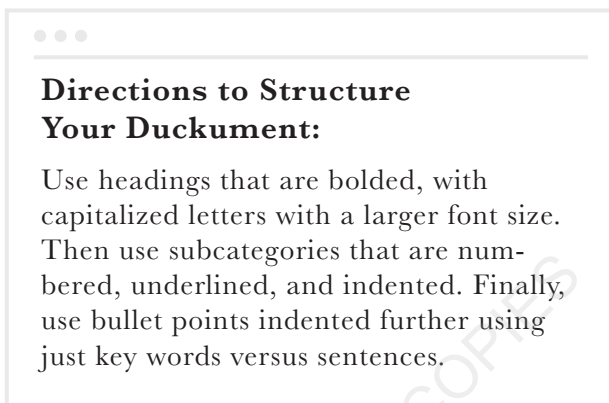
**“A picture is worth a
thousand words.”**

– Duck R. Barnard

“This quote was really an insightful thought from the early 20th century and has stood the test of time and is applicable to our author section. For any business communication, your job is to get your point across as quickly and clearly as possible. If you can, use a picture or diagram to significantly enhance the reader’s ability to grasp your point.

“However, this conceptually also applies to the way you design your duckument, even if it’s just all text. Use sentence and paragraph formatting, styling, and breaks in an effective way to help tell a fluid story.

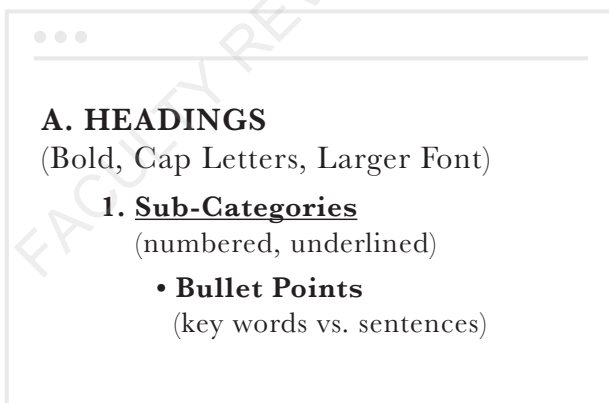
“For example, the two options on the following slides have the same information, but one has been visualized more effectively and clearly. Most first drafts look like this.”



Directions to Structure
Your Duckument:

Use headings that are bolded, with capitalized letters with a larger font size. Then use subcategories that are numbered, underlined, and indented. Finally, use bullet points indented further using just key words versus sentences.

“But see how easy it is to read the following slide with more distinctive headings and supporting lines.”



A. HEADINGS
(Bold, Cap Letters, Larger Font)

1. Sub-Categories
(numbered, underlined)

- **Bullet Points**
(key words vs. sentences)

“No contest, right?” Connie looked out at all the smiling studucks.

“The eye and brain grasp things quicker when there is dimension and an established structure to what is seen. That is why many books are written with serif fonts — because every letter has a

a unique shape the eye and brain can grasp quicker.

“Paragraphs require taking time to read through the sameness to comprehend key points. You need to design your communication so the eye can scan it quickly with the ability to grasp the core points. That is also helpful for audiences to go back to quickly review what they’ve just read to ensure understanding.”



“Moving on to number nine.” Connie said, “**Just because it needs to be quick, doesn’t mean it shouldn’t be done right.**”

“Among major documents and presentations, our days can also be filled with more casual communications as well — like d-mailing thoughts and directions.

“With casual communications and when the team member I’m working with knows all the background, I still want to be clear and effective, so I incorporate the three critical components of the ‘Get Your Ducks in a Row’ formula.

Connie expanded on each point by reading off her next slide.

The 3-Step Short Cut

1. Issues

Explain the problem or task.

2. Objectives

Clarify the desired goals with metrics.

3. Strategies

Propose approaches to reach your goals.

“This shortcut can help work through problems and solutions to communicate messages effectively, and quickly – especially when the world moves fast and every duck is on their own schedule. This helps to bring every duck onto the same page to collaborate and reach goals, all within their own timelines.

“However...” Connie let her first word linger for a moment. “Though d-mails can be amazingly efficient, it can also be a double-edged sword when you hit ‘Send’ too fast, especially without re-reading it first. We’ve all experienced that instant regret the second the d-mail leaves your draft box. So, remember this tenth and final tip.”

Author Advice # 10

The Danger of D-Mail

“So, we’ve all been there. Hot tempered or justifiably frustrated, manically typing out a d-mail that is way too long and way too sharp. I urge you — no, I implore you — when you are upset or angry, **be Connie Cautious. When in doubt, delete!**”



“Let’s all agree here, okay? It never works out how we want, disagreeing harshly or telling someone off, especially in the workplace. Even if you spend the time to author an articulate case to refute their comments, or to express a different opinion, d-mails are usually the wrong place to do it. It is always much better to discuss sensitive things in person, usually one-on-one, or with a supervisor or moderator. You may think that your d-mail is well constructed, but you may have missed something that would make the recipient take an idea or point out of context or from a different perspective.

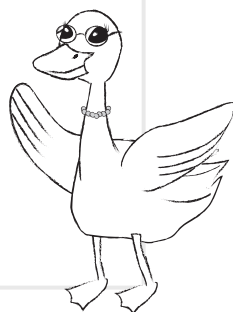
“It can be very helpful to get someone else’s POV before hitting send. They may have an unbiased perspective to prevent you from doing something that you’ll later regret. Possibly even regret it big time! At the very least sit on it for a day if possible. Sometimes just writing it out makes you feel better, so you get it out of your system. Great. Don’t hit send quite yet. Save it. Tomorrow you may see it much differently.

“Also, although it may not seem like a big deal — **be careful who you cc on a d-mail** – it may have consequences.

“Perhaps the information is sensitive, and management would prefer to limit the audience to senior level managers. Or maybe, the information is only supposed to be seen internally.

“My recommendation is to craft a list of duckxecutives you think need to be on the d-mail. Then ask your boss to check that list. Remember to err on the side of leaving a questionable duckxecutive off. You can always follow up with an apology... ‘Oops, sorry I forgot to cc you.’

**There’s a difference
between content
and context. Even if
you’re right, you
could be wrong.**



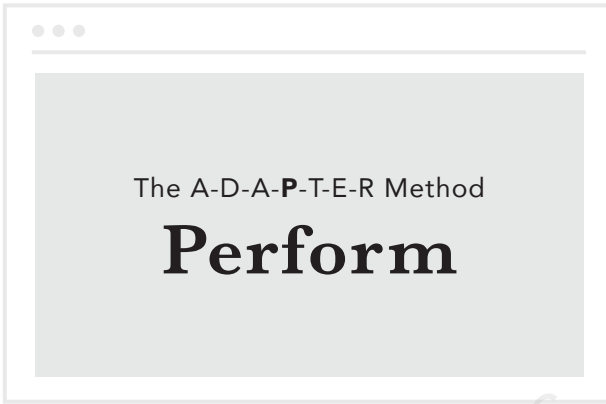
“Now, lets go back to our chalk boards to see where we are.”

Author

1. *Get Your Ducks in a Row*
2. *Tips & Tools*

Perform

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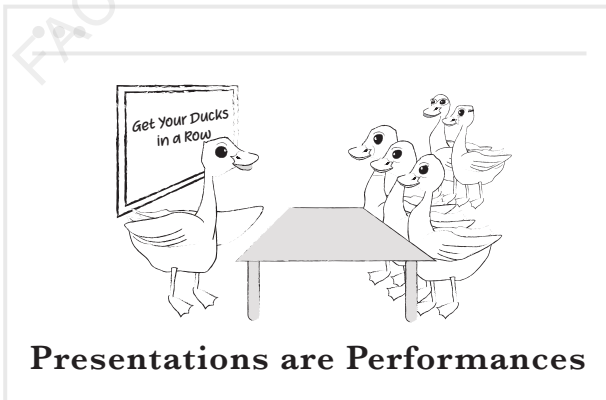


Connie said, “All right, now let’s move to an area that can scare some, but where ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ can help a lot.

“My first thought was to have the ‘P’ stand for ‘Present,’ but that isn’t all that you’re doing. This is your time to shine and deliver your message in a compelling way. It’s performance time.

“If the content and delivery are persuasive, you’ll easily gain approval. Do it really well, and you gain trust, recognition, and another quiver in your arsenal for career advancement.

“So, remember this,” she said as she advanced to the next slide.



Presentations are Performances

She continued, “I have developed some helpful pointers to help you maximize your performance. However, I want to start with this perspective.

“You need to own it. Know your lines. Practice. Deliver to impress and persuade. Most importantly, don’t be boring. Make them feel your passion. Be thoughtful, respectful, and authentic, but go for wow and applause.”



“**You may have heard that PowerDuck Point has gotten a bad rap in recent years** from some high profile duckxecutives,” Connie held up a feather as she provided perspective from each of the three duckxecutives.

“First, **Duck Bezos** has banned PowerDuck Point presentations at Duckazon in favor of six-page narratives where ducks digest quietly for 30 minutes before the discussion.

“**DuckJobs** of Orange Corp. was known to have hated PowerDuck Point indicating that ‘if you needed it you didn’t know what you were talking about.’ He wanted ducks to engage and debate.

“**Sheryl Duckberg**, CEO of duckcial media platform Duckbook, apparently caused an internal ruckus when she indicated she

didn't want to see PowerDuck Point presentations anymore. She meant directly to her, but ducks misunderstood it as a corporate-wide edict. That put pressure on the teams that had to present things to clients.

“Context, environment, and audience are all critical when reviewing these duckxecutives’ point of view,” she began, before providing her own perspective on them.

“Duck Bezos enforces those six-page duckuments with a 30-minute quiet time for reading prior to discussions and debates, and they probably go through a formula similar to ‘Get Your Ducks in a Row.’ I don’t disagree with this at all – but not every organization would allow or tolerate it. And, you certainly can’t make a pitch to new clients and ask them to do that.

“Additionally, as Duckberg points out, she meant she didn’t want to have PowerDuck Point presentations to her. She recognized that when going to customers or in presentations to larger groups PowerDuck Point can be useful.”

Connie pointed out the major issue with PowerDuck Point. “It’s so frequently misused.”

PowerDuck Point

The Wrong Way

Long Sentences

Small Fonts

Busy Charts

“Too often duck executives misuse PowerDuck Point by treating it like a written duckument with long sentences, small fonts and busy charts. Frankly those are bad approaches even for a written duckument. But for a presentation to a room full of ducks it’s a recipe for disaster.”



“Let me give you some perspective on the right way, from a master himself. Duck Gates indicated that Duck Jobs turned presentations into an art form. He worked hard to get it down to a simple elegant message. All he needed to do was talk, and the visuals added life to his message. At times, there were words — but just a few per slide.

“By presentation day, you should already,” she stressed each of the following words, “know what you are talking about! Because to get there, you will have gone through the thought process. Particularly the background, issues, objectives and strategies. All your analyses and thinking led you to being able to deliver your message in an orderly cohesive manner telling the story in a compelling way.

“So, I think that PowerDuck Point is a great tool. It’s a blank canvas to help you illustrate and narrate your story in an orderly fashion. But I actually think of it as...”



**Slides are
frames in
a movie**

Connie continued onto the specific tips and tools, “Therefore, I recommend...”

Tips & Tools

Pictures vs. Words

Large Font

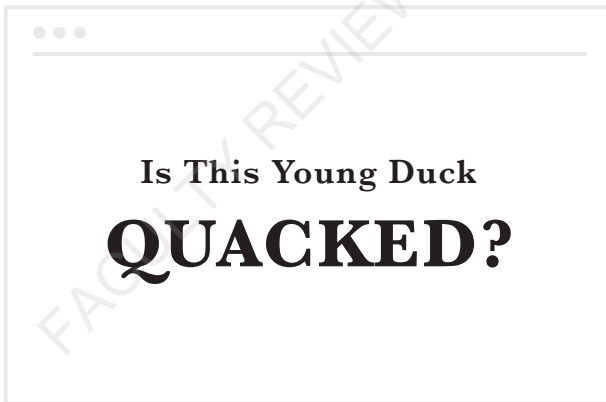
**Engage – Ask a Question
or Tell Joke**

“Use pictures versus words wherever possible. Adding pictures, animation, video, and design can bring it to life.

“If you’re going to use words, use few words and a really large font.

“Also, try to engage the audience to make them think or respond. For example, rather than just talking, ask questions. What’s the number one issue? Or add some levity, just as Dappy did when he first presented the idea for the ‘Duck Hunter Avoidance Plan.’

“He knew he would be viewed with skepticism, even ridicule. Therefore, he said, ‘I know what you’re thinking,’ and he clicked to the following slide which lightened the atmosphere in the room because that’s what they were all thinking.



“Finally, if possible — get it designed by an Art Director! Make it look amazing! Just remember to be consistent with your branding or images. And, avoid preset templates at all cost!”

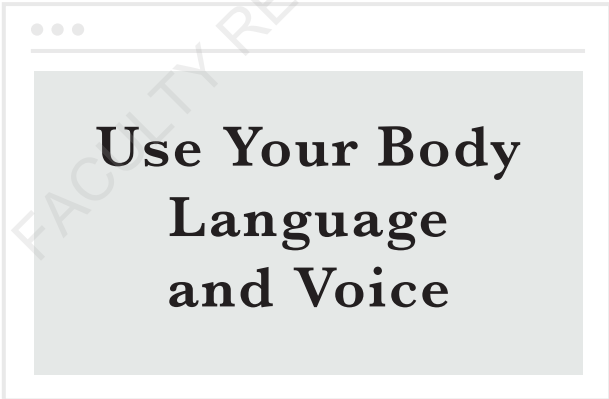
“Now, my next tip is very important to keep your audience awake and engaged!” Connie started as she moved onto her next slide.



Interact with Your Slides

Connie read tip number two and said, “As soon as you click on the slide, read it out loud. Ducks will read it immediately. So, stay with them before you elaborate, or you will lose them.”

“Also, use your wings to point to key facts. And circle important data. Know which facts you want to point to in order of priority as you go through your supporting story.”



Use Your Body Language and Voice

“Remember – **Your body language and voice** can be used to project confidence and authority,” Connie stated.

“**It begins with confidence.** Stand up straight. Look at the duckxec in the eye to engage with them.

“**Be aware of everyone** — particularly senior duckxecs and whether they are paying attention or not. Look for positive reinforcement — ducks smiling and shaking their head in agreement — it will build confidence.

“**Your voice is a huge weapon.** It will help command or lose the room. Be loud without going overboard — just enough to be in charge. Keep a conversational pace, but not too fast. Pauses are good to reclaim control and allow the audience to absorb what you said and showed them. If using a mic, ‘*eat it!*’ Hold it up to your beak, not your chest or waist, so they hear you.”

“And **don’t drone on.** This isn’t Shakespeare, but bring it to life. Have fun. Strut your stuff. You know it.

“Finally – **Practice, practice, practice.** Have someone be your audience to help provide feedback for clarity and performance. This is critical.”



“Next, it is imperative that you S.Q.A.L. IT!” Connie stood stone-faced for a moment looking out at the audience. There was silence and then an increasing murmur as the studucks tried to figure out what she meant. She finally smiled and asked if they gave up as she clicked the next slide.



Stop Quacking and Listen

The studucks quacked out loud. Connie continued.

“Too often when ducks are performing, they forget that the audience is the priority. You have put enormous time, thinking, effort and practice to get to this stage. While, it’s important to get all of your points across, it’s also important to...” she raised her voice and said slowly, **“Listen to what they have to say.”**

“First, remember they are going to look at it through WII-FM — *What’s In It For Me?* What are the benefits of your plan to them? If you are not taking into account something that they are pointing out, you could lose them *and* have your plan rejected.

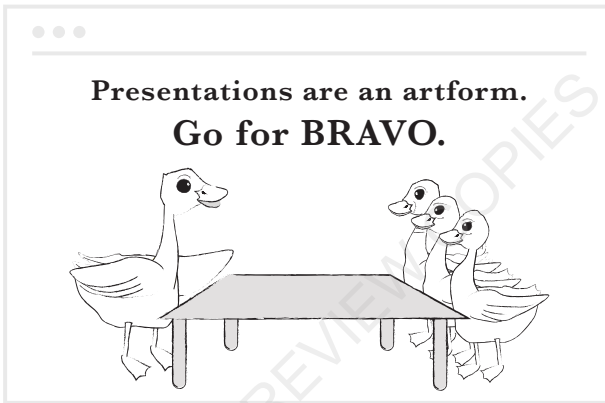
“They actually could be just trying to either understand something they missed or even help you – because they are seeing others looking confused, or not buying in to your plan.

“Finally, be patient. Make sure they are finished speaking before you answer.” Again, she clearly emphasized the next point, “Do not interrupt them or cut them off.

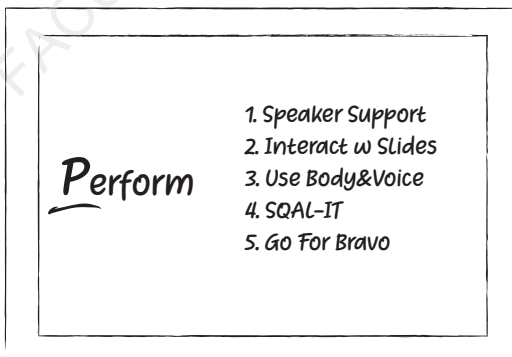
“I have found that junior ducks who are clearly smart, often jump to a response to demonstrate their grasp of the topic before

the senior duck finishes. However, this is unwise, not to mention simply disrespectful. It also results in the questioner's full point not getting across. That may have led to another question for the presenter. This can frustrate the duckxecutive asking the question, or it could result in making the presenter appear inexperienced, egotistical, or not ready to lead.

"I'll leave you with a final thought," she said, moving to next slide.



Connie went back to the chalkboard to enter the key points within the Perform segment.



"Ok, now on to the next step in 'The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method!'"

Tackle

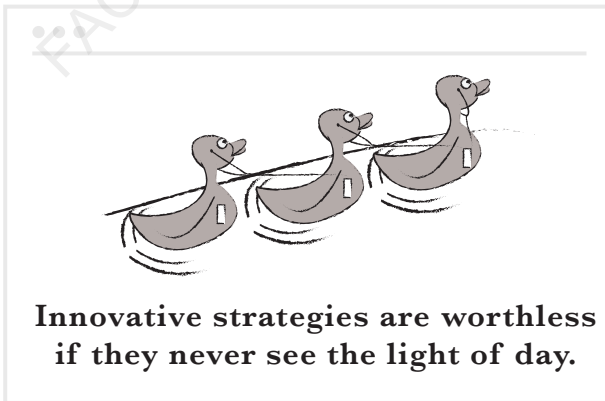
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– Connie started this section with a slide that simply stated –



– then clicked to her next slide.



“Most business strategy experts who discuss the critical importance of how to think through and develop innovative strategic plans, followed that up by reinforcing the essential ingredient – Execution.

“Duckexecutives – who can both critically think through the analysis, draw conclusions, develop innovative strategies, *and* can then marshal the team and resources to make them come to fruition – are the leaders who succeed. The training and skill sets are different, and in many ways the personality traits are different. But the commitment to objectives, a disciplined process, and a passion to deliver are the same.

“I’m going to give you several tips and tools on *how to tackle the tackle!*”

Studducks let out a collective groan and then quacked.



“The underlying premise is that executional discipline avoids chaos...and heartbreak. The devil is in the details.

“Let me give you some perspective. Some can’t wait to get started. For others, it is very tempting once a brilliant strategy and creative concept has been developed and approved, to be lured into a bit of complacency. A sense of relief that the hard part is over. Like doing well on your finals. But that’s wrong!

“Yes, it was hard and a hearty congratulations is deserved. But, tackling it so that it is hugely successful is going to be just as hard. And maybe even more politically dangerous. If everyone loves the strategy and concept, but the execution is poor, that is a major screw-up!

“Now you and your team need to employ a different set of skills. An attention to detail with as much enthusiasm, vigor, and importantly, discipline that you gave to conceiving the strategy and creative concept.”

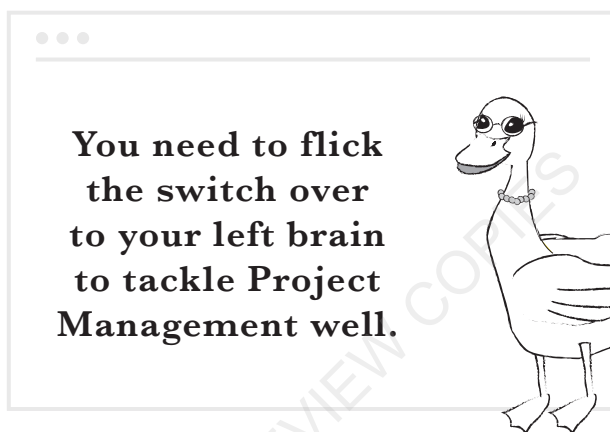
Connie clicked to the next slide.



“To some big picture strategists and creative thinkers, project management can be somewhat mundane. But recognizing it is critical also means making sure that it’s done right. Some ducks are good at both creative thinking and execution. Regardless, at

this stage, you need to have someone who can dive into the details of the project. Someone who is obsessively organized with the ability, and power, to lead the process, and stay on top of all parties involved.”

She then read the next slide.



Finishing up this section, Connie switched to the following slide and said, “Next...”



“Here are three key areas of project management.” Connie then read each item in the build slide and provided perspective.



Key Areas of Project Management

- 1. Macro Timeline**
- 2. Budget: Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up**
- 3. Best Practices**

“So, let’s start with the macro timeline and break it down.”



Key Areas of Project Management

1. Macro Timeline

- a. Set Launch Date
- b. Outline Components
- c. Timeline for Components
- d. Component Dependencies
- e. Apply to Calendar – Check Feasibility

“Start by determining the goal or launch date and work backwards from there.

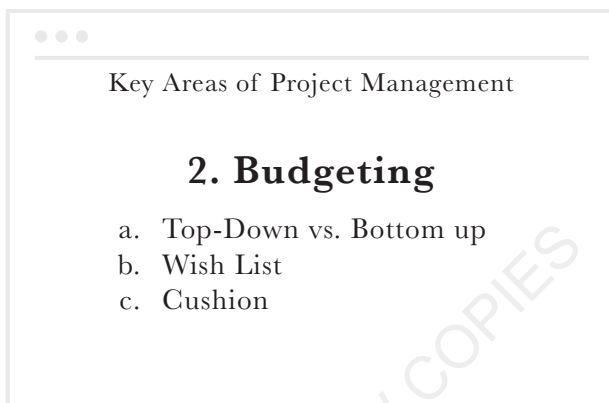
“Then, outline all the necessary components that need to be implemented.

“Develop a timeline for each component.

“Then, like building a house, you need to start with the foundation. Identify the dependencies of each component to each other to determine priority sequence of tasks.

“Finally, visually map out the project timeline on a calendar to see if it works or do goalposts need to move?”

As she got some bills noddin', she moved onto budgeting.



Connie indicated that there are two ways to budget, based upon whether there is an existing budget, or if there was a need to build it from scratch and provide management with a proposal.

“Top-down is when you’re given a budget to work within — based upon financial cost versus expected revenue projections. You need to choose wisely and prioritize what you feel are the essentials for success within the framework.

“Bottom-up happens when you are driving the project and it makes sense to do the initial cost projections. For example, since management didn’t know we were working on the ‘Duck Hunters Avoidance Plan,’ Dappy had to develop a budget with all the dPhones from scratch. This helps management see you have done the due diligence and can evaluate whether your concept or proposal is reasonable. In this bottom-up case, you need to take each of those components and do your best to estimate costs for each one.

“There are two tips I’d suggest you do when budgeting.” She then clicked to the second point on the slide.

“Start with your wish list, recognizing some things will likely be cut. But also, a wish list is a helpful exercise because it often encourages people to think out of the box. Develop ideas that may be so exciting that management sees them for attention and image-building benefits. You just might be surprised by their desire to make a splash.”

She then clicked to the third point on the slide.

“Next, put a cushion in your budget in case of overages, but not so high that it won’t be approved or viewed as excessive. For example, +20% across the board is reasonable.

“Now there are various software as service solutions, or SaaS, which provide impressive forms, charts, workflows, calendars, and collaboration platforms. These can be helpful and make the project more efficient, productive, and timely.

“However, whether you use a software solution or not, you need to at least follow the four best practices,” she said as she clicked through the slide.”

Key Areas of Project Management

3. Best Practices

- a. Project Lead
- b. Team Responsibilities
- c. Master Plan
- d. Progress Meeting

“First, establish a project lead with the skill set and power to marshal the forces throughout the process. Key behavioral characteristics of this duckxecutive should be,” she pointed to a feather on her wing with each characteristic as follows:

“Totally organized.

“Continually updates everything in writing.

“In charge, but collaborative by nature.

“Unafraid to hold members accountable.

“Next, establish team member responsibilities. Cover every phase of the project with established timing, budget, and completion goals. Ideally, the team members are all skilled, responsible, and collaborative in nature.

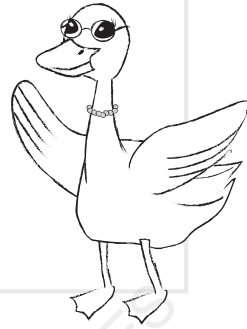
“Together, the team needs to create a master plan. This outlines both final completion goals with important progress goals along the way for every tactical element.

“Finally, schedule progress meetings at two levels. Team members need to meet very frequently, at least weekly if not more often, to ensure progress is being made on all fronts.

“Equally important is to involve the senior duckxecutives. Have check-ins with them to ensure senior management is aware of total progress. They help recalibrate things in the event of changes, obstacles, and more.

“I’ll end Tackle with the following thought,” she said as she read the final slide.

Woe is the strategist
who minimizes the
importance of execution,
for their ideas crash on
launch pads... if they get
that far.



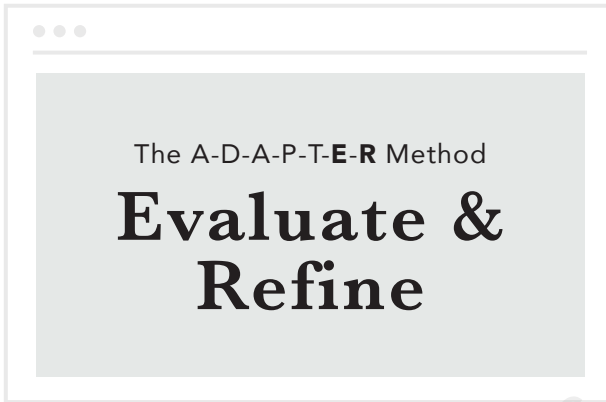
Connie walked to the chalkboards and scribed the key points of Tackle.

Tackle

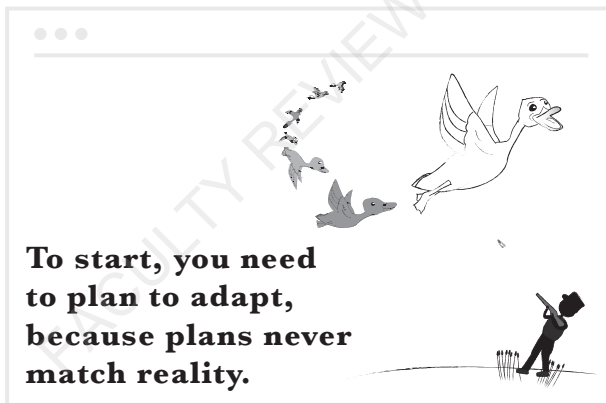
1. Project Management Tips
2. Timeline - Macro to Micro
3. Budgeting
4. Best Practices

*Evaluate
&
Refine*

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“Now, we’re actually near the end. I’ve combined the next two segments Evaluate and Refine into one, as they are interrelated.”



Number 1: Plan To Adapt

“As I stated earlier, reality never matches your plan. Therefore, before you even launch, prepare some contingency plans based upon potential early results. For example, what if sales are lagging after six months? Do you cut spending, increase spending, or shift spending to another facet?”

“That’s a negative scenario. What if sales are way above expectations? Do you have the manufacturing capacity to deliver?”

“Number 2: Track Metrics

“Fortunately, today’s technological tools allow for real-time tracking of metrics for many facets of a business.

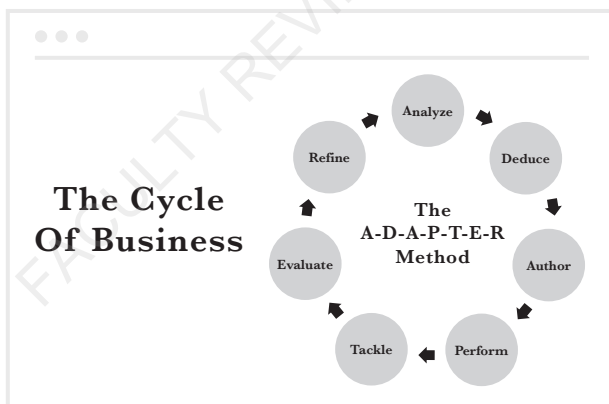
“Number 3: Evaluate Results

“Therefore, have the objectives set for key metrics, ideally on a timeline, so you can evaluate the results as they come in.

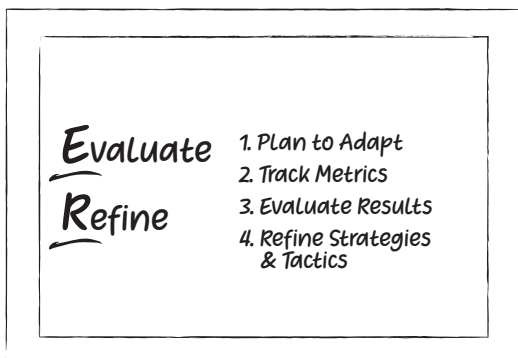
“Number 4: Refine

“Then refine your plans, based upon your pre-determined contingency plans.

“Now, I’m bringing back this visual all the way from the beginning.”



“When the first phase of the plan is concluded, ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ starts all over again beginning with an in-depth evaluation of the results to deduce conclusions to refine the strategy for the next phase. That’s the cycle of business.” She went back to the chalkboard and wrote the summary of this section:



“Does this help provide a good perspective of each step?” she asked. She saw nodding bills and rapid note taking from her audience.

“Before I move on to the bonus section, let me provide a brief closing perspective beyond these key points. To do that, I have some questions first. Let’s step back from all these details, steps, tips, and tools of the...”

...

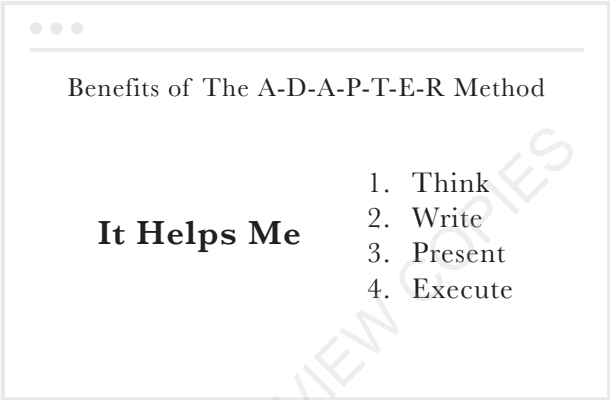
**The
A-D-A-P-T-E-R
Method**

“Did you find it helpful?” she asked, to which a room of unanimous bills nodded and a cacophony of affirmation filled the room. Then those were followed by some clapping of wings.

“Great, but I’m not looking for applause. At least not yet,” she quipped which led to lots of smiles and quacking.

Connie asked, “If you were to use just words to describe the benefits of ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method,’ **what would you say you learned how to do?**”

As the studucks called out thoughts she wrote them down on the board with chalk. Then they collectively agreed on the four key personal benefits as follows:



Benefits of The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method

It Helps Me

1. Think
2. Write
3. Present
4. Execute

Connie started with, “**So ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ has helped you learn to think, write, present, and execute.**”

Everyone agreed this was the essence of what they learned.

She then pivoted to her next point, “What do you think the benefit to any organization would be if all duckpoyees embraced and used ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method?’ Why should they adopt it?”

Studucks began to call out: “More successful, more profitable, streamlined, effective, efficient, united, happier.”

Then more chimed in and said, “Better morale from teamwork; smarter and more prepared to compete.”

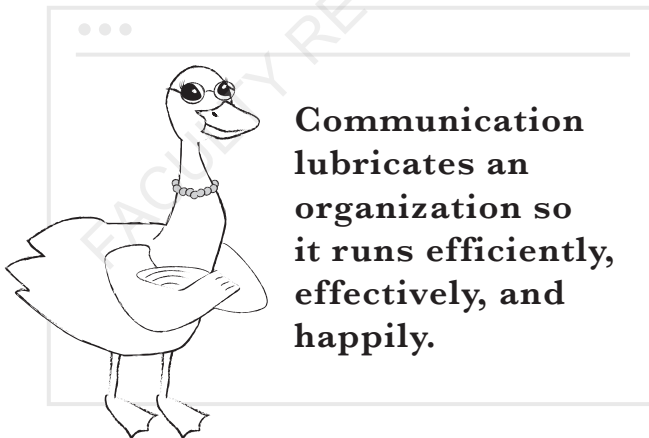
Finally, one studuck yelled, “Better communication.”

“Very interesting,” Connie said. “I think these are all valuable and accurate to one degree or another.”

“I can tell you what we are finding in the Flying V marketing duckpartment. I’ve noticed we collectively communicate better inter-duckpartmentally. And it hasn’t gone unnoticed, which is why Debbie Duck, the Chairduck Of The Board, asked us to expand this training to other duckpartments.

“I believe ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ helps generate,” she counted the next points on her feathers, “profits, success, leadership, duckstomer satisfaction and especially duckployee teamwork and morale. These are tangible, measurable, economic, and cultural benefits. The fundamental objectives of what a business should deliver.

“However, the way it works is ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ improves communication! In fact, I view it as,” she said as she read the next slide.



Connie then moved back to the center of the room.

“I have also deduced that better communication can be very, very, profitable. Two ways.

“First, think of the economic impact if every member of the corporation saved just two hours per week by communicating more efficiently from the beginning — that’s a 5% increase in efficiency!

“Since time equals money, poor communication could be one of the most expensive hidden costs for corporations. But, it can be hard to measure and detect. While corporations have leveraged technological production efficiencies with machines in manufacturing, and technology has made major advances in acquiring and leveraging data for analysis, there is still a need for clear, concise communication based upon critical thinking.

“Secondly, think of internal and external cultural benefits of improved communication on duckploys and duckstomers. More clarity. Less time wasted. Less frustration. Happier duckploys and duckstomers.”

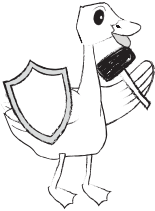
“Finally, remember that communication is a skill to be honed. My ultimate goal is to help you **RAP** – to be **R**espected, **A**dmitted and **P**romoted. It’s important to always keep in mind the gap between the student’s perceptions vs. the manager’s reality. Therefore,…” she clicked the next slide:



**To RAP,
Close the GAP**

“So, let me do a quick summary of the key takeaways from ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ to reinforce how.”

1. Data Is Your Hammer & Shield



Notice and Wonder

Go from Macro to Micro

Segment Thinking into Findings, Conclusions, & Implications

S.W.O.T. IT!

2. Deducing Sets Direction



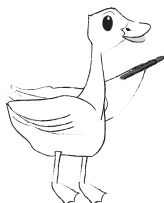
Define the Vision & Ask: *What If?*

Set Objectives with Metrics

Develop the Strategy with a Plan to F.O.C.U.S. organization

Innovate & Differentiate with 7 Sparks of Creative Thinking

3. Writing Requires Structured Thinking



To Write is to Think.

Use ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’
and *Get Your Ducks in a Row*

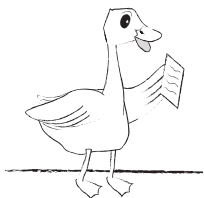
4. Editing is a Craft



Twain-It!

Refine Until it is Crystal Clear,
Concise, and Compelling
Check the 7 C’s
Target One-Page Docs
Bullets vs. Paragraphs
Large Type & Limited Words

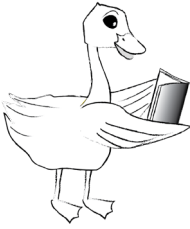
5. Practice, Practice, Practice



Know Your Audience.

They Want to Know “WII-FM”
Know Your Lines
Practice Out Loud
Use Verbal Segues
Ask Questions

6. Present It as a Story



Presentations are Performances.

Leverage Your Voice

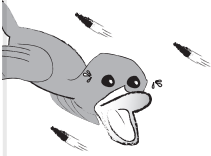
S.Q.A.L. IT

Look in Their Eyes

Highlight Data Points

Keep Audience Focused

7. Don't Drop the Ball



The Devil is in the Details.

Tackle Tips for Project Management

Work Macro to Micro

Create and Don't Miss

Reasonable Timelines

Budget top-down or bottom-up

Use Best Practices

8. Plan to Adapt



Reality Never Matches Plan.

Create Contingency Plans for Positive and Negative Results

Track Metrics

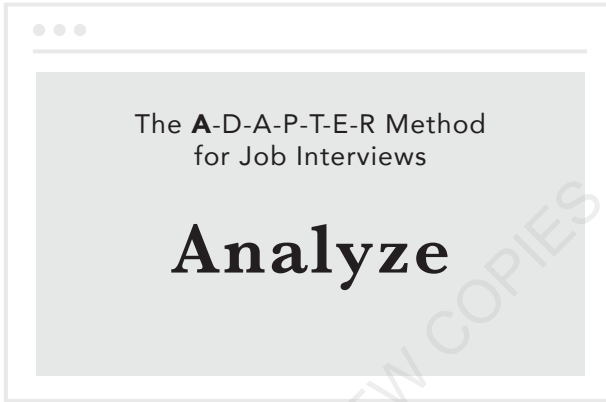
Evaluate Results

Refine

Repeat

The
ADAPTER
Method
for Job
Interviews

“Now I promised you a bonus section,” Connie stated. “Since many of you are about to graduate, I thought I’d share how ‘The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method’ is very helpful to prepare for and communicate better in job interviews. And just like with any project, we start at the beginning.”



“In today’s duckonomy, you may be up against some tough competition. Job websites like InDuck can deliver hundreds of qualified candidates, so like anything else – you need to earn it!”

Connie went through key things to analyze as she expanded on each point of the building slide.

A presentation slide with a light gray background. At the top, there are three small gray circles. Below them, the text reads "Job Interview – Analyze" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the title is a numbered list of six items:

1. Job Description (vs. S.W.O.T. of Your Skills)
2. Website Products/Services/Brands
3. Competitors
4. Key Duckexecutives
5. News Articles
6. S.W.O.T. Analysis of the Company

A faint watermark "FACULTY REVIEW COPIES" is visible diagonally across the slide.

“Start by dissecting the job description, qualifications, and requirements to assess your skill sets and experience versus their parameters on a per-item basis for a full comparison. Develop a S.W.O.T. analysis of your skills vs. the job description to evaluate your potential strengths and areas to address.

“Search for similar jobs at other companies to see if the description, qualifications, and requirements, and if possible, the salary, are the same or different.

“Next, learn about the company, its products, services, brands, categories, competitors – all of it.

“Obviously, check out their website against their competitors on the Duckernet. If relevant, go to their location and search stores or sites that carry their products.

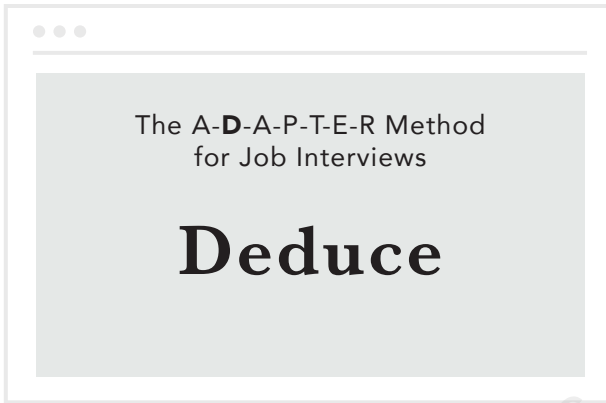
“Learn about key executives and any potential executives you could be meeting via LinkedIn. This includes people with similar positions, or the executive you are replacing. Do you have any mutual connections that you could ask for insight, or better yet, an advocate to push you to the front of the line?

“Do a Google search about the company, brands, executives, and competitors.

“Finally, do your own simple S.W.O.T. analysis of the company for a full perspective on what they may be dealing with or simply need.

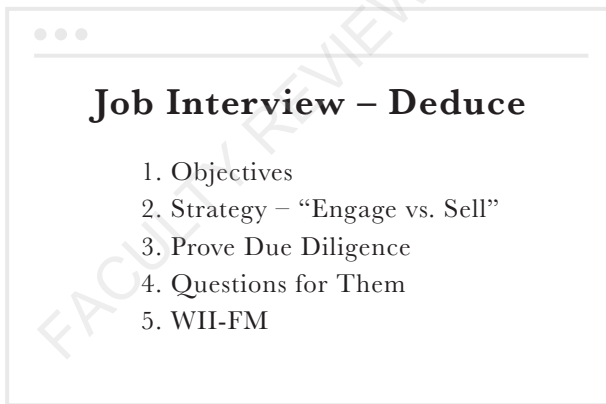
“Bottom line,” she said and paused briefly, “do your homework so you know as much as possible about their business, their vision, their issues, and the job.

“Got it?” Bills nodding. “Great!”



“Okay, let’s see how to deduce what you’ve learned in Analyze. Based on the findings, what are your conclusions?”

Connie, again, elaborated upon each point in the building slide.



“The first thing your analysis impacts is your resume – but we’ll get to that in the Author section. For now, let’s assume that your resume was,” as she emphasized, “amazing, and got you into the small pool of candidates being called for an interview.

“Evaluate your skills and qualifications versus their stated requirements. Are you a perfect fit, or are you a longshot?”

The implications are different based upon your conclusion.

“Assuming you got an interview, set your objective for the interview accordingly. If you’re the perfect fit, you want them to think you’re the number one candidate, and you want to meet other duck executives immediately. Or at least there should be a next step. If you have a chance, you want to stay in the hunt for round two and offset some of your weaknesses.

“Develop a strategy to achieve your objectives. There are different strategies based upon different situations. Regardless, priority number one is...” Connie turned to them and stressed, “**Engage – don’t sell!** Think about your interview like it’s your first day on the job. Rather than selling yourself, start by engaging the interviewer in a discussion about the business or position.”

She continued. “Make them realize that they’d like working with you, and you can handle the job. Outline the perfect fit relative to their priority requirements with your experiences as rationale.

“Where you’re weaker in skill, offset that by being the best in other areas with examples of areas you excel in. Include how those strengths will help in other ways.

“Demonstrate you’ve done your due diligence and discovered findings and ask if some of your initial conclusions make sense. Start macro before getting into details.

“Critically, develop a list of questions for discussion with the interviewer, which is a great way to generate engagement.

“Remember, they are thinking WII-FM. Why should they hire you versus the ten others they are interviewing? Talking about their problems and potential solutions will do a better job of

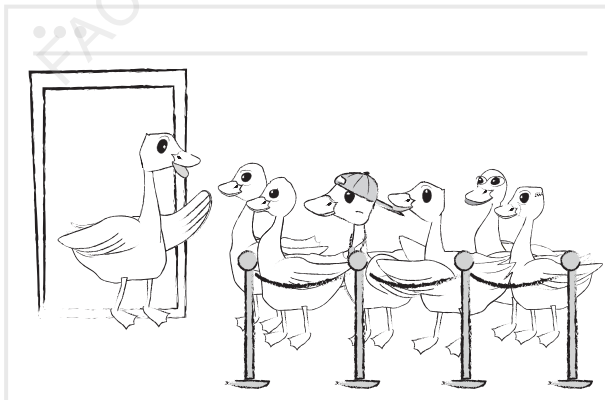
showcasing how you think, communicate, and work with others versus stressing how wonderful you are. It will give them an idea if they would like you on their team.”



“Now let’s get to the resume. Your resume needs to be developed with the 7 C’s. Design it for a quick read.

“This may seem like an odd comparison, but in the first stage of going through hundreds of resumes, they are sorting for who gets in and who doesn’t as if it’s a hot nightclub.”

She clicked to the next slide as the studucks totally got the analogy and quacked out loud.



“Your resume is your only opportunity to see if you look good enough to even get in the door. It needs to be relevant and sterling to get into the interview pile.”

“It should be adaptable, so you can revise it to tailor your specific and relevant experiences and successes to speak to why this company should interview you,” she stressed. “You may also need to revise it slightly for every different job application. The job post provides a checklist of what they’re specifically looking for — check as many boxes as possible.”

“So, let’s go through the key categories of a resume with some tips and tools,” as she went through the following build slide.

...
Job Interview – Author
Resume Structure
1. Objective = Job Title
2. Summary – Key WII-FM Skills
3. Accomplishments
4. Experience – From Most Current
5. Education – Awards
6. References

“After the basics of your contact information, start with your objective. Include it at the top of your resume. Make it brief and identical to the posted job title or position. Think about the selection process at the nightclub door. If you are not showing what they are looking for, you are never going to get in... or make it onto the interview list.

“Next, your brief summary of qualifications or skills. More bullets, less sentences. They are looking for WII-FM, so it

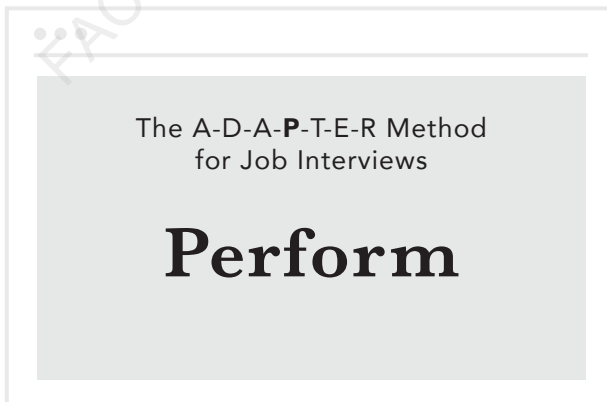
should be brief. Again, where possible, include keywords from their job posting where relevant. These keywords will also help with search engine capture.

“Now, let’s evaluate accomplishments versus experiences – both of which are needed. Typically, it’s what you have accomplished that sets you apart. It’s similar to having objectives with metrics. What benefit or value did the employer realize from your work? This is their evaluative filter — which is why accomplishments come before experiences. Experiences are needed to fill the requirements. Place them in recent chronological order unless one is the most important factor. If so, make that first.

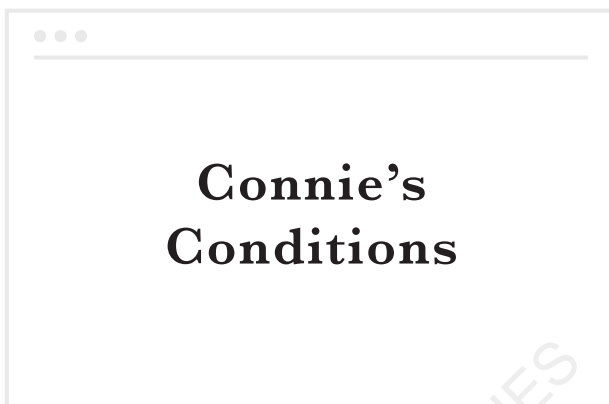
“Education should list school, year, major, and awards or special projects that helps to distinguish you from other candidates.

“References can be effective if they are relevant to the position and from a boss or co-worker. Include it at the end of the resume.

“Finally, in terms of a cover letter or d-mail — make it short, sweet, and enticing to open your resume. Verbose paragraphs are a waste of time with hundreds of applications. A quick look at the resume is all I need for first round of weeding out candidates.”



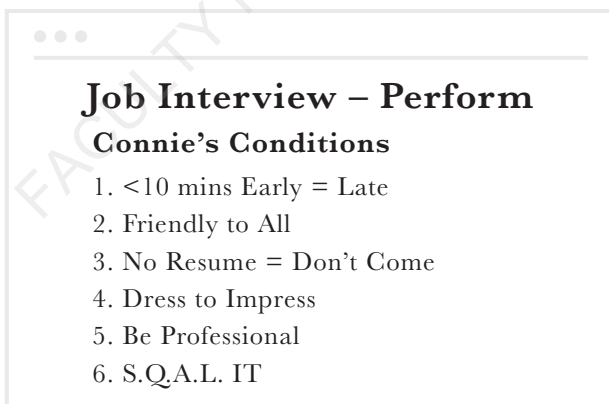
“I have some pet peeves about interviews I call,” Connie stated.



The studucks quacked.

Connie smiled and said, “Yes, I know. I must be getting old. I assure you these are not just important, but they could be the intangibles that get you rejected.”

The studucks stopped quacking at that. They understood.



“If you’re less than ten minutes early, you’re late — Zoom, too. For real issues (accident or a road closure) — alert them immediately and profusely apologize the minute you enter.”

“Everyone you meet is evaluating you — from security guards in the lobby to administrative assistants — be friendly to all.

“And if you don’t bring several copies of your resume — don’t bother showing up.”

“Styles differ by industry and company, but dress to impress.

“Body language shows how much you care. Be attentive, sit up straight, look them in the eye, and smile. In essence – engage, be friendly, and professional.

“Speak clearly; attitude and tonality should be respectful. Remember to S.Q.A.L. IT and don’t interrupt them - it’s rude.”

“Next, you should have the pithy answers to three basic questions,” as she went through the slide.

Job Interview – Perform

Answer 3 Questions

1. Strengths, Weaknesses, Accomplishments?
2. Why Should I Hire You?
3. Questions for me?

“Starting with number one, what are your strengths, weaknesses and major accomplishments? Writing and crafting your resume and preparing for the interview should help you create a pithy response to both strengths and accomplishments. Make them relevant to their business and their needs for the position – the WII-FM.”

“Note that I’ve seen weaknesses trip candidates up. They are important — you need a positive-negative.” Connie saw some bill nods, so she continued, “For example, some people say I’m a perfectionist which depending upon the job could be valuable. But that can also be a bad thing for a strategic planner or creative job. Most importantly have something preconceived with an example of it also being positive.

“Next, why should I hire you? You need to develop and be able to recite your ‘elevator pitch’ — that 90-second ride with points to close the deal focusing on how you benefit them. Remember, they are thinking WII-FM.

“Finally, what questions do you have for me? This is very important! Don’t get into what you are looking for, such as salary or benefits especially in early interviews. Ask them questions about their business, key issues, priorities, the team, the competition, their POV on these. This is your springboard to engage them like it’s your first day on the job.

“Taking quick notes is okay, but don’t forget to keep your eyes on the duckexecutive. Having notes or questions in advance is a plus, but don’t overly rely on them. You need to be able think on your webbed feet.

“Yes, some duckexecutives definitely give stress interviews, or ask you to multiply 25 x 25 in your head to see how you react. Try not to get frazzled. Take your time.

“When ending the interview,” she emphasized, “ask for their business card so you can thank them.”

“Finally, they don’t owe you a job. It’s a competition. You need to earn it.”

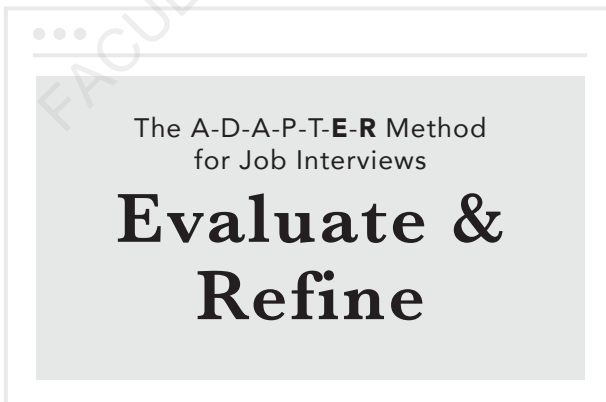


“I view your post-interview thank you d-mail as Tackle.

“Just a few points. First, it’s an absolute must to be sent ideally, that day, or very early the next.

“Send it individually to each person you met citing something relevant to your conversation.

“Include three very brief points: One, thanks and express high interest in the position; two, reinforce rationale why you’re the right candidate; and three, suggest a next-step meeting or call.”



“In the event you are rejected, try to get an answer as to why. You

may be disappointed, upset, or even angry. Regardless, send at least the leading interviewer a thank you note for their consideration. You can also comment that if any other opportunities come up, how you are still interested in working with them.

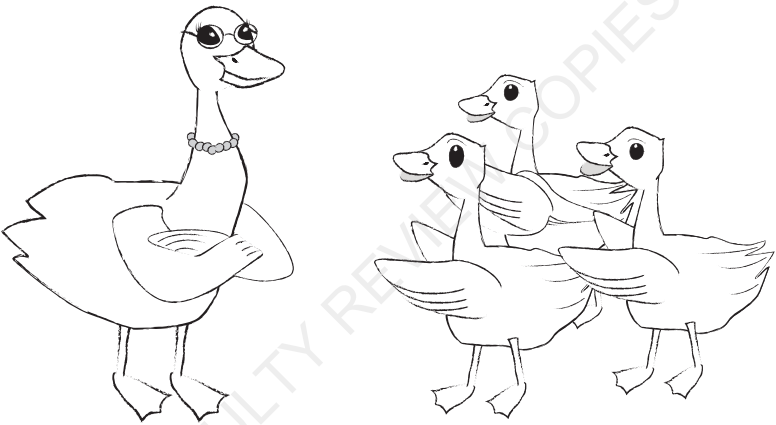
“Remember, it’s a small world and ducks change jobs. Like a brand, you want to make a positive, lasting impact on anyone you come in contact with. You never know, they could be interviewing you again someday.

“If you don’t get a clear reason, you need self-evaluation. Try to remember the interview. Were there any signs that you weren’t doing well and see if you can revise and strengthen your approach for the future.

“However, stay positive, no one gets every job they go for. Don’t fret over it. Go after the next one with the same discipline.”

After she wrapped up her last sentence, Connie went to the center of the floor and said, “So that’s it. Thank you for attending. I’m very grateful to Columbiduck University, the Dean and importantly to you for listening and participating. I hope this was helpful. Now, get your ducks in a row, and...”

**Go Forth and Become
A-D-A-P-T-E-R-S!**



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Acknowledgments

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 everyone 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, was 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 co-founder 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.

Dave Zilko, insightful executive, wildly successful entrepreneur, and a man I am privileged to call my friend. Dave was an outside board member bringing food marketing expertise to Huron Capital to help with their acquisition of Victoria Foods Pasta Sauce company. We were hired to reposition the brand to sell it for a significant multiple in a few years. (It worked and they did). I met Dave in my first board presentation covering

strategic insights we had uncovered. I realized Dave was engrossed in each slide, carefully listening while looking at me the entire time. I gauged the meeting based upon his expressions. He was instrumental in supporting our recommended direction. Soon after he came to NY and presented his business to me. His fluid delivery and simple slides turned a presentation into an engrossing story. I realized why we connected so well. He went on to sell Garden Fresh Gourmet business to Campbell Soup and wrote *Irrational Persistence: Seven Secrets That Turned A Bankrupt Startup Into A \$231,000,000 Business*. But once an entrepreneur always an entrepreneur, Dave has since created Skinny Butcher plant-based poultry flavored protein foods carving out a new niche. Twice I have asked him for help with a testimonial. Once when I started JRM and then for an early review of *Get Your Ducks in a Row* – Book-2: The A-D-A-P-T-E-R Method. Each time he was not just willing but enthusiastic to do so. The effort and thought he put into crafting each one, and the time this busy executive spent reading both books, will forever be some of my proudest and most humbling moments.

Finally, to the rest of the flock:

Frank Carollo, old friend, Grateful Dead concert companion, and to all of us who know him he's always been referred to as "the smartest guy in the class." He's also the only one I knew that created a personal summer reading list when most of us high school students were looking to party. As always, Frank went above and beyond to help providing structural suggestions and detailed editing charts for things we missed despite numerous reads. Getting his input was critical. The favorable review was a feather in my cap.

Katherine Leask, narrator on both audio books. I spent a weekend and listened to 1,100 female voices. When I heard Katherine, I knew immediately she was the one. She provides an intelligent narration with proper gravitas and inflection to keep the book relevant for senior executives, as well as students. But, because she had to read every word, she was an invaluable resource for finding even more small typos. She could have let it go. But because she cares, she spent significant additional hours providing me with all the details and suggestions. I'll have to write a 3rd book just for the pleasure of working with her again.

Gene Willhoft, one of my oldest and closest friends (I was his best man at his wedding), is always interested in what I'm working on next, and we've always been supportive of each other. When he decided to start his media agency, my partners and I gave him a place to start in our offices. I had two smart partners to build MME together, but he built his very successful Absolute Media business all by himself. Incredibly well read and an exceptional critical thinker, I was honored to also get his thoughtful review as an expert in the industry.

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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 second book.