

THE ART OF EXPLANATION

Making Your Ideas, Products, and Services Easier to Understand

LEE LEFEVER

LEE LEFEVER is cofounder of Common Craft, a communications consulting company. He consults with leading brands like Intel, Google, Dropbox and Ford to help them enhance their explanation skill sets. Common Craft has developed an award-winning video explanation series which has now been viewed more than 50 million times and which is used by individuals and companies around the world.

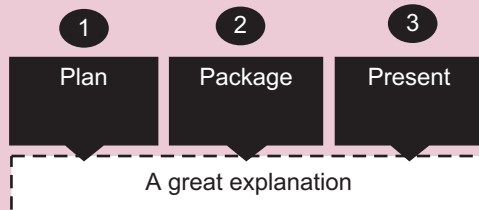
The Web site for this book is at www.artofexplanation.com.

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MAIN IDEA

Explanation – being able to make the facts more clearly understood – is an art form which is well worth mastering. If you can enhance your explanation skills, you'll be able to persuade more people to move in the direction you want them to head. That's got to be good for your career prospects and for your progress in whatever you're trying to achieve.

To create great explanations that work, the three part process you need to use is:



Although we all live in a world full of data and information, facts in and of themselves can be difficult to understand, hard to apply and confusing if stripped of any context. This is why explanations are needed. Explanations make facts understandable and accessible.

"Great explanations often do not come from rigorous research and testing; they come from someone's unique approach to communication. Two people could have profoundly different ways of explaining a single idea and still achieve equal levels of understanding. Like any art form, explanation thrives on being unique and novel; it succeeds when it helps people see ideas from a new perspective. It is a conscious act that depends on creativity more than a specific formula or set of steps. Explanations are packages of ideas that help people see what is already in front of them in a new way. Once explanation becomes a part of your communications toolbox, you'll start to see all the ways you can use it. Explanation represents an amazing opportunity to make your ideas more understandable. If you choose to pursue it, it could change your life for the better."

– Lee LeFever

1. Plan Pages 2 - 3

Pure and simple successful presentations package ideas in ways which lower the cost of understanding so more people can get in on what's being discussed. Put another way, successful explanations always answer the question "Why?" They help people know and understand better the idea at hand and they also lead the listener to act on the information they convey.



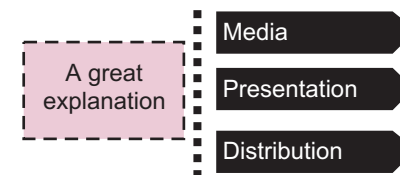
2. Package Pages 4 - 6

Visualize a presentation as being the way you package ideas and solutions into a form which makes them more understandable. You use the elements of your explanation to build confidence in the recipient that they are in fact moving on the scale from "understanding less" to "understanding more."



3. Present Pages 7 - 8

Explanations are not intended to sit on the shelf gathering dust – their real value comes when they're being used and shared. To make your explanation truly effective and productive, you will have to get the blend of media, presentation and distribution just right. The key is to mold your explanation into forms that fit your intended audience's needs like a glove. Achieve that and your explanation will soar.



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