

NeenJames



Shape Your Vision:

USE IDEA SHAPING™

Use Idea Shaping™

HOW CAN YOU WIN ENDLESS CLIENTS? BY GIVING THEM SOMETHING TO SEE.



I was once in a heated debate with my five-year-old neighbor, Donovan, about who was cooler: Superman or Batman. He kept constantly asking me questions. “Neen, cats or dogs?” Cats. “Neen, Obi Wan or Yoda?” Clearly Yoda (insert eyeroll). He started to get more and more frustrated with me as this Q&A session went on. Suddenly, he shifted in his seat, stared right at me, and shouted,

“Neen, you’re not listening to me!”

What? Of course, I was.

He couldn’t stand it one moment longer. Donovan jumped into my lap, grabbed my face in his tiny little hands, and turned it toward him. And with great passion and intensity, he said this:

“NEEN, LISTEN WITH YOUR EYES!”

Even as adults, we listen with our eyes every day. Our world is so incredibly complicated, and if we took in all the information available to us and kept it totally abstract, we’d probably go crazy. We need something tangible, something visual to ground our ideas in reality. If you’ve ever written down a pro-con list to make a tough decision, you’ll know what I mean. Seeing a concept modeled out before your very eyes transforms it into something you know you can manage.

Our job as executives is to create ideas that make people think and act. But if people can’t **SEE** our ideas, how will they ever be driven to share them with the world?

Idea Shaping™ helps the communities around us visualize ideas that matter.

Why Idea Shaping™?

The term “Idea Shaping™” might be new to you, but I bet you’ve run into it before.

Maybe you’ve heard of Stephen Covey’s quadrant model or Simon Sinek’s golden circles. You’ve almost definitely seen the old food pyramid diagram. These models for understanding time management, business, and nutrition make complex ideas catchy and memorable.

What we see is extremely important to our understanding of the world. More than 50 percent of the surface of your brain is devoted to visual processing. You can tell how important visual learning is simply by spending time with babies — before a baby can even talk, they can associate visual stimuli with specific events, study objects in their line of sight, and spot nearby shapes.

To keep it simple, Idea Shaping™ is effective for three reasons.

First, it allows people who would otherwise be totally confused, to see and understand your ideas.

Secondly, it simplifies great ideas into memorable models that rise above the noise.

And thirdly, it helps others easily spread your ideas so that you can make the impact you’ve been desiring your whole life.



Neen James

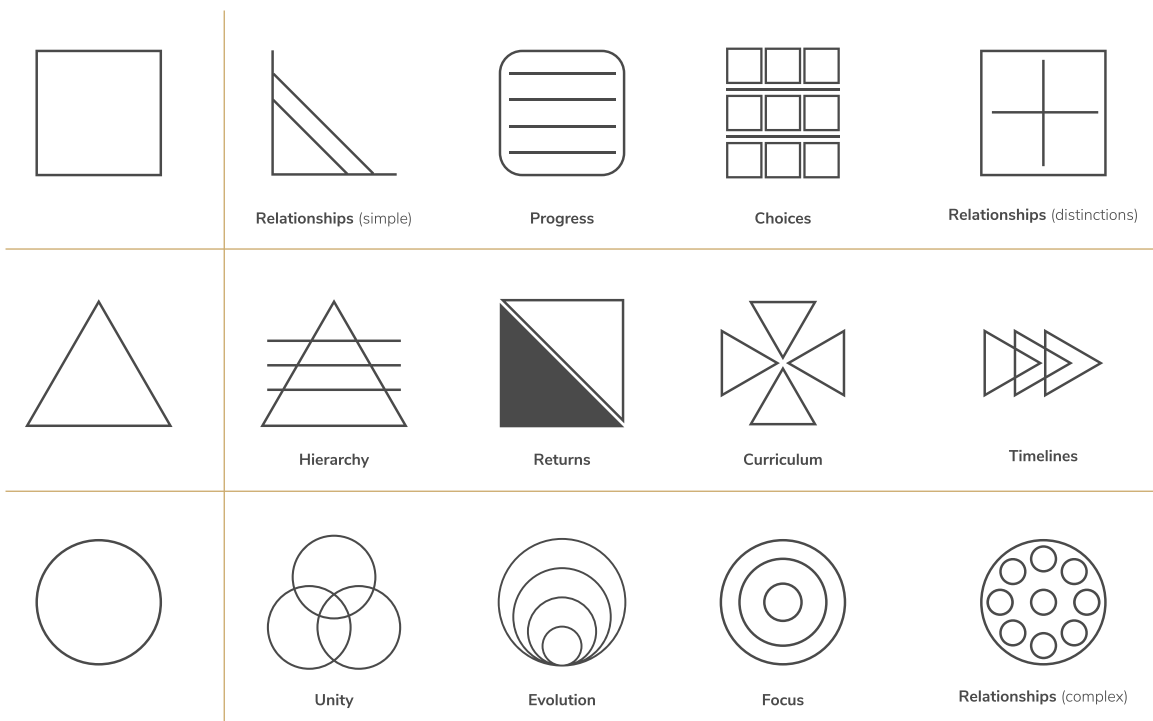
Choose Your Shape

When you're thinking about taking your ideas and putting them in a contextual model, the first thing to consider is the shape itself.

Just like a picture is worth a thousand words, a simple shape can speak volumes.

But when you're using your signature shape for sales operations or for explaining concepts that are crucially important to your business, it can feel like the pressure is on for you to find the perfect model. There's no need to stress. As long as you know the vision you're trying to convey, choosing a shape should be simple and clear.

SO LET'S GET STARTED.



FIRST...

Sit down with your sales force. Not everything needs a shape, and the people who are describing your products or services to potential clients every day will help you decide where to focus your Idea Shaping™ efforts. Ask a few questions of your valuable team on the front lines. What elements of your business are all of your sales reps explaining differently because they don't share one unified understanding? Which ideas take way too long to explain? What concepts are failing to resonate with your clients? Once you understand what it's like in their shoes, you can start to understand which ideas are calling out for a visual model and how those models might look.

SECOND...

Keep it simple. The purpose of your shape is to make the viewer's thought process as straightforward and intuitive as possible. Many people know how much I love creativity, but this might not be the time for innovation. It's my belief that great contextual models are really just squares, circles, or triangles. So move forward with those three options in mind. Remember that you're not making this model to express the full nuance and complexity of your idea — instead, you're giving your audience an easy visual shorthand to grasp what you're saying and move forward with the business at hand.

THIRD...

Decide which shapes to use. It doesn't have to be just one. You can use a square inside a circle, or a triangle with circles around it, or whatever matches your vision. You know your idea better than anyone else, after all! Just make sure to keep your shape targeted, simple, and accessible to the people who really need to understand it.



Pick Your Point

You've decided to embrace Idea Shaping™ and create a visual model for your company's ideas. You've already chosen a shape. Now is a perfect time to determine, what's your point? For your model you might focus on what makes your organization unique or a process you use. A model will showcase the depth of your intellectual property.

What's the meaning you want your audience to take away from your idea? That's the question you be ask yourself at this stage of the process.

FIRST...

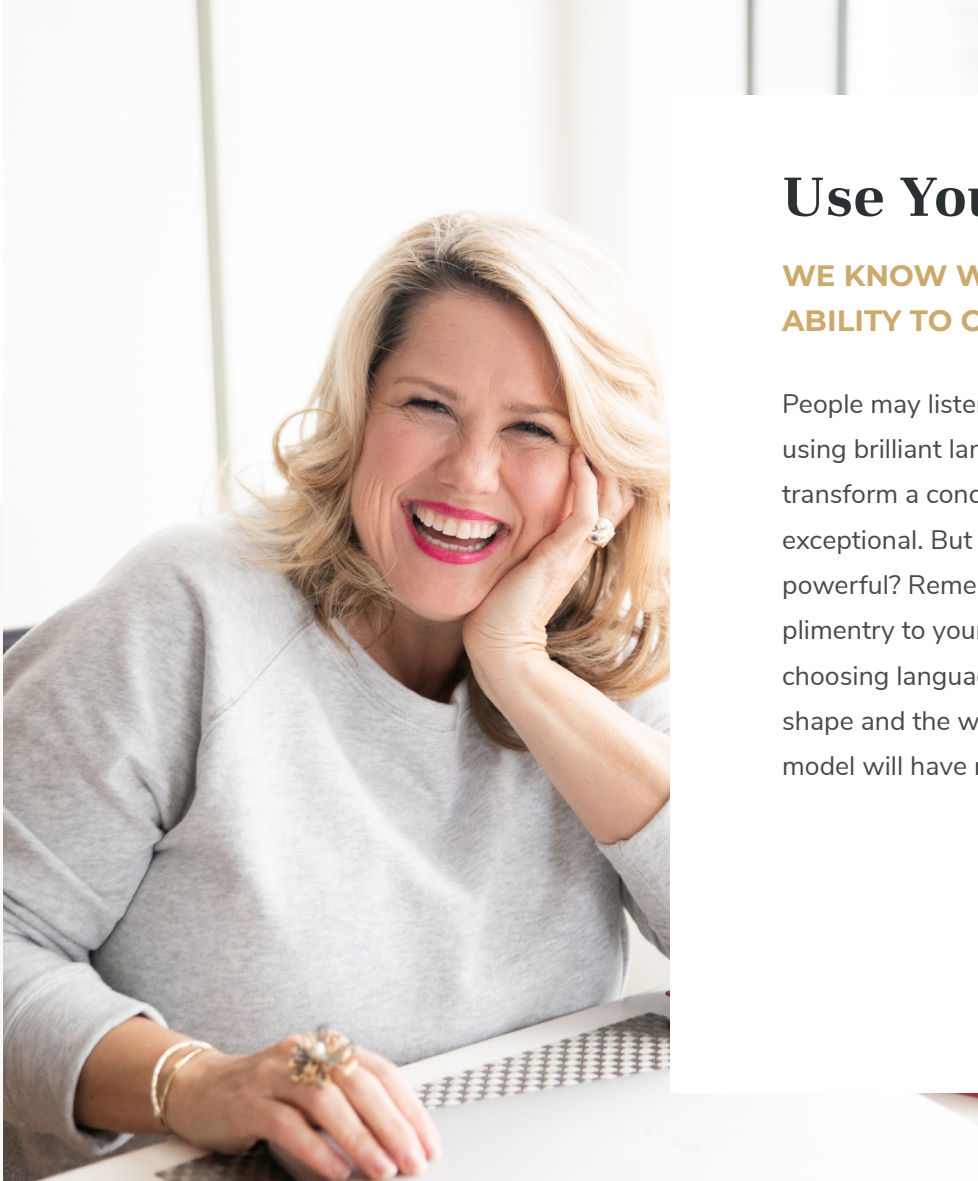
Think about the context of your model. How will it be presented? When will your client see it? Will you share it in a speech, company update, marketing collateral, conference or training? These questions are important – a great contextual model has multiple applications. You might use it for a sales presentation so your client has a deeper sense of your company's purpose and personality before exploring the details. Or you might create it to answer questions about your offerings. Either way, considering the context of your shape from the client or audiences perspective and that will help you define and demonstrate your point. What do they need to hear?

SECOND...

Decide what type of idea you hope to express with your model. You might model a process, a concept, or a value. A process model is great for teaching someone how to do something. Maybe you're trying to explain what it looks like for you to collaborate with other companies. Maybe your model will explain a core concept, where different ideas are intersecting, or a value, like the quality of the services that you deliver for your clients.

THIRD...

Visualize your ideal outcome. What are you hoping to achieve by creating this model? Your Idea Shaping™ will be centered around a clear, tangible goal, whether it has to do with your sales, branding, or something different. Make a distinct point in your model that will move you a step closer to that objective.



Use Your Words

**WE KNOW WORDS HAVE THE
ABILITY TO CHANGE THE WORLD.**

People may listen with their eyes at first, and using brilliant language is a perfect way to transform a conceptual model from good to exceptional. But what kind of language is powerful? Remember that words are complimentary to your model, not a substitute. By choosing language that's compatible with your shape and the work you've already done, your model will have more impact.

FIRST...

Keep in mind with models that less is more. A reason to create a visual model for your idea is because shapes and diagrams often express it better than words. Don't create a text heavy model, ensure the images and shapes in your model guide the viewer into the concept you're sharing.

SECOND....

Use verbs, I remember in school my teachers called them 'action words'. Your model will lead people to action or deepen understanding. Choosing action-oriented words inspire the viewer to do something immediately. If your text doesn't cause people to think differently or ask more questions, revisit the words you use in your model.

THIRD...

Consider your language palette. Sounds fancy, right? It's actually really simple. If I told you that I was going to buy you a shirt and asked if you'd like me to get it in a small, medium, large, or humongous, you'd probably be surprised, right? That's because "humongous" isn't in our everyday language palette when it comes to clothing sizes — instead, we use "extra-large." Our language palette changes depending on our circumstances, just like the shade of red an artist might use on her palette would change depending on what she was painting. Get in touch with your audience. Think about what people in your target industry associate with specific words. Your Idea Shaping™ will be stronger with great word choices.

FOURTH...

Use figurative language. Remember those similes and metaphors they taught you about in grade school? Now is the time to use them. This type of language allows your audience to understand the point you're trying to make with your visual model by helping them connect it to other things with which they're already familiar. For example, people might not immediately get it when you say "establishing connections between diverse populations," but everyone knows what "bridging divides" means.

Put It in Action

With Idea Shaping™, you now have one of the best, simplest, and fastest tools for communicating your message to other people. As a leader, that's where all your power is!

YOUR IDEAS MATTER. IF PEOPLE CAN'T SEE THEM, THEY CAN'T SHARE THEM.

Once you see your shape, stick your point, and share your words, you're going to get the attention you want and need for your ideas, your products, and your organization.

I believe Idea Shaping™ is a tool to change the world, and I need your help to do that. Today is the day to begin crafting your perfect visual model to share with the world.

Just like my little friend Donovan reminded me, we all need to 'listen with our eyes'.

If I can help you or your organization to create a contextual model or share how to do this with your team, contact me today and find out more neen@neenjames.com

You can also find out more about the Idea Shaping™ work we do with companies around the globe here:

neenjames.com/speaking/idea-shaping/



Using Your Words

LANGUAGE PALETTES
KEEP THE LANGUAGE MINIMAL
USE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE
ACTION-ORIENTED



Idea Shaping™



**Neen's team would love to chat with you
about your **media events**.**

You can chat to Neen directly or Sue, her Sales Goddess
would be delighted to help you.

Neen James

8710 W Hillsborough Ave
Suite 114, Tampa, FL 33615

215-230-0835

neen@neenjames.com

