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Fundamental Principles of Experience Design

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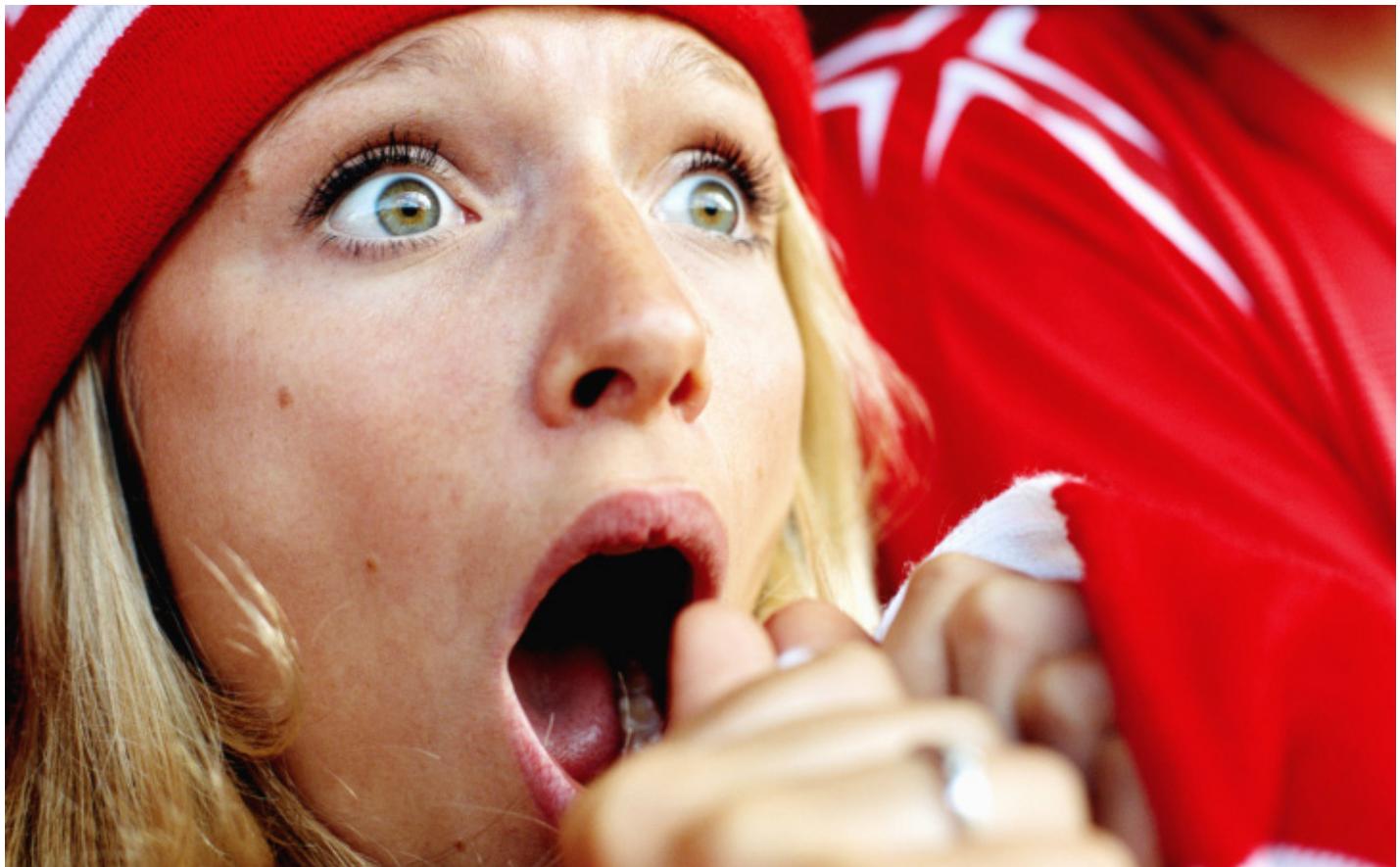
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMPROVE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT BY CREATING **COMPELLING EXPERIENCES.**

Rising customer expectations and innovative technologies are forcing companies to engage and collaborate with customers in new ways.

Customer experience is the interaction between a company and the customer over the entire customer journey. It is measured by the customer's experience during all points of engagement against the customer's expectations. Understanding and mastering Experience Design is a critical component to the creation of compelling experiences.

Experience Design requires a cross-discipline perspective that considers multiple aspects of the brand, business objectives, and competition. The

more consistent and personalized a product or service is across all channels – the better the experience is likely to be.

At LiquidHub we understand the importance of creating compelling customer experiences through innovative engagement solutions. These ten fundamental principles of experience guide our work. We use them to illustrate how and why we developed our UX Canvas and why they are so critical to designing great experiences.

01 / PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCES



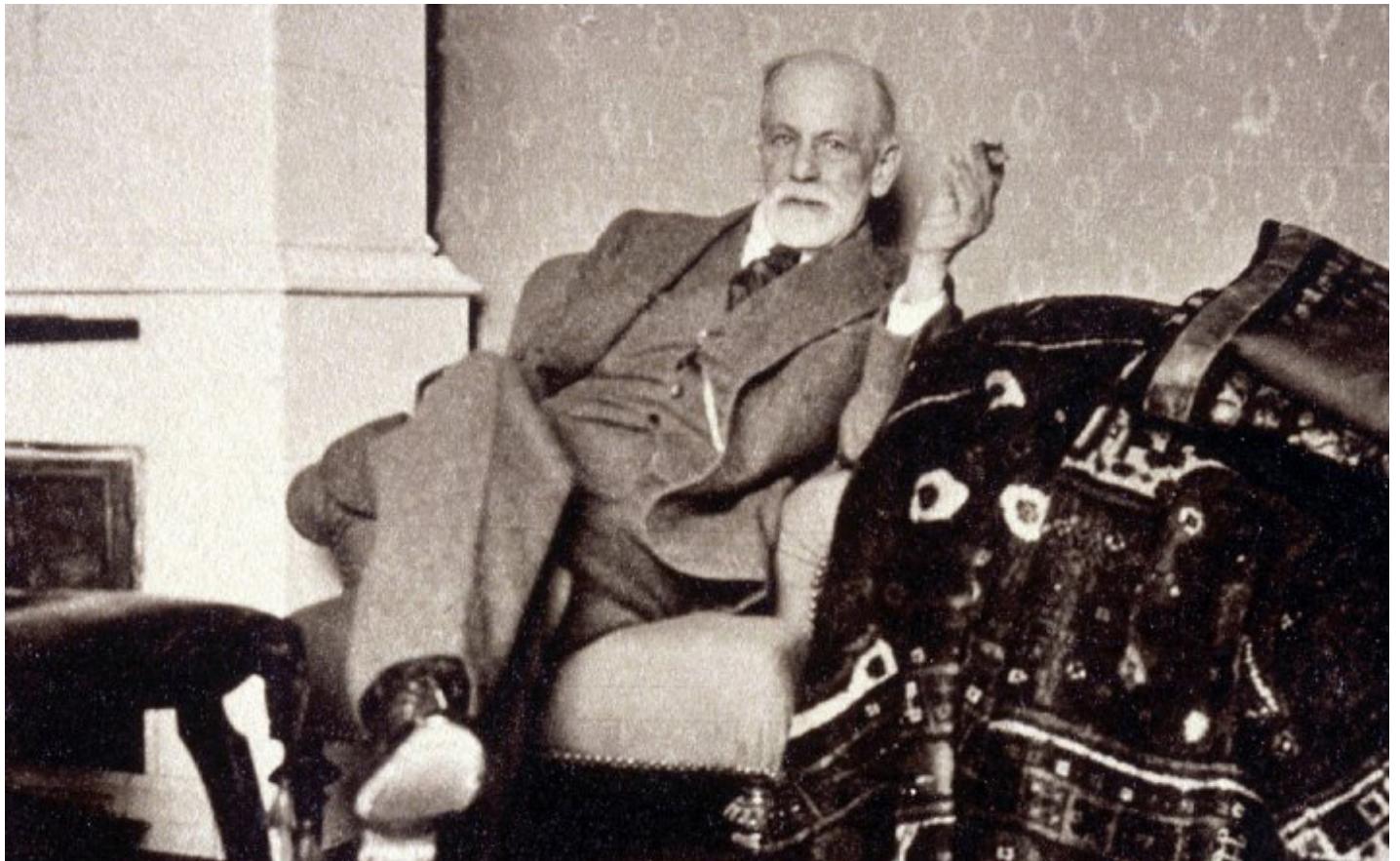
This may seem obvious, but it's worth reiterating and bringing to the forefront of your thinking. When designing for the web, it's easy to be distracted by SEO considerations, page load times and other automated, online algorithms and platforms. If you aren't careful, you'll discover that you are designing for bots and spiders crawling the web rather than for real people, sentient beings looking to accomplish a task, explore content, experience emotion, engage with your brand, etc. SEO may be a constraint that you have to work with, but bots don't have experiences.

People do. Live it. Breathe it. Die by it. Your user/customer/prospect/client is a real person. Always. Of course, this notion extends beyond the web as well. Real people are the ones downloading and using apps, interacting with embedded interfaces, moving from screen to screen over the course of the day. And, it's actual human beings who will express emotion based on the experiences they have – joy, happiness, frustration, satisfaction – whatever that may be. Algorithms are not burdened in this way.

“ Experience Design requires defining what pleasure means in the context of the experience. When pleasure requires fireworks, make sure to **deliver fireworks.** ”



02 / PEOPLE SEEK PLEASURABLE AND REWARDING EXPERIENCES.



- Sigmund Freud

This is a biological imperative. We are programmed at the cellular level to seek pleasure and avoid pain. It's an ingrained survival instinct and it can be observed in the behavior patterns of single celled organisms. It's also an inherent quality of western philosophy that can be traced back to ancient Greece. The Greek philosopher, Epicurus (341 – 270 B.C.) taught that pleasure and pain were directly associated with good and evil and the only reason to ever choose pain over pleasure is because it will ultimately lead to even greater pleasure. Rather importantly, Epicurus also believed that pleasure could be defined as the

absence of pain and suffering, both physical and mental. This is significant because it allows us to calibrate our perception of pleasure not as something that is exclusively or overtly joyful, but as something that spans a spectrum ranging from relatively neutral, tranquil feelings, emotions and sensations through heightened levels of happiness, joy, comfort, and satisfaction, both physically and mentally.

In 1895, noted psychologist, Sigmund Freud, dubbed this inherent biological drive to seek pleasure as "The Pleasure Principle" in his Project for a Scientific

Psychology. In George Ortega's book, Exploring the Illusion of Free Will, he writes "*Human beings are hard-wired to seek pleasure and avoid pain. That's what we do. Through every moment of our lives, we're making decisions based on the prediction that decision is going to result in the greatest pleasure to us, either immediately or in the future, or is going to minimize any kind of pain we might feel. We're completely programmed in this way.*"

These ideas are important because as we design experiences that are heavily task oriented or necessary in the performance of a job, our goals do not have to be to turn everything into an interactive, gamified, animated experience, but rather to design the types of experiences that promote efficiency and that accelerate successful outcomes. Customer service reps want to quickly resolve problems. Surgeons

want tools that will augment their knowledge and skills and help them render their patients healthy again. Even tasks as seemingly mundane as using an ATM machine or pumping gas should be perceived as easy and frictionless for users. This is pleasure. It may not be fancy and it may not elicit fireworks, but that's fine. Fireworks would be inappropriate for these experiences. It's important to note, however that designing a pleasurable and rewarding experience requires defining what that means on a case by case basis. This involves acknowledging and identifying potential areas for friction and negative outcomes and then intentionally designing those issues out of the experience. It also requires defining what pleasure means in the context of the experience. When pleasure requires fireworks, make sure to deliver fireworks.



“ Our entire lives are a series of **cumulative** experiences that influence who we are, how we think, and what we aspire to be. ”



03 / EXPERIENCES CHANGE PEOPLE



There are a myriad of quotes and variations to the idea that as humans, we are the sum total of our experiences. Personally, I like **Maya Angelou's** take on this: *"You are the sum total of everything you've ever seen, heard, eaten, smelled, been told, forgot – it's all there. Everything influences each of us, and because of that I try to make sure that my experiences are positive."* She has nailed the most salient qualities of this concept. It's all there. Every bit of it. **Our entire lives are a series of cumulative experiences that influence who we are, how we think, what we aspire to, etc.** And she also implicates the pursuit of pleasure as an important quality. "As designers, we should embrace this notion fully. We should strive to make all of the experiences we design, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, positive for our users. They will be influenced by what they do, see and hear. It will change the next decision they make. It will become ingrained in their DNA. This is where the idea of heritage comes from, in fact. (That's a different discussion, however, but it is related and worth mentioning.) This is not to imply that every single thing we design has significant, life-altering implications, but we should acknowledge that there are implications and they are cumulative. We can affect behaviors and outcomes. We can change perceptions. There is power in what we do. So, whether you are a fan of Voltaire or Spider Man, or something in between, embrace the idea that with great power does come great responsibility. Affect good things. Change people in nice ways. Design experiences that enable people to be better versions of themselves.

04 / EXPERIENCES ARE DISCRETE

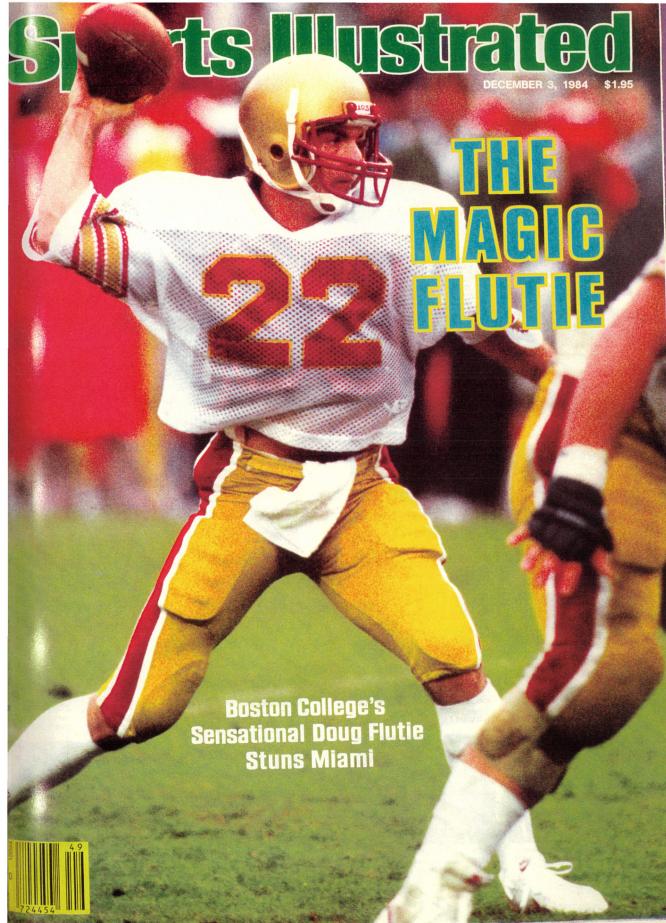


Image URL: <http://www.si.com/vault/1984/12/03/643824/it-wasnt-a-fluke-it-was-a-flutie>

This is why we remember Doug Flutie's "Hail Mary" touchdown pass from 30 years ago, but we likely don't remember the game as a whole – even if we were there..."

This notion has both micro and macro implications. A single button press, a menu drop-down, an animated transition, a page load . . . these are all discrete actions or events. We can think of them as discrete, micro experiences. A user presses a button or clicks on a menu with the expectation that the action will trigger a reaction. This, in turn will lead to the next decision and action. This is actually one of the key tenets in GOMS (goals, operators, methods and selections) modeling and some forms of usability measurement. In this way, experiences can be broken down into very small components or building blocks that come together to form a more holistic, yet still discrete, overall macro experience such as a session or task.

The discrete quality of experiences is also associated with memory which is why you might remember a broken link or an improperly mapped button that created a frustrating or confusing experience. It's also why you might remember booking an airline ticket online three days ago, but not remember a specific key press or button click during the process. We tend to remember discrete outcomes – often with an emotive connotation such as success or frustration. Although experiences unfold over time, which we'll address next, it is very common to remember them as discrete events. This is why we remember Doug Flutie's "Hail Mary" touchdown pass from 30 years ago, but we likely don't remember the game as a whole – even if we were there. The cumulative experience is overshadowed by a discrete moment. Conversely, Ricky Henderson stole 132 bases in 1982. Even he probably doesn't remember all 132 steals. Individually, their significance pales in comparison to his achievement for the season. Micro. Macro.

05 / EXPERIENCES UNFOLD OVER TIME



NEW LOOK for an OLD FRIEND!

FULL-COLOR TELEPHONE: Blends with decor of home or office. Eight colors shown at left. Clear plastic finger wheel on green, beige, brown and ivory models.

TWO-TONE TELEPHONE: Designed to give pleasing contrast of lustrous colored base and jet black handset. Choice of four colors—red, green, gray, ivory.

WALL TELEPHONE: in rich ivory. Mounted on wall, it takes up no working space. The ideal additional telephone for hall, workshop, kitchen.

... PLUS extra conveniences we're making for Bell telephone users!

LIGHT-UP DIAL TELEPHONE: Dial is illuminated as soon as handset is picked up. Easy to dial in dark or dimly lit rooms. Ideal for use in bedrooms, nurseries, sickrooms, hallways—wherever it is desirable to have little or no illumination.

VOLUME CONTROL TELEPHONE: Makes hearing easier in noisy locations. Equipped with control which enables listener to increase sound volume as required for best individual results. Also a boon for many people with impaired hearing.

CUT-OFF SWITCH: Pulling up the special knob will temporarily cut off any extensions on the same line, so no one can overhear elsewhere in home or office. Replacing handset after automatically puts extensions back in service.

BUTTON CONTROL TELEPHONE: Available in one, four or six button models as convenience may require. Many different combinations of outside lines and inter-communication lines are possible to meet particular home or business switching needs.

PLUG-IN TELEPHONE: Plugs into telephone outlets wherever you occasionally want a telephone—for example: patio, sleeping porch, game room, workshop. Permanently installed extensions also available.

TELEPHONE ANSWERING SET: Attached to your telephone, automatically answers calls when you're out, gives callers a message you have recorded and enables them to leave half-minute recorded messages.

We're now manufacturing the extra conveniences shown here — and others, too! They'll add more satisfaction to your use of the telephone. Western Electric's part in Bell telephone service is to make the things that make good service possible. Call or visit your local Bell telephone business office for information as to moderate cost and availability.

 **Western Electric**

Even with experiences linked to discrete actions, events and moments, there is still an important association with time. Some experiences are enhanced because of the time required for them to unfold. Vacations fall into this category. So do video games such as Halo or Assassin's Creed which may require upwards of 40 hours to complete. Omni-channel retail experiences unfold over time, across devices and locations. Learning new skills – and software – requires time, as does the transition from beginner to

expert. It is often the emotional quality of how time is spent engaged in an activity that is most valued about an experience. Similarly, some digital experiences such as shopping on Amazon, navigating with Waze and streaming video content on Netflix become better over time due to the algorithms that track our actions and decisions in order to make the experiences more personal and relevant for us. Time is valuable and we all want to feel as though we are spending it wisely. We want to be rewarded for our time.

“ Consider applying **emotional qualities** of experiences strategically to evoke emotion. This will increase the likelihood that our experiences will resonate and be memorable. **”**



06 / EXPERIENCES ARE MEMORABLE



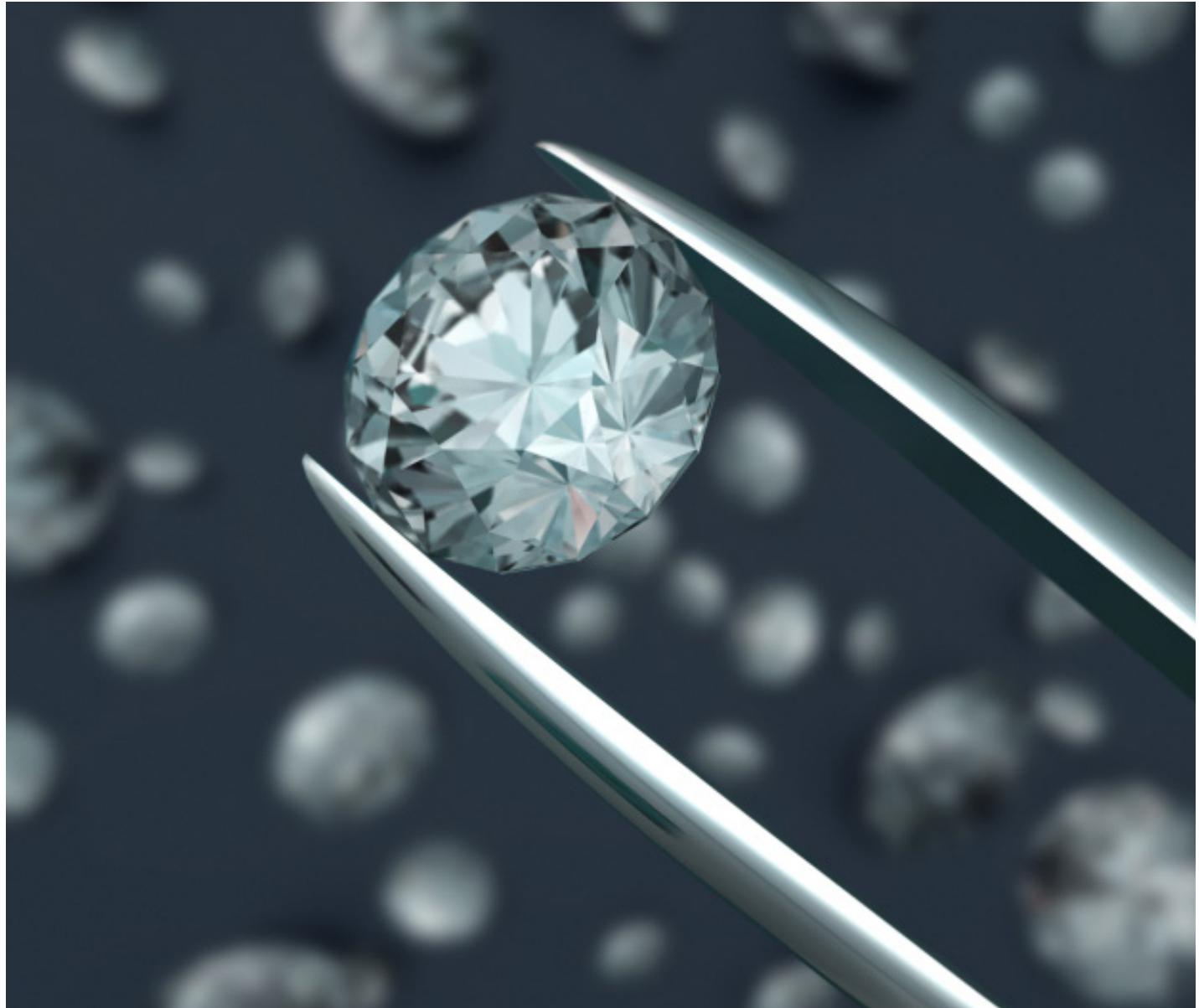
From a scientific standpoint, memory – and whether or not something is memorable – is related to the electrical rhythms and patterns in the hippocampus area of the brain. When a person is learning or experiencing novel things, the theta rhythms are particularly strong, a key indicator that the person is likely to remember the experience. This is interesting information, but it's not very actionable for us as designers.

Christof Koch, President and Chief Science Officer of the Allan Institute of Brain Science and an adviser to Scientific American, has written extensively on the subject of memory and what makes things memorable. He peels away some of the scientific mystery to making things memorable by saying “that many factors play a role in determining what people remember, among them how much attention the person is paying, how novel and interesting the experience is and the kinds of emotions that are evoked.” This is very useful and helpful information for those of

us designing experiences. When we design with intentionality and we make our experiences interesting and novel, they are much more likely to be memorable. Further, when we consider the emotional qualities of experiences and we apply these qualities strategically to evoke emotion, we increase the likelihood that our experiences will resonate and be memorable. People enjoy feeling successful, happy, socially connected, confident and competent and we should always strive to deliver experiences that evoke these types of emotions. Remember, one of the other principles of experience is that people seek pleasurable and rewarding experiences. It's wired into our DNA.

Anger and frustration are also memorable emotions, so this cuts both ways. When we neglect details or send users into error cycles or cul-de-sac experiences with no discernible resolution, the experiences are, indeed, memorable, but for the wrong reasons. This is important to keep in mind.

“ The difference is in the details.
How do you **differentiate** your
product or service? ”



07 / THE MAGIC OF THE EXPERIENCE IS OFTEN IN THE NUANCE

Indeed, it is. Attention paid to small details delivers big rewards and has great impact. Walt Disney knew this. Ritz Carlton Hotels knows this. Apple knows it. So does Neiman Marcus. And Harley Davidson. In fact, there are a litany of examples of companies devoting considerable time and attention to small, nuanced details – and books have been written on this subject.

In 2013, Dan Saffer published a great little book called *Microinteractions* that focused on the magic of small, thoughtful interactions in the digital world. He discusses everything from AOL's "You've got mail" announcement to Facebook's "Like". It's well worth reading.

For a long time, automakers have embraced this principle in a myriad of ways. Automakers work hard to make cars more appealing and more experiential – above and beyond the styling and the horsepower. They design and implement small details all the time. Think about rain sensing windshield wipers, keyless entry systems that automatically unlock the car as you approach, the little chirping noise that tells you the car is locked as you walk away, automated parallel parking systems, even the engine noise. Yes, the engine noise:

"The engine growl in some of America's best-selling cars and trucks is actually a finely tuned bit of lip-syncing, boosted through special pipes or digitally faked altogether. And it's driving car enthusiasts insane. Fake engine noise has become one of the auto industry's dirty little secrets, with automakers from BMW to Volkswagen turning to a sound-boosting bag of tricks. Without them, today's more fuel-efficient engines would sound



far quieter and, automakers worry, seemingly less powerful, potentially pushing buyers away.”

There is a lot of backlash from consumers about fake engine noise, but the fact is, we expect cars to sound a certain way and for the engine to provide audible feedback when we accelerate or decelerate. More to the point, we expect certain kinds of cars to sound a certain way. An Italian sports car should not sound like a pickup truck or a luxury sedan. An engine that is running smoothly will not sound like an engine with

a bad spark plug. We've learned these lessons over time – and they affect our expectations of the vehicle which leads us to our next principle of experience:

“God is in the details.”

— Ludwig Mies van der Rohe



“ Our previous experiences shape us and prime us for new experiences – **raising the bar** of customer expectations. ”



08 / PRIOR EXPERIENCES SET THE CONTEXT FOR NEW EXPERIENCES



Whenever an experience seems intuitive – and that's the word that is most often used – it is because our brains recognize recurring patterns (and situations) and it is these patterns that bring a sense of familiarity to us that guides our actions and expectations. This is really the basic premise behind intuition as described by CUNY philosophy professor Massimo Pigliucci in *Answers for Aristotle: How Science and Philosophy Can Lead Us to A More Meaningful Life*. Pigliucci says "intuitions get better with practice – especially with a lot of practice – because at bottom, intuition is about

the brain's ability to pick up certain recurring patterns; the more we are exposed to a particular domain of activity, the more familiar we become with the relevant patterns . . . and the faster our brains generate heuristic solutions to the problem we happen to be facing within that domain." Additionally, as we get better at recognizing patterns, we are able to transfer this knowledge and skill beyond a single domain in order to recognize similar patterns in other domains and contexts. In essence, our previous experiences shape us and prime us for new experiences.

09 / BRAND EXPERIENCES SHOULD ALWAYS BE **DESIGNED**



Earlier, we mentioned Walt Disney as an example of a leader/brand/company that truly embraces the magic that is in the detail and nuance of the experience. This analogy can be extended from smallest detail in the amusement parks and hotels to the overall brand experience with each and every touchpoint – including all customer-staff interactions. Walt Disney's philosophy was "You don't build it for yourself. You know what the people want and you build it for them." This has been the guiding philosophy from the beginning and Disney (the company) has spent decades perfecting their approach, teaching their staff to anticipate needs and meticulously designing everything associated with the brand. It's the right approach and it's how we should all be thinking about our work and the things we design and create.

“ Our jobs as designers is to not only represent the user, but also to **balance** the user needs with the business and technology requirements. ”



10 / EXPERIENCES BALANCE EMOTIONAL WITH FUNCTIONAL ATTRIBUTES



Thus far, the previous nine principles of experience design have all been tethered to the emotional and psychological qualities of our users, the people who engage with and experience the things we design. We believe it is paramount to keep users at the center of our thinking, but we also need to balance this with business goals and technology constraints. Emotional qualities can be measured in a number of ways and sentiment analysis algorithms are improving continuously, but this is still a softer science and it's not the only way to measure the quality of an

experience. Click-through rates, customer acquisition, basket size, visit frequency, purchase frequency, time on site, and a multitude of other definitive measures should still be considered and accommodated in the design. Our jobs as designers is to not only represent the user, but also to balance the user needs with the business and technology requirements of the experience. There are always three players in the game and we can't lose sight of that.



CONCLUSION

Taken as a whole, the 10 principles of experience design represent our approach, our thinking and our philosophy for designing great experiences. We believe these 10 principles can be universally applied to experiences whether they are websites, apps, products, environments or some combination of these things. We believe our mandate is to be as thoughtful as possible when we design experiences, to consider the emotional qualities we want to engender and to nurture our users throughout the experience. We hope our 10 principles of experience will influence your design approach as well. And we hope they will help you design amazing experiences!

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