



NEWGROUND



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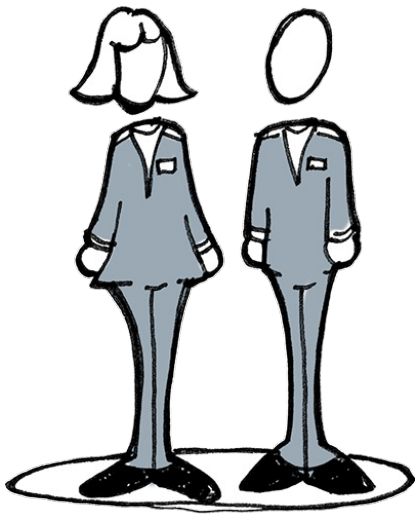
March 6, 2018

Brand promise and the signature moment

Remember the last time you went to your favorite service business. Sometime during the engagement, there was that one thing they did that other companies like them don't do. It's that moment that shows you they care about you and you are a special customer to them. It may be as simple as a handshake and a sincere smile of thanks or some small token that is unique to them—this is that signature moment. An action that is not necessary to the service provided yet adds that personal touch that goes just above just doing the service.

Signature Moments Start with Looking at Your Marketing Messages

In an earlier post on Signature Moments, a few examples were given from various industries as well as from banking. The challenge is how to make the signature moment unique to your institution. There are multiple approaches in the design process, yet a simple method to start with is looking to your marketing messages. You know, those words that tell your customers what you promise.



SERVING

A great example is Ritz-Carlton's "*We are ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen.*" The promise that is communicated is that you will be served by staff that are polite, respectable, and gracious. It is the expectation of "white glove" level of service. An expectation that continues throughout your stay and is completed by the final signature moment when the registration staff member serves you a piece of fine chocolate on a tray with your statement. This is a signature moment that is uniquely Ritz-Carlton.



To begin creating your own signature moment, here are a few simple steps you can try.

The Brand Promise

Take a look at your brand promise or your brand tagline. Write it down separately on a blank sheet of paper. Read it out loud. What does it actually promise your customers that your institution will do for them? What is the expectation you are creating in your customer's mind?

Promise to Performance

Grab a highlighter marker and highlight the most important action word in the statement and the related adjective, if present. What is the action that you promise the customer that your staff will perform for them? Let's say your institution is a leader in lending and your message is "We make loans simpler." The key action here is 'make,' and the adjective or modifier is 'simpler.'

Now expand the idea of 'making something simpler.' Look at the whole loan process from the minute a customer enters to the moment they leave. What else can you make simpler—or streamline—to remove the burden from the customer during their visit or what else can you do that conveys 'making and simpler' while they are there? Maybe even when the customer is exiting the lobby.

**MAKING
IT
SIMPLER**

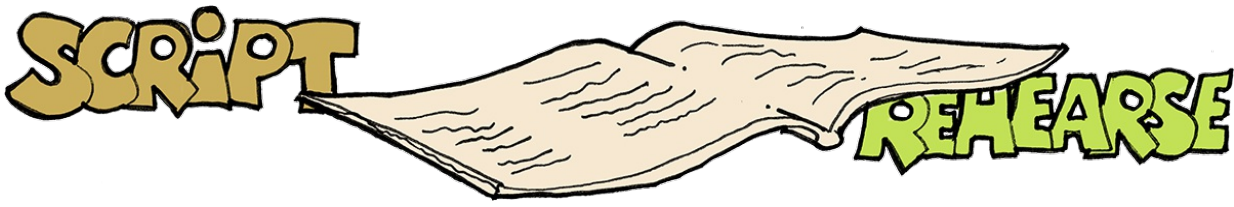


One way to reinterpret this idea of 'making something simpler' is by simply walking the customer to the door and opening it for them. If it is inclement weather, staff can use an umbrella and walk the customer out to their car. This is one of the best times to create that signature moment.

For Ritz-Carlton, 'serving' is the key action and 'ladies and gentlemen' is the modifier. The final time their staff is actually serving a visitor is at the moment of check out when the guest is about to leave. The signature moment of the chocolate on the tray becomes the last impression of the promise made.

Script and Rehearse

So, now you have your idea of your signature moment. It supports your brand message and you know that no other institution has created something similar. Don't just throw it out to your team to do it. It must be scripted and rehearsed. It's important to remember that the signature moment is a living extension of your brand promise.



Scripting and controlling every aspect of the signature moment can help eliminate interpretation by staff. Interpretation leads to modification which inevitably takes from the key message and purpose. A signature moment should be managed just like your brand and brand messages. Don't leave anything to chance or adaptation.

To avoid adaptation in the field or staff relaxing on performing the signature moment, it is best to rehearse repeatedly on how and when the signature moment(s) will occur. Rehearsals are key to consistent performance. Signature Moment rehearsal should be part of any training program, or regular reinforcement meetings, to ensure proper delivery. It also is essential for management to perform the same signature moment for their staff as well.

Things to Avoid

Signature moments can be positive and lasting reminders to a customer about your business and your brand promise. A well-orchestrated and performed signature moment is also a very powerful brand tool. To be believable, it must compliment your brand promise and message because it is a direct reflection of your institution, your staff, and the brand you have established.

It is also best to avoid creating something as merely an oddity or marketing stunt. These types of events are usually short-lived, offer no true brand value to the institution, and can be perceived as negatively—or worse—a sales ploy to the customer.

About Kevin Dulle, CEEE

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Kevin M. Dulle, Certified Experience Economy Expert (CEEE), is Director of the Experience Innovations Strategy Team at NewGround, an experiential design build firm. He has spent over

25 years serving the financial industry with strategic planning, visual thinking, and experiential business development. With visual translations and graphic thinking techniques, Kevin guides clients in discovering unique strategic solutions, develop long-term planning options and organize complex concepts into cohesive strategies.