

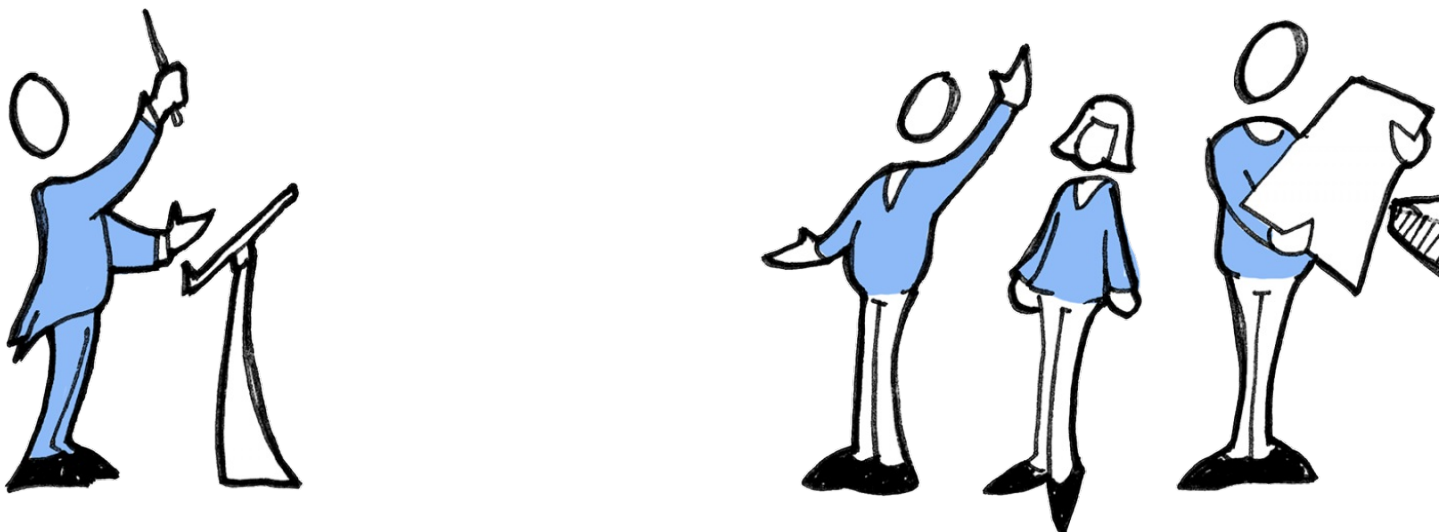


Creating signature moments in banking

Consider the key element of every well-designed and staged customer experience: the *signature moment*.

This is an event that transforms a consumer into a committed customer by making that individual feel personally connected to the brand. At their best, signature moments are uniquely orchestrated by the company and performed by the staff. They are inherently part of the brand and establish a crucial part of the experience. The downside is that, as all things tend to go, time and technology can impact signature moments and degrade them to functions.

Let's talk about how they work—and what you can do to make the most of them.



If you ever walked into a Starbucks—any Starbucks, about 20 years ago—you would have experienced a classic performance that included three key moments that were uniquely Starbucks.

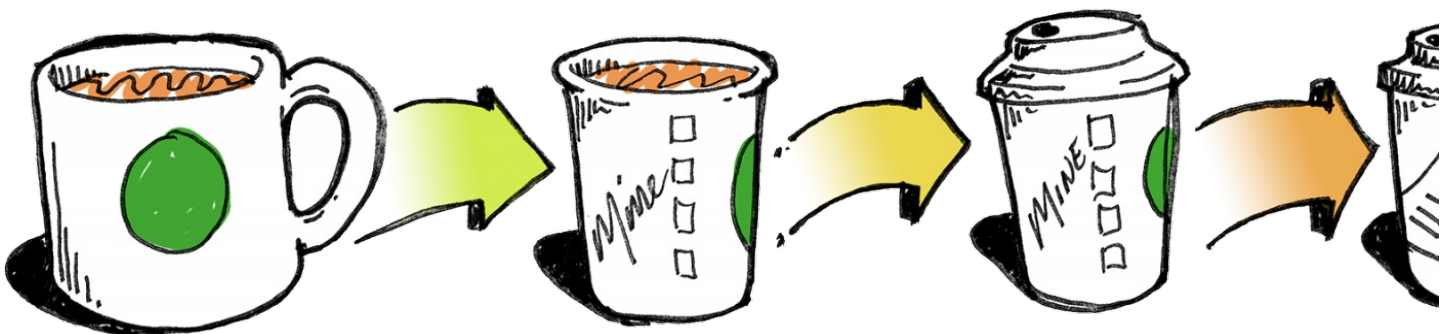
1. The first came as a statement at the counter, “What may I start for you?” This was the moment that let you know that your personal Starbucks coffee experience has begun. By asking what they can start for you, they communicated that it is an engagement initiated by permission: *may I*. Next, you were signaled that the process was just beginning with the words *can start*. And finally, the personalization, *for you*.

2. Next came the second moment uniquely attributed to Starbucks—the writing of your name on the cup and the marking of the ingredient mix. Another cue that your drink was personal and customized for you. You watched as your cup moved down the production line.

3. As you watched the process—or performance—of the barista, there was a bit of excitement if you were new to this coffee making experience. You watched as the ingredients were blended to your specifications. Then the classic finish of the topping, which was artistically completed with some pattern as a completion of the making experience. All this staged performance made key signature moments for Starbucks.

Enter technology and efficiency. As popularity grew so did the need for efficiency. Away went the signature finish to the foam top. No longer could you get your caffeine in ceramic mugs, only paper. Also, as fast as the coffee was completed, on went the lid, giving no time to add that artistic flair, synonymous with a true barista.

Then, mobile technology added even greater need for accuracy and efficiency. Customers now could forego the in-house experience and just get the customized goods in a click of an app. This process led to printing names and mixes on a label that was then slapped onto the side of the cup. This was the second signature moment lost to technology and efficiency.



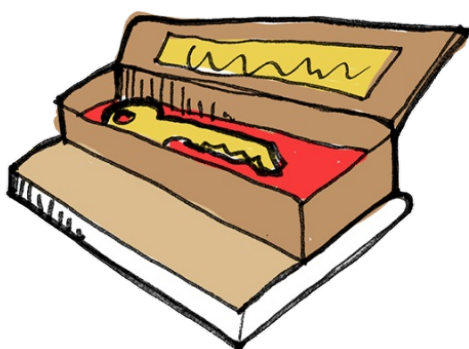
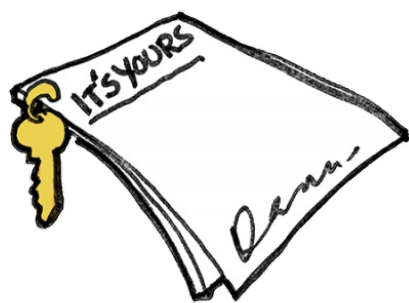
And what about the initiating signature moment? Well, for the mobile customer, gone forever. Only the walk-in or drive-up customer gets in the line, usually. Speed, efficiency and accuracy has killed more than half the coffee experience at Starbucks. The whole of Starbucks has become commoditized in the pursuit of price and time. No longer is Starbucks time well spent, but time well saved.

Because of these actions, Starbucks appears to be shifting to a service economy model quickly. For the banking community, signature moments can help bring a sense of personalization to the branch engagement.

By creating signature moments that are uniquely your brand, your institution can engage customers and enhance the relationship. Another advantage of having live in-branch signature moments is that they only happen when customers are physically there.

Look at the in-branch visit. What is the journey the customer takes while visiting? Where along the journey can you stage small signature moments with the customer? How can you customize their visit in a systematic way that complements your brand?

A specialist in car loans, for example, could gather together the paperwork, not by stapling it, but by hole-punching the papers and using a new key ring with the bank's logo tag to hold them together.



If your bank is known for its mortgages, maybe the paperwork could be gathered up into a folder that is in the shape of a key and has the applicant's name embossed on the key. This

simple action signifies that the relationship is important and that the process was personalized to the customer.

Whatever your bank does well or is the best at, leverage that into a signature moment to add personalization and customization to any engagement with the customer. The greater the personal engagement, the greater perceived value. Efficiency and accuracy are critical, but should not take center stage to the interaction and relationship or you begin commoditizing your offering and begin ceasing to be seen as unique.

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.