

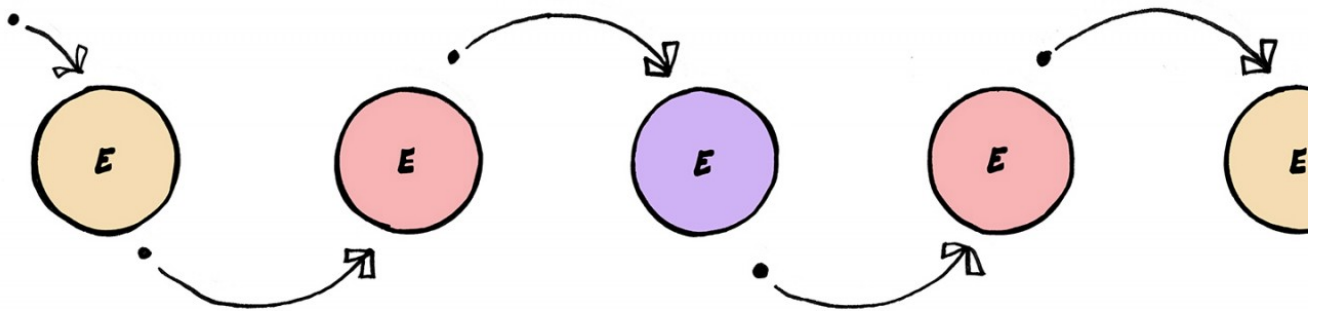


JENN SPILLERS

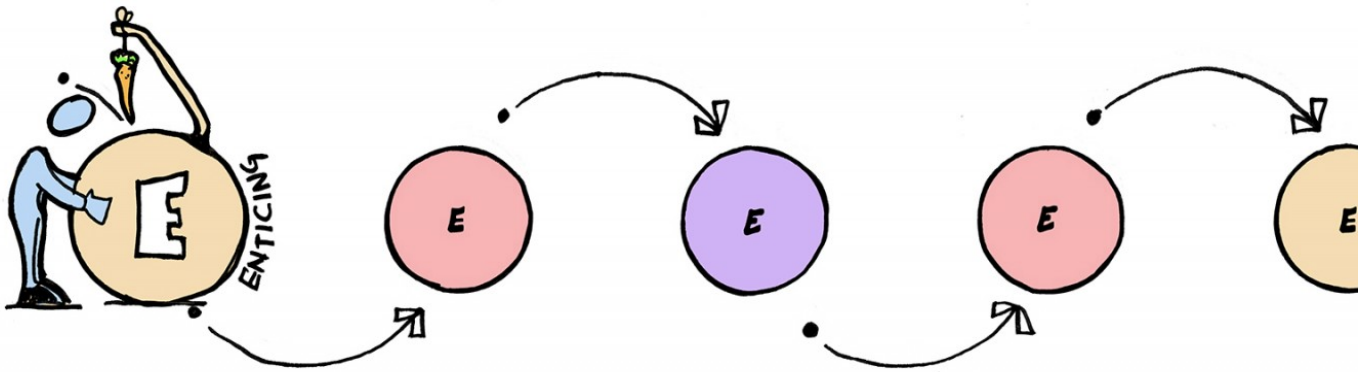
June 19, 2017

Experience economy | go with the flow

There's a lot conversation from the design world about the customer journey. Each design firm has its own version of how customers travel through the place, be it physical or digital. What many have in common is the attracting of customers. In the physical world, they label the outside environment of the place as *Attract*. They explain, "The design must draw people inside in order for them to do business with you."

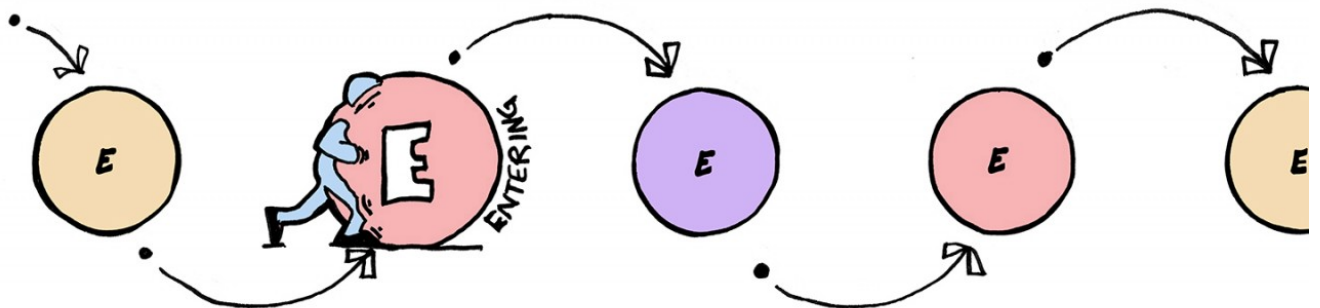


However, if your institution is looking for ways to participate in the emerging experience economy, you'll want to begin staging experiences for customers. And you should start by using a different design criteria terminology—one that better aligns with experiences. Instead of trying to *attract* customers, think in terms of *enticing* them. Enticing suggests that you're providing the customer with a call to action—rather than merely attempting to stand out from the masses and be noticed.



In the economy of experiences, enticing is the act of luring a customer in. It speaks to something special, unique, even other-worldly. Enticing is also the first phase of the flow of an experience. It is the cue in the outside world to beckon the customer inside and teases what awaits inside.

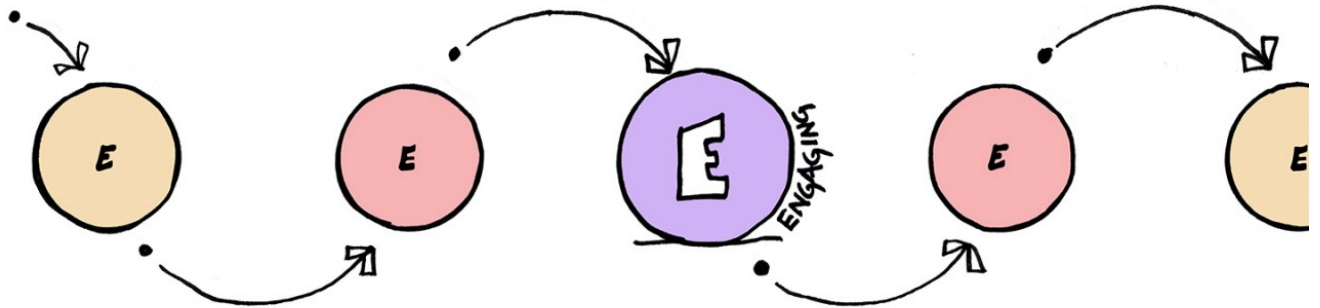
Take the Build-A-Bear Workshop stores. The façade around the entrance way is their enticing zone, which allows them to begin telling the story of customized and personalized teddy bear creation. It speaks to customers, telling them that “here is where your dream bear becomes real.” It is enticing them to come and build a bear of their own.



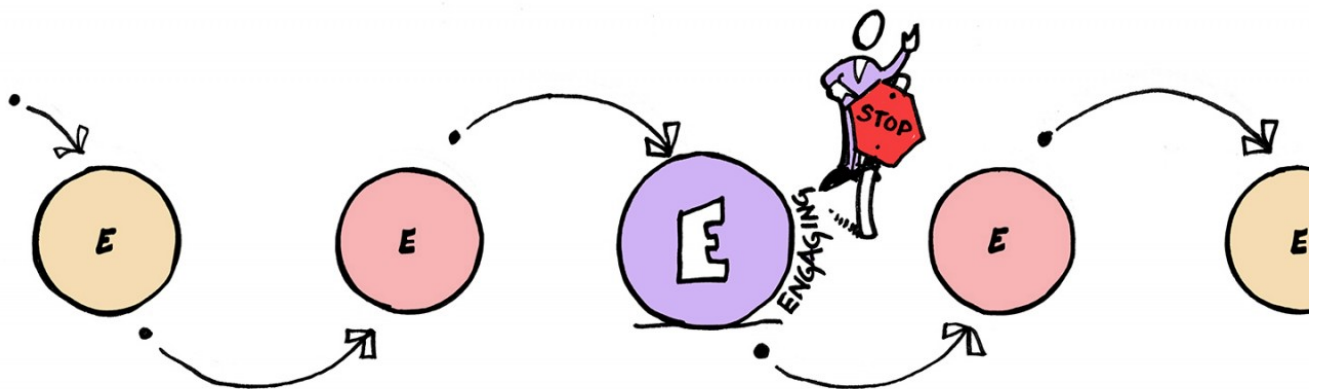
Following along the flow of the experience, the customer transitions through the second phase—or liminal space—called *entering*. It may not sound as exciting as enticing, yet it is as critical as any other phase in the flow of an experience. It is the phase—be it a distance or span of time—that guides customers into the world you’ve created. It transitions them from the outside and into your place. The entering is one of the most overlooked phases in business. It is commonly treated as merely the doorway in or out of your business and yet, to the experience stager, it can be key to establishing the experience. Imagine if Disneyland or Disneyworld didn’t have its deep gates and Main Street to establish its world. How believable would it be as the Magic Kingdom?

Entering is also where the stager begins changing the environment through the use of the five

senses. Sound and visual cues are strong ways to begin shifting a customer's perception from the outer world to that of your business and the experience. As with enticing—which establishes the promise—the entering begins to shape the promise. In this phase, it is crucial that it must reflect the brand and the experience being staged.

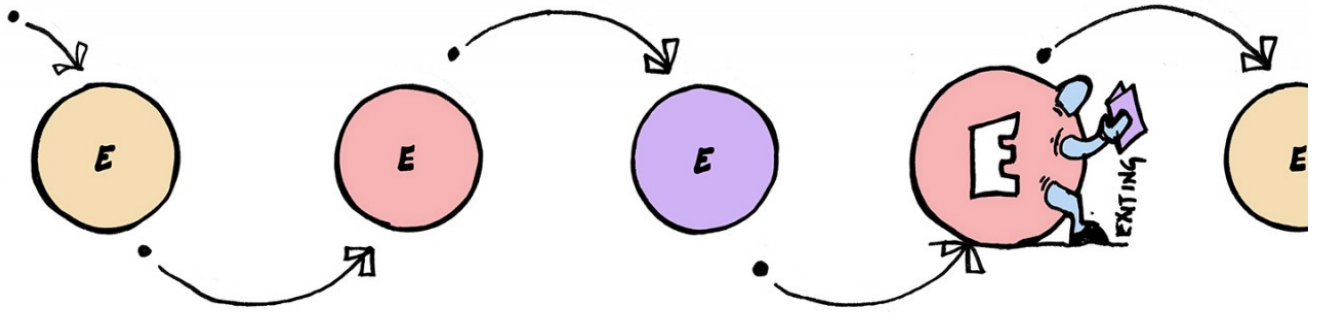


Once the customer has entered, the *engaging* phase of an experience begins. Engaging is as it is named, the point in which the customer engages with the business, brand, and staff—and where the promise established in the enticing phase begins to be fulfilled.



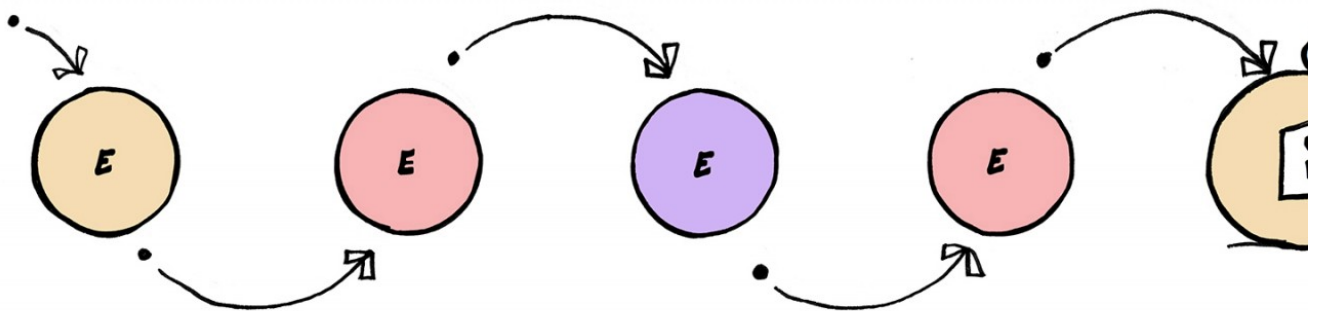
At this point, most services or goods providers see this as the end of the customer journey. Yet in the experience economy, the engaging phase is followed by the *exiting* phase. Exiting—like entering—is usually an overlooked phase of the experience. Although it's not as exciting as the *engaging* phase, **exiting is critical to reinforcing the memories created during the engaging phase.** Here the business has the opportunity to provide a token of the experience.

In many museums, for example, this phase is represented by the gift shop or souvenir shop that's well located for visitors as they are exiting the museum. It can even serve as a moment when they take photos with others in front of the marquee or display. It is a place that offers the opportunity to create a reminder of the engagement.



For banking, the exiting could be as simple as a handshake and a branded folder holding documents of a transaction. Or it could be the nice pen used to sign a loan. This phase is another liminal space, like that of entering. It is the transitional segment along the experience journey, leading from the inner world of your business back out to the outer world.

Finally, the last phase of an experience is that of *extending*. It is that point in which the engagement is extended beyond the place. Take Starbucks as an example. As a customer leaves the café, they typically carry the drink in a branded cup beyond the business out into the public view. Some customers even purchase Starbucks travel mugs as memorabilia of the experience. In banking, it can be a follow-up piece sent later that is personalized for the customer around the type of engagement they had—or a handwritten thank you note when adding a new product or service.



It is important to understand that the extending phase then becomes the enticing phase for the return visit. It can also become a means for customers to share their experience with others. It can be used to help transform customers into brand ambassadors and entice others to experience what is offered.

Here, a note of caution.

Working through the flow of the experience is not about a checklist of things to do along the

way or build as needed. A clear strategy needs to exist—one that incorporates all five phases of an experience harmoniously. Design and develop the complete flow of the experience before engaging customers to the experience that will be staged.

About Kevin M. Dulle

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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.