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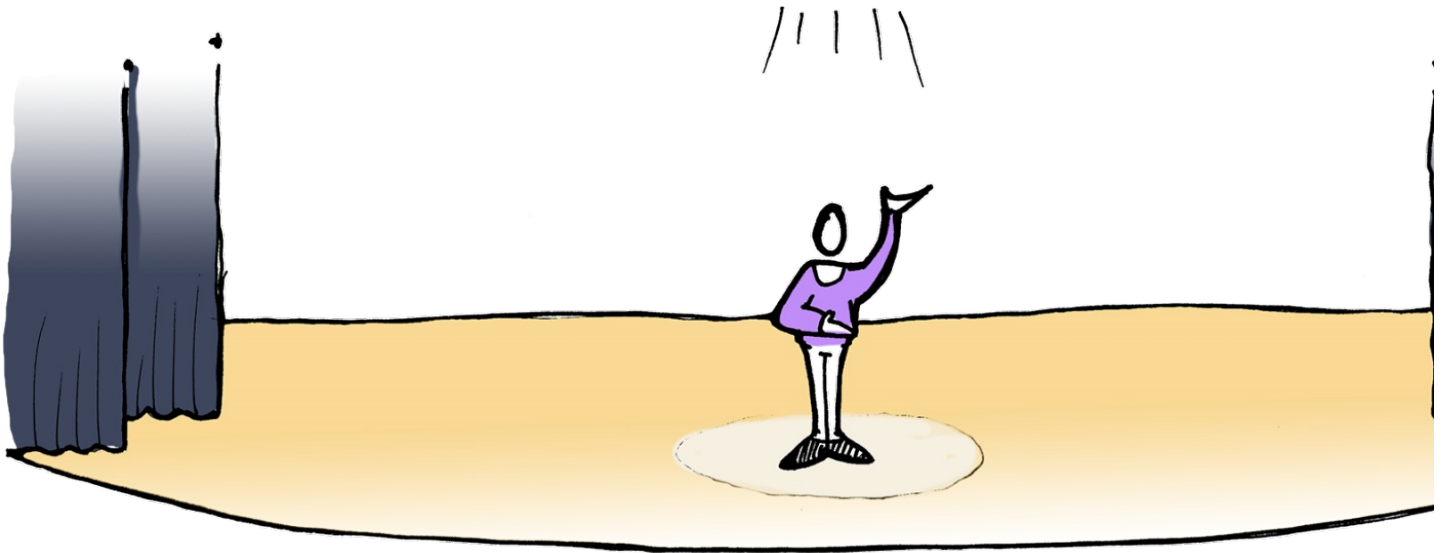
January 22, 2018

## On with the show

In previous articles, I focused on the objects and interactions that can help stage an experience, yet I want to step back a bit as the new year begins. I want to look at another aspect of experiences.

Over the holiday season, I was fortunate enough to see a Broadway show. What I find fascinating is the feeling of excitement and anticipation that builds up inside my mind. I can't wait to see the lights of the marquee, the polished brass doors, and even the rich red and gold patterned carpet of the lobby. Huge figurines stand proudly at either side of the stairs that lead to the sanctum of the theater. The environment—with its lush trimmings, fine décor and the magnificent grandeur of the seating—is only a small part of the experience. The real experience is yet to come.

From my seat, I could see up to the domed ceiling and the paintings of constellations, stars, and even some angels playing horns. The atmosphere shouted, "Welcome to the theatre." It was all designed to complement and enhance what would soon occur on the stage behind the velvet curtains—a theatre performance.



The lights dim, music builds from the orchestra pit and slowly the curtains open to reveal the stage sparsely filled with props and simple scenery. Not what I was expecting from such a grand environment. Then a single actor walks out onto the stage and begins his performance. Others soon appear and start interacting with each other and the play comes to life.

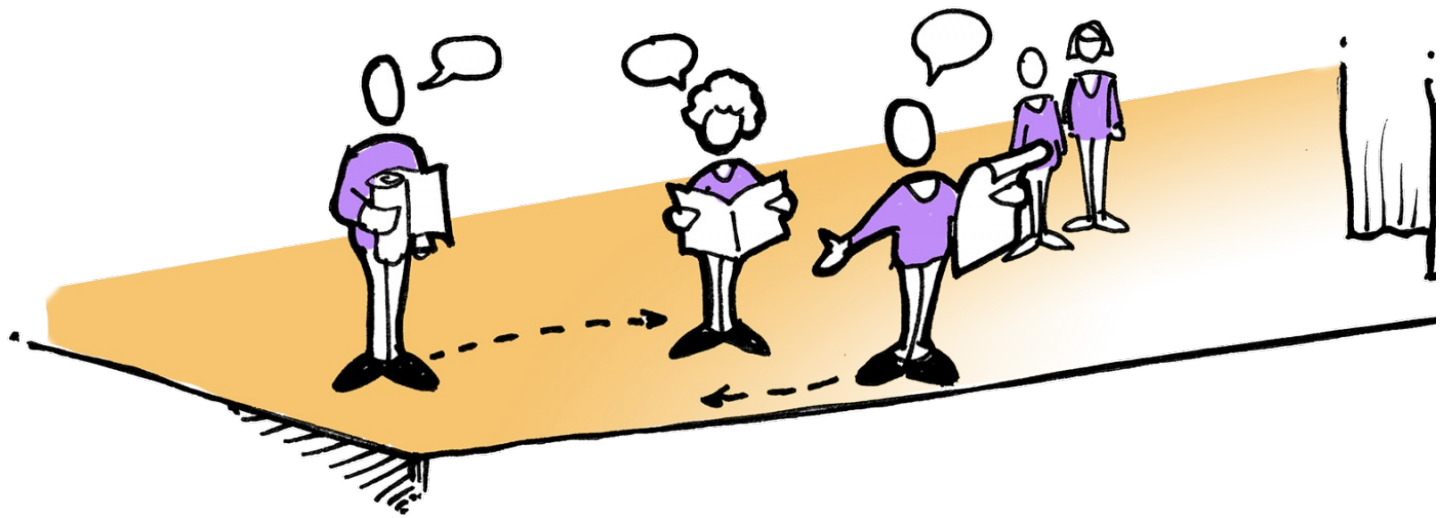
Though the stage was simple in its props and scenery, the real experience comes from the performance skill of the actors. Each actor is as believable as the roles they played. Much of this is also credited to a well-written script. A script that defines each role and the actors' purpose in the play. Without the script and the performers, no stage, props, lighting or scenery can save a bad script or performance. A bad script and performance creates a bad experience.



“Work is theatre and every business a stage” are the words written by Joe Pine and James

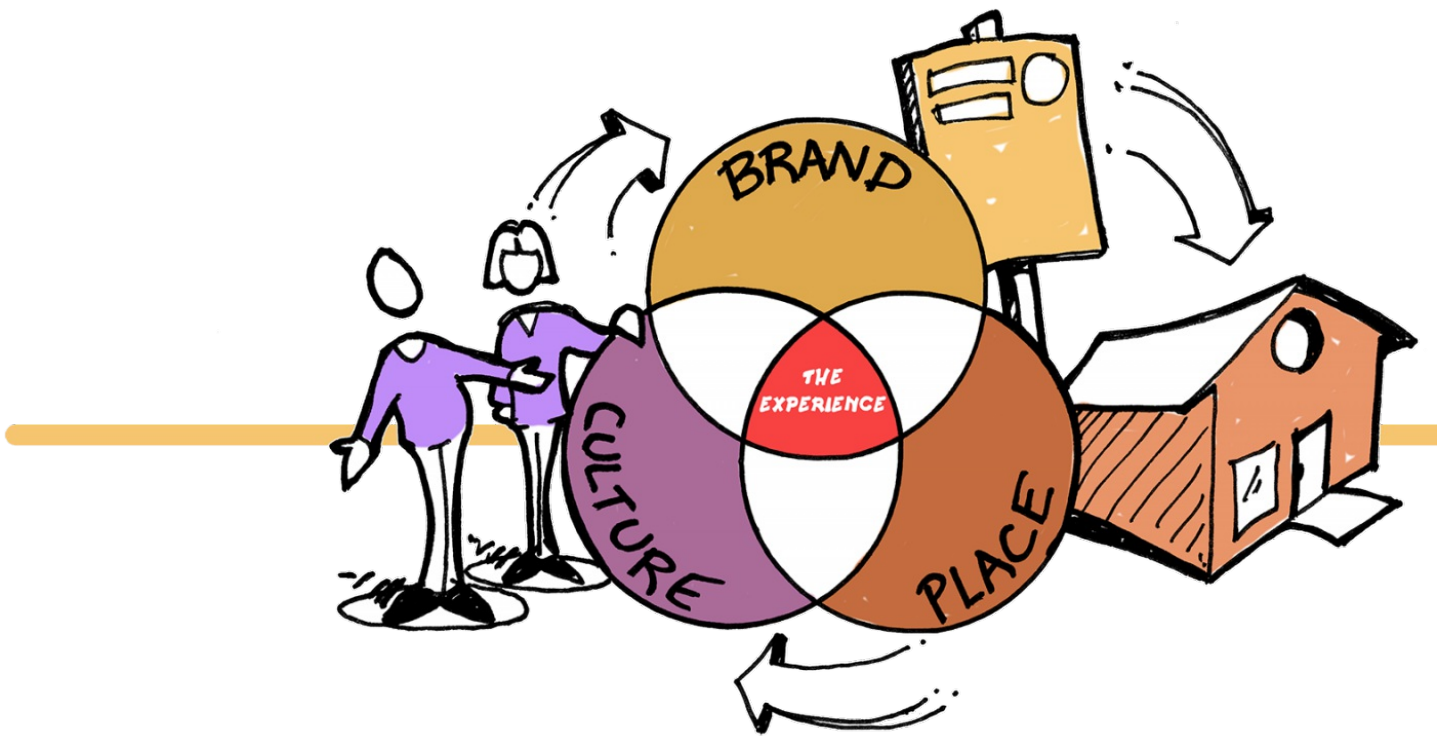
Gilmore in their book; *The Experience Economy*. If this is true—which I agree it is—then your business is the stage to your brand, your staff are the actors that perform your story. Much like the play, each of actors must have a well-defined role—by a well written script—to guide them.

A bank can train its people on skills and procedures, but these are only part of what makes them great performers in the eyes of the customer. Finding the right talent and creating a unique dialogue based on the brand promise of your company is key. It creates the script which gives direction to your staff's roles on the business stage.



When the staff has clear and well-written scripts to work from, the brand message and promise are clear to your customers, your business audience. If the performance or story is weak, then the experience falls short of being memorable.

Companies can't expect to succeed through the latest digital technology alone—even if it makes them look cutting edge. Even if they pair it with the fanciest branch design that says, 'we are different and trendy. However, to be successful, companies do need to invest in their performers. Those who deliver the dialogue that defines their roles and creates a great experience for the customer.



Remember this simple idea—a performance requires three parts that must work in harmony:

- Actors
- A script that tells your story
- A stage to perform it on and bring it to life.

In business, I call these your *Culture*, *Brand*, and *Place*. If they are not in sync, the experience you stage is not believable. And if it's not believable and memorable, it creates no value to the customer.

So, script your brand story, train your actors on their roles, and create the proper stage environment for them to perform in and your business will transform both your customers and yourself.

#### **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.*