



The power of place



Readers who follow my work know that I've spent most of 2017 writing on the concepts and principles of the experience economy and how they apply to banking. To close out the year, I want to shift your focus from customer engagement and interaction to another aspect of the experience: the physical space and props that stage the experience.

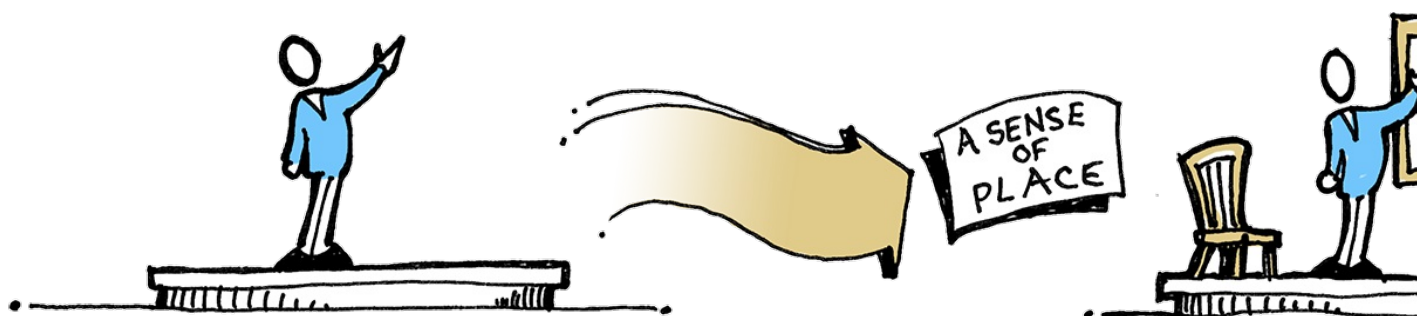
There is no better time of the year than December to illustrate the importance of the physical staging to support the experience.



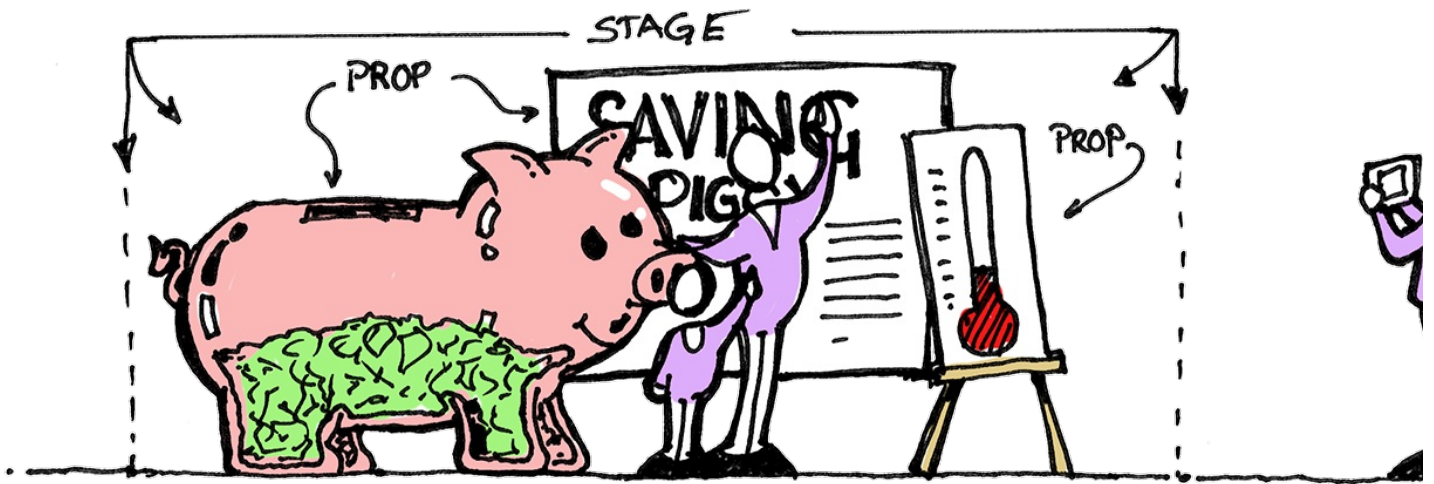
We all have been to the malls at this time of the year. You can't miss the theme that is being communicated. The lights, the holiday music, and even the smells of pine and cinnamon fill the air. Trees are decorated with glimmering, glittery accents and the mall is adorned with greenery and holiday color at every corner. Even the employees capture the theme all the way down to holiday costuming that add to the effect.

It's all theatre.

Because the experience is theatre, the experience needs supporting by props, staging, and other various sensory inputs. It is the power of place along with the props that create the stage for the experience. Imagine if there were no displays created for the holidays—no festive music piped throughout the mall or those seasonal pop-up kiosks selling the smells and flavors of the season—there would be nothing special to enhance the differentiation of the season. The holiday experience would not even exist.



This idea of staging is also true of businesses that want to design experiences for their customers. There are many parts of the experience that are overlooked. Mostly, the actual physical space or stage of the experience. Companies must be aware that an experience is more than just the engagement, it is also the stage and the props where the experience happens. The experience must have its theater, a physical platform.



In a previous article, we talked about the concept of staging an experience around an intriguing object—such as a giant piggy bank—where people would gather to contribute, interact, and even take selfies about the experience. To make it a true experience, you must stage an enhanced environment to control how people interact in the space. The right mix of props is needed to dress the scene and provide a cohesive setting to the experience—a setting you control.

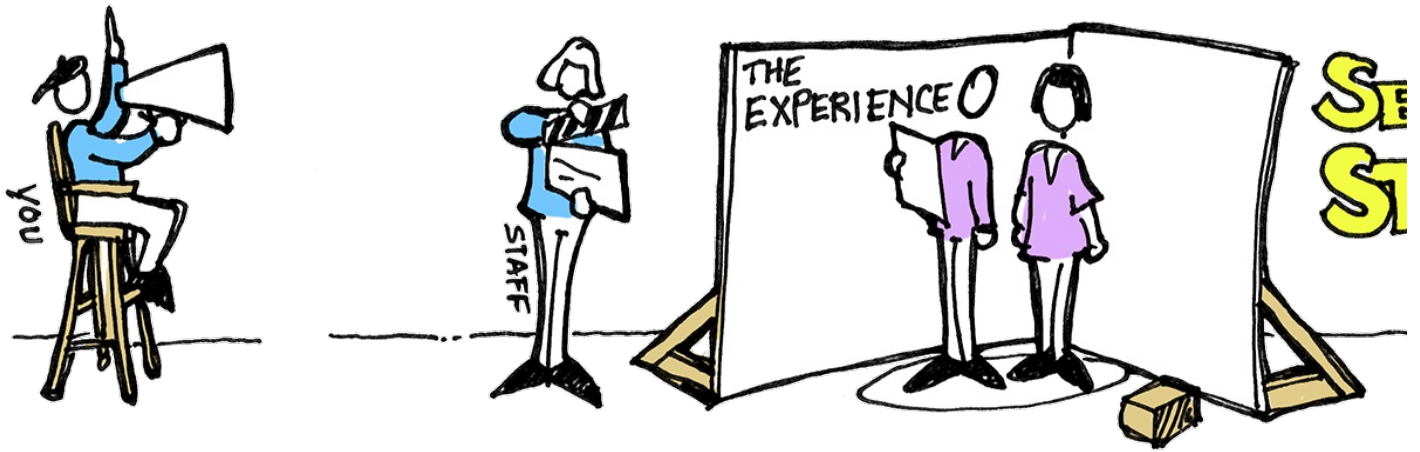
To get a better idea of how an experience works, think of it this way.

What you offer is part of your business model. *How* you engage your customers is part of the experience. If you want to stage an experience to enrich your value, you must orchestrate all aspects of the experience—from the engagement to the space.

And there is no greater asset of the experience than the power of place—the stage.

Look at the places where you want to create experiences for your customers. Are they defined by key props, controlled staging, and proper placement? If not, redesign the theater to better stage the engagement and make the experience unique to you and your customers.

Once the stage is set, it's time to perform.



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.