



FORGET FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION.

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You only get one chance to make a first impression! This has been the catch cry of many a self help book for, well for forever. Some even get very technical and give you clear metrics to adhere to, "People make their minds up about you in 1/10 of a second so make that time count". But psychology shows us that there is a simple and more powerful formula to winning people over?

Recently I have been working with some clients on applying my research around transitions to create an amazing customer experience. During this work I began to ask the question, in addition to how we transition into a sales experience does it matter how we transition out of an experience. Turns out it is very important.

How we judge our Experiences.

Prominent psychologist Daniel Kahneman is the founder of Peak End Theory. This theory proves that when people reflect on an experience they remember the peak moments (either good or bad) and how it ended. What we do not do is look at the experience as a whole and average it out. We don't measure pleasure or pain by how long it lasts, rather by the most intense feeling experienced and the impression left by the final moments of the experience. Your decision to go through an experience again or buy a product associated with it, is

controlled by whether the experience had any peak pleasurable moments and how it ended. An experiment was done where people had to place their hands in painfully cold water under two different conditions. First of all they immersed their hands for 60 seconds.

"Your decision to go through an experience again or buy a product associated with it, is controlled by whether the experience had any peak pleasurable moments and how it ended."

After their hands returned to normal temperature, they repeated the test but held their hands in for 90 seconds. However for the last 30 seconds the water temperature was increased by one degree. When asked which experience they would go through again, the majority of people said the 90 second trial is the one they would repeat. Why? It ended more pleasurable. The same relationship has been seen in various medical procedures. During a colonoscopy (try to keep a straight face as you read this), patients rated the quality of the experience by the peak moments of

pain and how it ended. They found that people who's procedure lasted over 30 minutes said they would come back next year for the same treatment as it ended with less pain than the beginning. While some patients who's procedure lasted a mere 8 minutes said they were not coming back because the experience had high peak moments of pain and ended painfully. These medical studies show that people do not remember the total amount of pain but rather the peak moments of pain and how it ended.

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It can be applied to any type of experience.

This theory applies to all our experiences. Rock concerts get this. They give you peak moments where they have the high energy songs and follow them by lower energy ones. But the knock out punch is they always save the big song for last, so we walk out thinking WOW! Movies do the same. They leave the twist for the end. The Sixth Sense is one of the most successful films ever. Its popularity was driven by its amazing twist at the end that caught everybody off guard.

How it applies to business.

This theory is the reason why you can have a series of good experiences with a company but that one rude staff member is the one you remember (peak moment of pain) and causes you to never use them again.

Unfortunately most businesses usually get this wrong. When you turn up to a hotel they are incredibly nice, they greet you with enthusiasm, carry your bags from the cab to the room, your TV has your name on it and of course there are the chocolates on your pillow (if you are really lucky macaroons).

That's all very nice but come the next day the honeymoon is over, you lug your bags down to the front desk, line up forever, argue about the bill, hand over the cash and then stand out on the street trying to flag a taxi.

Car sales people often miss this crucial concept.

The peak moment for a sales person is when the customer signs the contract.

This is what they care about the most. What they don't care about is when the customer takes delivery of the car. However delivery is the peak moment for the client.

The problem is that the sales person has a "ho hum" attitude to the delivery process and therefore gives a terrible experience.

When I picked up my latest car, delivery was 3 hours late (I was sitting in their very small waiting room with no one offering me an apology or a glass of water) then the guy just handed me the keys and said "Here you go".

What an anti-climax! If they want to create a raving fan they need to make the delivery process exceptional.

"I was sitting in their very small waiting room with no one offering me an apology or a glass of water"

If you are in sales you can close more by ensuring your sales meetings have peak moments and a compelling ending.

If you are a conference organiser, do you let a boring internal speaker wind up the conference and just say see ya, or do you finish the conference with a big moment.

If you are a teacher or lecturer it shows that your presentation can

have low moments and the whole thing does not have to be a laugh fest.

Research shows that students engage with and rate teachers/lecturers highly if they gave the students a couple of highly engaging moments over the semester.

I saw this first hand, I have been coaching an MD of an organisation around his presentation for the company's national conference. We worked for 2 months on his presentation. On the day of the conference he nailed it. The feedback was amazing. One of the most frequent comments was how funny he was. But the interesting thing was there was only four funny moments in the one hour presentation. I did this on purpose as I didn't want it to be all humor and no substance. If you looked at the whole presentation it wasn't that funny yet people remembered the funny moments and the humorous ending.

A friend of mine is a plumber, his point of difference is that he will leave your house cleaner than when he got there. After telling him about this theory.

"My manager belittled me in front of other people"

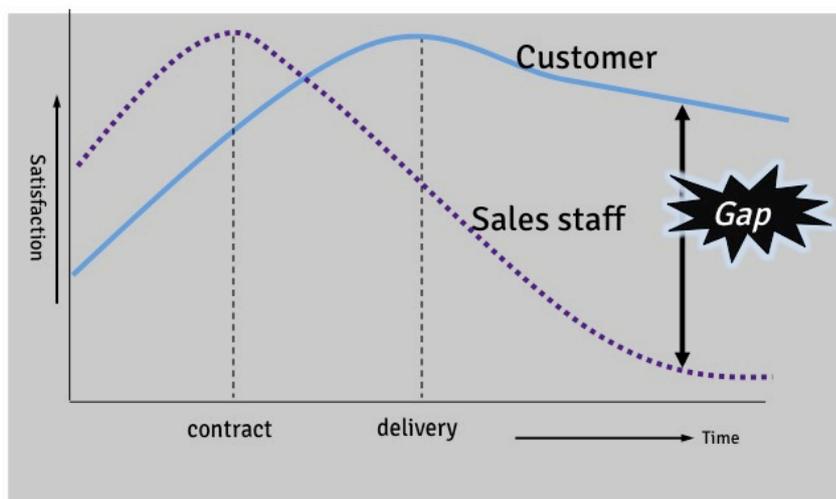
He changed how he wraps up his appointments. He gives the client their invoice and then shows them the work and how clean everything is. After doing this his referrals went up!

How to use it to have more satisfied employees.

How do you run your performance reviews? The traditional way is, you tell them all the great things they are doing, but finish with here are all the things you are terrible at and need to improve. What do you think they are going to remember?

Changes in Satisfaction.

When does the peak of satisfaction appear?



The University of Brunel asked if this theory affected someone's desire to stay at their job.

Turns out we do not average out the good or bad experiences over the entire job instead we look for peak moments (good or bad) and the most recent interaction.

When we think am I happy here, what comes up are things like "My manager was really kind and supportive when my mum was sick", "In front of the whole team my manager made reference to a strategy I implemented and how it was innovative and genius." or "My manager belittled me in front of other people"

"They yelled at me when I made a mistake during a presentation". The study showed that peak moments of satisfaction were twice as powerful as any other variable in the person's decision to quit their job.

Do you create moments for your staff?

Create better meetings.

I shared this theory with a friend who said how she always struggled to get her team to turn up on time to team meetings.

We brain stormed some ideas around how she could make the ending of the meeting more enjoyable.

"My manager was really kind and supportive when my mum was sick"

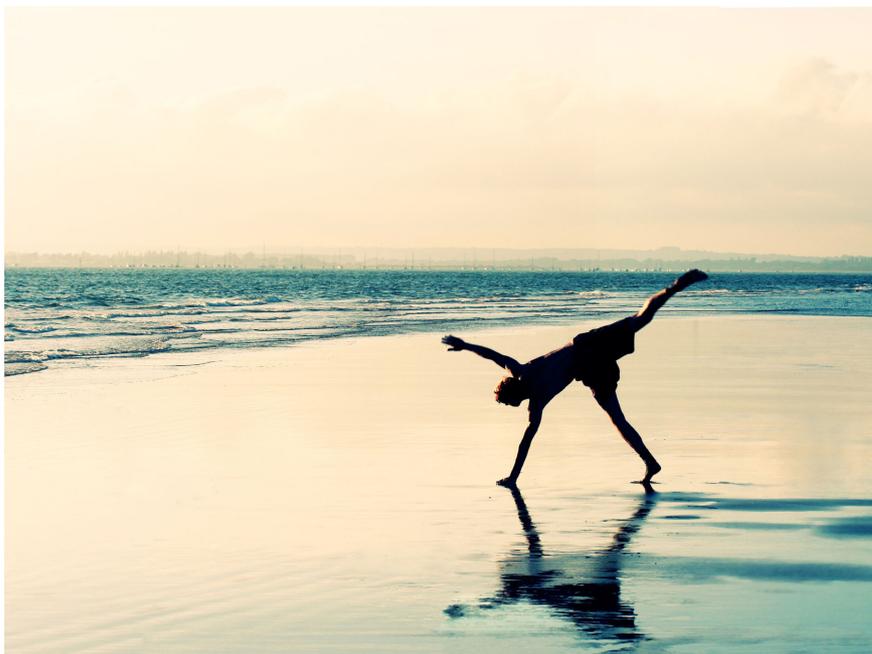
This is what she did:

1. Got more organised around the agenda and managing people going off on tangents to free up meeting time.
2. At the 15 minutes to go mark she spent five minutes complimenting each of the staff members about positive things they had done in the previous week. Then the last 10 minutes had nibbles brought in and the group spent the rest of the time just having a general chat about non work things.

The feedback was amazing, people started to comment about how great the meetings were and punctuality dramatically rose. All she did was add a peak moment (the feedback) and add in a pleasurable end.

In every interaction you have start to explore how the Peak End Theory can get you a better outcome.

Ensure that you peak well and end well.



Example: Monica from BMW

BMW recognises there are certain peak moments in a customer's life cycle and with this in mind each dealership has set up steps to provide special moments.

It starts with being greeted by a concierge when you first arrive and being acknowledged as soon as you walk into a dealership.

A host will try to make your stay at the dealership as comfortable as possible. There are always coffee and tea facilities with most dealerships having a professional barista.

But the experience doesn't end there and BMW doesn't forget the customer as soon as the customer decides to make a purchase.

One of the most impressive experiences for the customer is at delivery of their new vehicle. Each delivery is treated as a new vehicle launch with their new vehicle being unveiled. In some instances such as birthdays a huge red bow would be placed on the vehicle with flowers or a cake being organised by the dealership.

As part of the BMW customer experience every customer was followed up a week after taking delivery of their vehicle with a phone call from their sales consultant to check all was going well. This contact with the customer continues throughout the customer's life cycle until the customer decides to purchase their next BMW and the cycle starts all over again.

This is the expected result from providing customers with great customer service experience, it didn't always go as planned but it was expected that each BMW staff would go above and beyond to provide the best experience available.