

Design for Experience: From Design to Business Strategy

การออกแบบเชิงประสบการณ์: จากการออกแบบสู่กลยุทธ์ทางธุรกิจ

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Abstract

Due to higher productivity and innovations, design outcomes have become more and more similar in their technology, functionality, price and quality. The change towards a more human-centered design has gained popularity among many businesses. The concept is to create stronger emotional connections with customers which currently become dominant in consumer arenas. By evoking valued meanings through their products, services, and multidimensional customer experiences, companies are then able to create more value and achieve strategic advantages over their competitors. In any given case, the design is asked to influence, not just the look and feel of things, but also the quality of user experience that people have through the power of design in creating a tangible expression. As designers, we are now challenged to help companies explore and visualize directions for their future offering.

This article aims to review the many definitions of experience, understanding the process of experiencing, and analyzing the role and optimizing development of experience design in marketing and business perspectives.

บทคัดย่อ

เนื่องจากนวัตกรรมและความสามารถในการผลิตที่เพิ่มขึ้น ผลงานการออกแบบเริ่มมีความคล้ายคลึงทางเทคโนโลยี ประสิทธิภาพการใช้งาน ราคา และคุณภาพ ทำให้การปรับเปลี่ยนการออกแบบผ่านนวัตกรรมซึ่งเน้นมนุษย์เป็นศูนย์กลางแพร่หลายได้รับความนิยมมากขึ้นในวงการธุรกิจ รวมทั้ง แนวความคิดที่เกี่ยวกับการสร้างความสัมพันธ์ทางอารมณ์กับลูกค้ามีอิทธิพลต่อการแข่งขันแย่งชิงผู้บริโภค โดยผู้ประกอบการสามารถสร้างความได้เปรียบทางการตลาดเหนือคู่แข่ง โดยการสร้างคุณค่าทางความหมายผ่านผลิตภัณฑ์ การบริการ และประสบการณ์หลากหลายมิติ การออกแบบประสบการณ์ของผู้บริโภคที่มีคุณภาพจึงเข้ามามีอิทธิพลและกลายเป็นส่วนสำคัญ นอกเหนือไปจากการออกแบบภาพลักษณ์และลักษณะของผลิตภัณฑ์อย่างที่เคยเป็นมา นักออกแบบจึงมีความจำเป็นในการสำรวจและทำให้เห็นภาพพจน์ทิศทางของการนำเสนอสินค้าและบริการในอนาคต

บทความนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อทบทวนความหมาย และการตีความอันหลากหลายของ ‘ประสบการณ์’ รวมทั้งทำความเข้าใจกระบวนการการเกิดประสบการณ์ และวิเคราะห์บทบาทความสำคัญของการออกแบบประสบการณ์ของลูกค้าในมุมมองของโอกาสทางการตลาด

Keywords

Experience (ประสบการณ์)

Customer Experience (ประสบการณ์ของลูกค้า)

Cognitive (กระบวนการรับรู้)

Emotion (อารมณ์)

1. Introduction

Abraham Maslow (1970) developed the 'hierarchy of human needs'. The model views humans as a 'wanting animal' who rarely reach a state of complete satisfaction (Maslow, 1970). Taking the idea of this hierarchy of needs and applying it to human factors, the hierarchy of needs would be functionality, usability and pleasure (Jordan, 1997). So to design things and objects such as mobile phones, furniture, cars, buildings, spaces, and services, the usability is not the only factor that indicates the quality of design. According to Ehn and Lowgren (1997) "quality-in-use" refers to a range of aesthetics, ethics and functional qualities that need to be considered in design (Ehn & Lowgren, 1997). Every time we relate with goods or services, our reaction is not only how well it works, but also how good it looks, and how it makes us feel. Emotional qualities such as enjoyment, fulfillment and fun can result in better outcomes of certain kinds of experiences. When designs are aesthetically pleasing, we experience it positively (Norman, 2002).

Today, our society has an influence on the world of business. Designers work with different perspectives on more complex design issues. As technology and higher productivity progress with competitive intensity, it drives the search for differentiation. This is where the experience design becomes more important for economic expansion. Creating value for their customers in form of experience has become increasingly interesting in business strategy planning (Shaw, 2007). Many companies shifted up their economic value from selling goods or services to selling experience. Pine and Gilmore (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999) said "When a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. But when he buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of

memorable events that a company stages - as in a theatrical play - to engage him in a personal way."

Therefore, there is no surprise that it is one of the most widely studied areas by researchers and one of the most widely implemented marketing initiatives by practitioners. Hence, this article aims to review important findings related to experience design in many perspectives; theory, psychology, design and marketing, understand the process of experiencing, and analyze the role and optimizing development of experience design in marketing and business perspective.

2. Defining Experience

Experience is a very dynamic, complex and subjective phenomenon. In *Art as Experience*, John Dewey (Dewey, 1934) focused on the event qualities of an experience. He explained that experience is the totality of people acting, sensing, thinking, feeling, and meaning-making in a setting, including their perception and sensation of their own actions. Engaging in an experience involves a progression over time, an anticipation, an emotional involvement, a uniqueness which makes it stand out from the ordinary, and reaches some sort of completion. He wrote "Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living. Under conditions of resistance and conflict, aspects and elements of the self and the world that are implicated in this interaction qualify experience with emotions and ideas so that conscious intent emerges. Oftentimes, however, the experience had is inchoate. Things are experienced but not in such a way that they are composed into an experience. There is distraction and dispersion; what we observe and what we think, what we desire and what we get, are at odds with each other." (Dewey, 1960)

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi refers to optimal experiences as ‘flow’. Flow experiences offer absorption, personal control, joy, value, spontaneity, and newness of perception and process. The activity or goal object completely absorbs one’s attention and the experience has a level of skill and challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). According to McLellan, the goal of experience design is to orchestrate experiences that are functional, purposeful, engaging, compelling, and memorable (McLellan, 2000). Nathan Shedroff said “One of the most important ways to define an experience is to search its boundaries. While many experiences are ongoing, sometimes even indefinitely, most have edges that define their start, middle, and end. Much like a story (a special and important type of experience), these boundaries help us differentiate meaning, pacing, and completion” (Shedroff, 2001).

Presently, in the design and business communities, phrases like ‘design of experience’ ‘user experience’ and ‘customer experience’ are frequently used (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002). In the article ‘Welcome to the experience economy’ by Pine and Gilmore (1998) represent the design of experience as a new kind of economic offering. Disney World, Niketown and theme restaurants such as Hard Rock Café and Planet Hollywood are examples of corporate branded environments that create memorable events (Pine II & Gilmore, 1998). In ‘the experience economy’ it explained that ‘The newly identified offering of experiences occurs whenever a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props to engage an individual. While commodities are fungible, goods tangible, and services intangible, experiences are memorable.’ (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999)

Diller, Shedroff, and Rhea give explanation of experience in which “From a marketing and design perspective, an experience is an engagement delivered to the customer through an integrated system of “touch points” – product, packaging,

message, customer service, and so on – that conveys or evokes a consistent sense of its essence.” (Diller, Shedroff, & Rhea, 2006)

3. Designing Experience

There are several ideas which relate to the design and management of customer experience. Proper experiences will be a success not only through a functional design, but also by creating an emotional connection through engaging, compelling, and consistent context.

3.1 Perception & Emotional States

Typically, product and service quality depend on the perception of the customer of what was delivered and how. The cognitive assessment of customer satisfaction is considered as a key outcome measurement of experience design (Norman, 1988). There are several levels of the cognitive and emotional system. Norman (2004) suggests that human attributes result from three different levels of the brain: the automatic layer, called visceral level; the part that controls everyday behavior, known as the behavioral level; and the contemplative part of the brain, or the reflective level. Each level plays a different role in the total functioning of people. The three levels can be mapped to product characteristics like this:

- Visceral design > Appearance
- Behavioral design > The pleasure and effectiveness of use
- Reflective design > Self-image, personal satisfaction, memories

Consider the visceral level of design, this is where appearance matters. Visceral design is about the initial impact of product, about its appearance, its touch and its feel. But personality theory divides people by dimensions. There are large individual differences in this degree. To designers, this means that no single design will satisfy everyone. Although

the visceral system has evolved to protect the body against danger, many of popular and sought-after experiences involve horror and danger such as horror movies, high risk sport. As mentioned before, the pleasure of risk and perceived danger varies among people. Such individual differences are the basic components of personality, the distinctions among people which make each of us unique. (Norman, 2004)

Behavioral design is all about use. There are four components of good behavioral design: function, understandability, usability, and physical feel (Norman, 1988). In most behavioral design, function comes first. If a chair doesn't actually sit able, or a watch doesn't tell accurate time, then nothing else matter. Understanding is next, if you can't understand a product, you can't use it. Usability is how easy to use. More formally the International Standards Organisation (ISO) defines usability as "... the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction with which specified users achieve specified goals in particular environments (ISO DIS 9241-11)." While physical touch and feel can make a huge difference appreciation, like cooking food; feeling of the comfort of high quality knife, hearing the sound of cutting on the chopping board, smelling the fresh-cut food.

Reflective design is about message, culture, and meaning of products. First, it is about the meaning of things, the personal remembrances something evokes. Second, it is about self-image and the message a product sends to others. That is why some people are willing to spend a lot more money on expensive handmade watches although a cheaper digital watch keeps time just as well. (Desmet, Overbeeke, & Tax, 2001)

3.2 Context and Participation

Particularly, memorable context allows different levels of customer participation and connection with the event or performance both through relational and physical elements. Pine and Gilmore (Pine II &

Gilmore, 1999) explain the experience realms (Figure 1), that customer participation could be passive participation; experience the event as pure observers or listeners, or active participation; customers actively participate in creating their own experience. The vertical dimension of experience describes the kind of connection, or environmental relationship. At one end of this spectrum lies absorption; occupying a person's attention by bringing the experience into the mind. At the other end lies immersion; becoming physically (or virtually) a part of the experience itself.

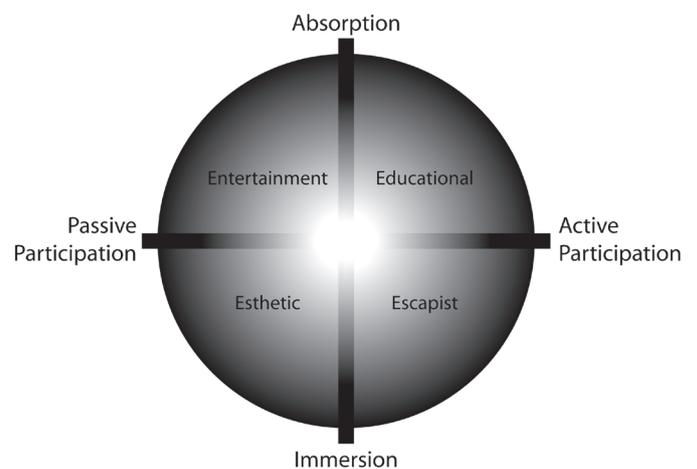


Figure 1. The experience Realms. (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999)

The coupling of these dimensions defines the four realms of an experience; entertainment, education, escape, and estheticism, as shown in Figure 1. The passively absorb experience occur when people engage in entertainment, such as viewing a performance, listening to music, or reading for pleasure. With education experience, the customer absorbs the events while actively participating. The guest of the escaping experience is completely immersed in it, an actively involved participant. Examples include theme parks, casinos, or a paintball game in local woods. In the last experiential realm, esthetic experiences, people immerse themselves but remain passive. Esthetic

experiences include standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, visiting an art gallery or museum. While people participate, an educational experience may mean wanting to learn, an escapist experience may mean wanting to do, an entertainment experience may mean wanting to sense, whereas an esthetic experience is just wanting to be there.

Similar to Carbone and Haeckel, elements of experience design consists of two primary components; physical context and relational context. They refer to physical context as ‘mechanics clues’ for sights, smells. Sounds, and textures generated by things. They refer to relational context as ‘humanics clues’, for those behaviors come from people. From this perspective, managing customer experience means orchestrating all the clues that people detect. (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994)

As mentioned before, the key context design elements of experience design are opportunities for customer interaction with other people and design, or atmospheres which convey messages or themes. The relational context could be interactions between the customer and service provider, and between one customer and another. While the physical context applies to tangible aspects like supporting facility, facilitating goods, and sensual and psychological benefits.

3.3 Unique Additional Offerings

Unique additional offerings refer to everything that goes beyond the core product or service that one can expect to be offered. These kind of special offerings, which are quite unexpected and surprising for the customer, are attempts to make a difference for the client. Also, because they are reasonably “unique” according to their unusual nature (not commonly found in the competition establishments), representing a pleasant surprise for customers when offered; finally, they are “additional” or extraordinary and so they offer something that goes beyond the core product or service, which will be probably highly appreciated by customers. (López, 2009)

Kotler (1999) explained that level of customer’s satisfactions come from differentiation of product and service’s expectations. The valued-added delivered to customers must always be more than their principle or product price.

$$\text{Product and Service offers} - \text{Customer's Expectation} = \text{Customer's satisfaction}$$

In the other words, supplemented by findings, is can be said that, satisfaction with memorable experience would come from expectation plus ‘WOW factors’ (Kotler, 1999).

$$\text{Customer's Expectation} + \text{WOW Factors} = \text{Memorable Experience}$$

4. Experience Business

The design of meaningful experiences can be integrated into almost any innovation process, but in doing so requires a new way of thinking about development and its effect. Rather than thinking of design as a function limited to visual expression, we need to recognize design conceptually as both the intent and the process of integrating functional, economic, emotional, or social benefits within a meaningful context.

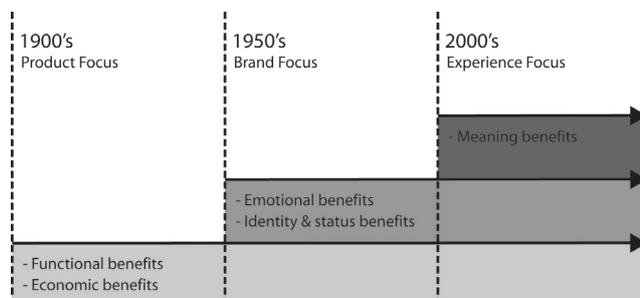


Figure 2. Evolution of innovation and consumer demand. (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999)

It was not enough to offer a functional product at a fair price with a winning campaign. In order to succeed, a company had to offer exactly the right product or service for the right person, at the right place, and at the right price. The break-up of the mass market and shift to innovation and marketing practices need new designs, unique feature sets, and brand identities. Consumers developed a thirst for “more” and “different”, particularly if the product or service was a component of a branded “life style” scenario. (Diller, Shedroff, & Rhea, 2006)

The design that delivers memorable customer experiences consistently creates more value and competitive advantage. With memorable experiences, not only do they add to the value of products or services but also help by increasing the price. Pine and Gilmore give an example in ‘the experience economy’ about how price of birthday offering change on four range of offering; commodities-raw materials such as butter sugar eggs flour milk, goods- necessary ingredients in one package, services- finished cakes, and experiences- theme parties. (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999) (Figure 3)

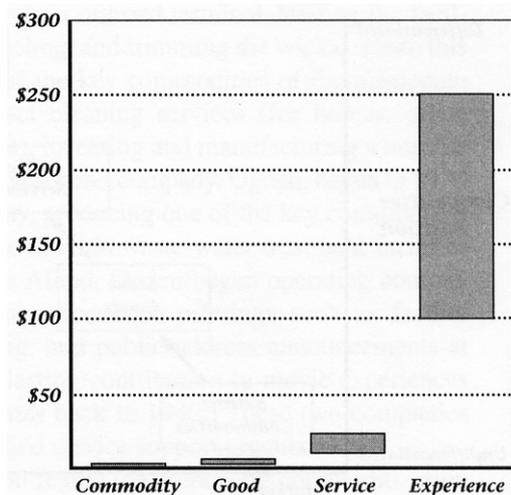


Figure 3. Price of birthday offering. (Pine II & Gilmore, 1999)

In its commercial context, experience design is driven by consideration of the moments of engagement between people and the ideas, emotions, and memories that these moments create. Restaurant businesses could be good examples. At themed restaurants such as Planet Hollywood and Hard Rock Café the food is just a prop for what’s known as ‘eatertainment’ experience (Pine II & Gilmore, 1998), while several restaurants go beyond the theme and are playing with our senses. First, the toilet restaurants, located in Taipei and Hong Kong, called ‘Modern Toilet,’ was opened by a former ice cream vendor who used to serve ice cream from a toilet bowl shaped scooper. Customers sit on toilet bowl shaped stools, eat their food out of dishes resembling male urinals, toilet bowls or bathtubs. They drink out of mini toilet bowls, and toilet paper is used in place of napkins. Even the food itself is designed to look like what comes out after you eat a meal. These restaurants are very popular for its novelty, especially among young people. It is also a popular family destination and many of foreigners come here to see these interesting places and have a laugh of these crappy dining experiences.

Another example is the dark restaurant. The first such restaurant was Blindekuh which opened in Zurich in 1999. The concept of purposefully eating in pitch-black originated with Jorge Spielmann, a blind clergyman from Zurich. When guests ate dinner at the Spielmann house some would wear blindfolds during their meal to show solidarity with their host and to better understand his world. What Spielmann’s sighted guests found was that the blindfolds heightened their sense of taste and smell and made their dining experience more enjoyable. That gave Spielmann the idea to open a dark restaurant. The restaurant concept has subsequently been replicated elsewhere, including in; London, Paris, Berlin, Frankfurt, Moscow, Hamburg, and China. One of the reasons for its popularity is not only because dining in pitch-black heightens the

sense of taste, but it also lowers social inhibitions. People feel a lot more comfortable when they can't be seen by others. They talk more freely and spontaneously. The absence of vision changes completely the way people act and react, both emotionally and socially.

These are just a few examples. Nowadays, experience design takes an important part in many businesses, both products and services. Many high-end fashion brands like Louis Vuitton and Prada invested a large budget for their new inventive flagship stores to introduce their shopping experience. Niketown offers fun activities, fascinating displays, and promotional events. Many hotels offer their unique service and surprising environments. Experience help many businesses increase their product value and also take on the role of making a strong brand (Pullman & Gross, 2004). In this commerce era, all marketing managers have talked about user experience. Design is asked to influence the quality of experience through the tangible expression.

5. Conclusion

Experience is personal and subjective; we cannot predict nor control the experiences that people will have. But designers can design based on the concern for quality of user experiences relating to design outcomes and their systems. Good experience design, all physical and rational context elements will be well-managed for increase value of design and make an emotional connection with customers, and achieve the strategic advantages over competitors. In conclusion, the engineering of customer experience will fulfill the gap between concept, theories, and practices, which will help both designers and companies to design and improve both tangible and intangible environments.

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