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The Endless Pursuit of Instant Gratification

BY KIM KELLEY, FRBMA

My son recently turned five years old and he, my daughter, and I visited Disneyland together for the first time. Leading up to his fifth birthday, I'd been telling him he was going to be a big boy. On the morning of his birthday he came to me, hand over his head, and asked me, "Why am I not high?" He associated being another year older with getting taller, and believed it would happen overnight. I explained to him that getting taller takes time; and like any good mom, I told him if he eats his veggies, it would happen.

Add to the mix, Disneyland, where the crowds are thick and the lines are long and you have, well, an opportunity to exercise patience. For little customers, though, who are inherently selfish, waiting 45 plus minutes for something that lasts five minutes can be a tough sell.

So what did Disney do? They sell hordes of in-line gadgets to help pass the time, developed an app to show you, in real time, the status of everything from line length to character location, and a Fast Pass! One-at-a-time opportunities to save time, skip the longer lines, and manage expectations.

This is how we are hard-wired. To want things. Now. We have high expectations that any amount of effort we put in will generate a gratifying result. When we send a text message or use social media, we expect an almost immediate response. Call on a doctor's office, and we expect an almost immediate return on referrals. Place an ad in a local publication, and we expect a certain return on our investment. We've gotten so used to this society of instant gratification that it seems like our good intentions, good will, and one-off marketing efforts should be enough to produce results. Sustainability, however, is founded in consistency.

The desire for instant gratification can be used to your advantage in marketing. It means developing strategies for saving your customers time,

speeding up communications, leaving no question unanswered, and, like Disney, managing expectations and creating a positive experience imprint.

Save time

If you can answer the phone sooner, set the appointment quicker, or deliver results faster, you should boldly state this in your headlines.

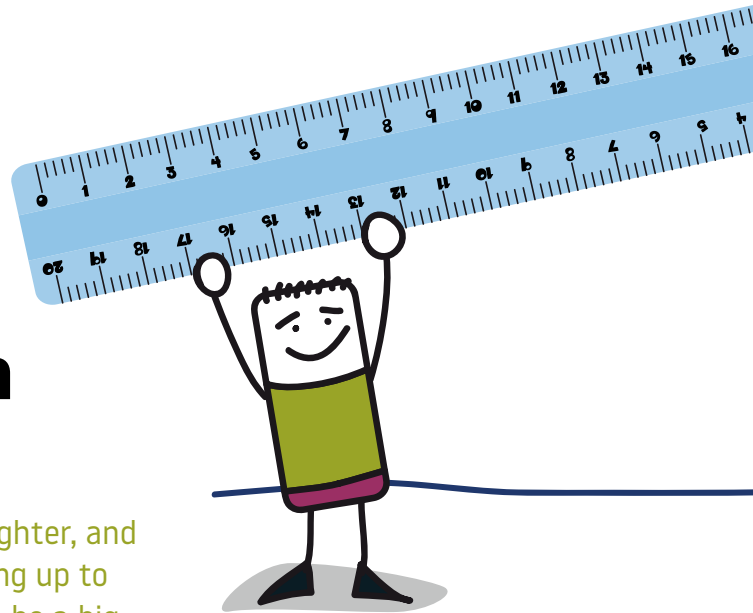
Make it memorable

To be effective with time-saving strategies, the experience has to be consistent from one time to the next. First impressions are important, but repeat experiences create loyal customers.

Speed up communications

Today's customers expect to be able to access customer service when and where they need it. Thanks to email notifications coming from social media and online review sites, it's possible to monitor near real time customer contact and provide a rapid response. Live chat can be added to your website as an added convenience for mobile and computer-based users who either cannot make a phone call or prefer not to.

With the exception of 24/7 teleradiology, round-the-clock customer service in radiology is not realistic; but you can enable auto-responders on social media apps and on email addresses that receive customer contact. The key is to then follow up in person in a timely manner.




No question unanswered

Content creation is time-consuming, but well worth the effort. Your website should be easy to navigate and content-rich so your market, regardless of generational segmentation, can easily find what they are looking for. Include thorough, but brief, service descriptions, photos, videos, testimonials, or reviews; the ability to request an appointment; and an opportunity to easily get more information if they have additional questions.

Make it memorable

How can you sweeten the deal? Try providing downloads from your site that contain useful, quick-reference information or lengthier service descriptions for those who want more. Links to ask a question, leave a review, go to your social media pages, or read your blog can all help cement your brand experience.

Success comes in all shapes and sizes, and to create a memorable experience for your customers, you've got to give them the tools and options they need and want to satisfy their desire for instant gratification. You can drive exceptional results by looking for the magic moments in your marketing. Streamline processes and design ways to make your customers feel special and they will respond with loyalty. 



KIM KELLEY, FRBMA, is the principal and creative director of Ali'i Marketing & Design. She has worked in marketing, advertising, graphic design, and social media for over 20 years. She is a fellow of the RBMA and is the recipient of the Special Recognition Award for her work in rebranding the RBMA. Kim can be reached at (970) 800-3678 or kim@alidesign.com.