

Experience Design Playbook

This is often a solution that is more recognisable to stakeholders or fellow L&D professionals – mainly because it’s usually something that happens at a certain place or time. What constitutes an experience can vary widely depending on the desired outcome.

Getting Started

The aims of an experience design are to:

1. Prompt an emotional reaction in the target audience. This could be joy, disgust, fear, excitement, pride etc.
2. Create something that's memorable and will be recalled when it matters.
3. Shift the audience's mindset from 'I don't care' to 'I care'.
4. Make the audience aware of useful resources that will ensure good performance when it matters.

Considerations when designing an experience:

1. Design for all the senses.
2. Focus on behavioural outcomes not learning objectives i.e. what people will do next.
3. Make what happens before and after core to the overall design (not an add-on).
4. Think brand activation: 'What would Nike or Red Bull do?' – not classroom training.
5. The content is the resources. Don't put content into the experience unless essential to the emotional journey.



Developing and Experience

It starts with care - experiment with how you can reframe a business problem in a way that will appeal to your audience. The key question to answer here is, 'what would need to happen to me to take this seriously?'

If you are stuck, think about how you can create a 'flight simulator' for the target audience. i.e. How could you create a realistic scenario where people can 'crash' in a safe space.

Make use of media – you don't need facilitators to facilitate if you can write clear instructions and produce engaging how-to videos.

Think about an experience as a 'Customer Journey'. Ask yourself, 'what are the touch-points that need to be in place to move people from A to B'.

What are some examples of experience design?

The trick to great experience design is to make people feel something. For example:

- Storytelling
- Gaming
- Immersive theatre
- Role playing with actors
- Simulations
- Virtual reality scenarios
- Rich media



CASE STUDY

A company needed to better connect their leaders to changing consumer mindsets to change their marketing approach.

The experience had actors brought in to play the customers, and leaders had to interact one-on-one with them to try and sell their product. Experiencing objections from the customers built empathy and in turn saw leaders change their marketing plans as a result of this.

CASE STUDY

Journalists about to go into a war zone were sent to training, and enroute their van was hijacked (by actors) and the journalists were kidnapped.

They then had to survive a situation before it was revealed that it was an exercise. The emotions experienced created a strong connection to the memory of being 'kidnapped' and so the journalists took extra precautions to protect themselves from this happening for real in the war zone.

CASE STUDY

A company needed to onboard large numbers of graduates during a nationwide lockdown. These graduates would go into a variety of roles within the organisation. The experience needed to get these graduates invested in the company with a view to increasing retention whilst doing this all virtually due to the pandemic.

An experience was created that mimicked a live TV broadcast, with breakouts and exercises that allowed the graduates to practice, network and ask questions across a week-long programme of activity.

Top Tips

01

Get inspired from your personal life. What have you seen or done that's been memorable, why was it memorable?

02

Scale is a big challenge for many organisations when designing experiences. Consider how you could create the experience without input from L&D e.g. making use of video or managers.

03

Don't rely on automated messages from learning platforms. Good experiences are tailored and personalised at every touch point.

04

Every part of the experience needs to look and feel the same, from the tone of voice, to the design of communications.

05

No film or television show works without jeopardy i.e. there has to be something at stake for an experience to be engaging.

06

Use your experience from gaming – or ask your children – to input game mechanics such as 'lives', badges, points and so on.

07

Learning comes from being challenged – not being in a safe space. Push the audience out of their comfort zone. The skill is in managing how far you can push.

08

Use smell and sound. These are powerful senses that often get ignored in experience design.

09

The classic three act story structure is a good way to think about the audience journey. Google this for more information.

10

Surprise and delight the audience by including the unexpected in the design. This might be positive or challenging interventions.

Common Mistakes

01

Expecting everyone to have the same experience. Relinquish control and focus on the measurable outcomes.

02

Playing it safe – this includes toning things down for sensitive stakeholders who are worried about taking risks.

03

Focusing on 'content'. Content should only be used where it's necessary for the audience to engage with the experience.

04

Designing for the classroom. Where else, or how else could this experience take place?

05

Deploying the experience without testing it first.

06

A lack of diversity amongst those who deliver the experience – if people are required at all.

07

Moving on once the experience has been delivered – the experience is the start, not the end of the behavioural change.

08

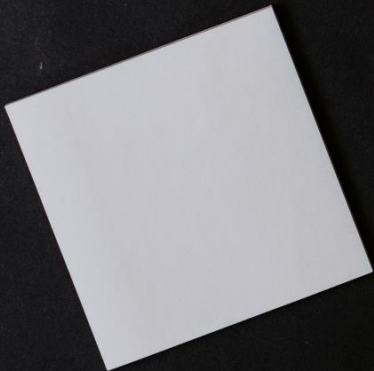
Not addressing strong emotions. In some cases and through no fault of your own, people may have unexpected reactions to an experience. Proactively engage with this or risk being 'shut down'.

09

Not measuring the outcome of the experience – only reporting completion.

10

Not iterating the first version of the experience. Test and learn each time the experience is deployed.



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