

# 10 IDEAS TO IMPRESS

## EXPERIENCE ENHANCERS YOU CAN START USING TODAY

A resource for the book *From Impressed To Obsessed* by Jon Picoult

### A Message From Jon

One of the key points that I stress in *From Impressed To Obsessed* is that customer experience improvements can be small yet significant. Even subtle changes in how you interact with customers (or employees) can have a meaningful impact on the impression they're left with.

There's also another benefit to these small experience enhancers: they build credibility. Whether you're trying better engage customers, colleagues, or employees – these incremental improvements send a signal that something is afoot. That you're making a concerted effort to do something differently and create a better experience for others as a result. For an organization that's trying to elevate its customer experience, or a leader who's trying to strengthen employee engagement, the credibility earned through these small signals is invaluable.

Your endeavor to create a better customer or employee experience can start right here, right now, simply by committing to infuse these 10 ideas into your business operations and your own personal interactions. (Note that each idea includes chapter references, so you'll know where to look in the book to read more about the customer experience design principles associated with it.)



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1

### **Take ownership with five simple words.**

“I can help you with that.” If you confidently utter those words to a customer or an employee who comes to you for assistance, it immediately changes the tenor of the interaction. To the person on the receiving end, it’s a signal of ownership and advocacy – an indication that someone is taking personal accountability for addressing their needs. Of course, the words must be followed by actions, so be sure to not just *signal* ownership, but to actually *take* ownership. [Chapters 13, 18]

2

### **Recap commitments at the end of an interaction.**

The last thing that happens in an interaction exerts a disproportionate influence on people’s overall impression of the experience. To help end on a high note, conclude calls, meetings, e-mails, and any other type of interaction with a recap of what specifically you’re committing to do to help the person you’re serving. That caps off the experience with clear communication that instills confidence in your customer, showing them that you’ve got everything under control. [Chapter 8]

3

### **Set clear, time-based expectations.**

When making commitments – be it to call someone back, deliver a proposal, or provide requested information – don’t promise to get back to people “soon” or “shortly,” because those terms mean different things to different people. Proactively communicate a specific time or date when you’ll be in touch, and then honor that commitment. Clear expectation-setting helps remove ambiguity from the interaction, thereby creating a much better customer experience. [Chapters 9, 12]

4

### **Provide a status update – even when there’s no update.**

Establishing a specific time commitment to get back to a customer is great, but what if that time comes and you don’t yet have an answer to their question? Faced with such a scenario, many people hold off on contacting the customer. They’re sheepish about reaching out without having a resolution to report. That’s a recipe for experience failure. It’s always better to honor your communication commitments, even if just to say, “I’m sorry, I’m still working on your request, and I’ll be back in touch tomorrow with more information.” [Chapters 9, 12, 13]

5

### **Give people your undivided attention.**

Want to make your customers or employees feel special? Just giving them your undivided attention goes a long way, since that’s rare to see in today’s distraction-filled world. Whether interacting with people in person, over the phone, or via videoconference – stay laser-focused on them and what they’re saying. No glancing at your phone, no checking e-mails, no scanning the room for a better or more important person to talk to. Make the individual you’re engaging with feel like they are the *only* person in the world. [Chapters 11, 16]

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6

### **Surprise people with your responsiveness.**

Imagine submitting a purchase inquiry through a “Contact Us” form on a business’s website – and then hearing back from a company rep within *minutes*. That’s impressive, in part because exceptional responsiveness is a rarity in today’s world. People like to create the illusion that they’re busier than they are, so they sit on that e-mail or voice mail for a while, making their customer or colleague wait. Don’t fall into that trap. A rapid response alone, even if it’s just acknowledging receipt of an inquiry, can make a striking impression. [Chapters 9, 17]

7

### **Greet customers within ten feet or ten seconds.**

If you work in a retail environment, be sure someone is greeting customers within 10 feet or 10 seconds of entering the store. That simple act of making eye contact and acknowledging the customer with a prompt and courteous greeting (even if just to say, “I’ll be with you in about five minutes”) sends an important signal: We care about you and your patronage. The greeting helps to immediately personalize the experience, making customers feel more welcome and appreciated. [Chapters 11, 16]

8

### **Pay attention to the visual appeal of communications.**

Whether it’s a piece of marketing material directed to a customer, a proposal prepared for a prospect, or an organizational memo sent to employees – the look and feel of communications plays an important part in shaping the reader’s experience. Put a dense wall of hard-to-read text in front of people and they’re likely to tune you out. Avoid that pitfall by breaking information up into easily digestible paragraphs, inserting white space to make the text feel “lighter,” and using section headings to help readers navigate the message. [Chapter 10]

9

### **Sit down on the job.**

Efficiency-minded organizational leaders often engage in “fly by” visits with employees, breezing through offices and cubicles, perching themselves in a doorway while they touch base with staff. While it’s great for leaders to get face time with their people, this approach signals urgency and impatience. By contrast, sitting down (however briefly) to chat with an employee signals approachability and attentiveness – yielding an experience that simply feels better to the employee and fosters stronger engagement with their manager. [Chapters 11, 15]

10

### **Preempt the next question.**

Effectively addressing a customer’s question is good. What’s even better is anticipating and addressing their *next* question. When people buy a product, when they request a change to their account, even when they cancel a service – these are all interactions where there’s an opportunity to “play the movie forward” and proactively address common follow-up queries (how do I install this?; when will I receive confirmation?; how will my next billing change?). By preempting such queries, you create a better, more effortless experience. [Chapter 9]