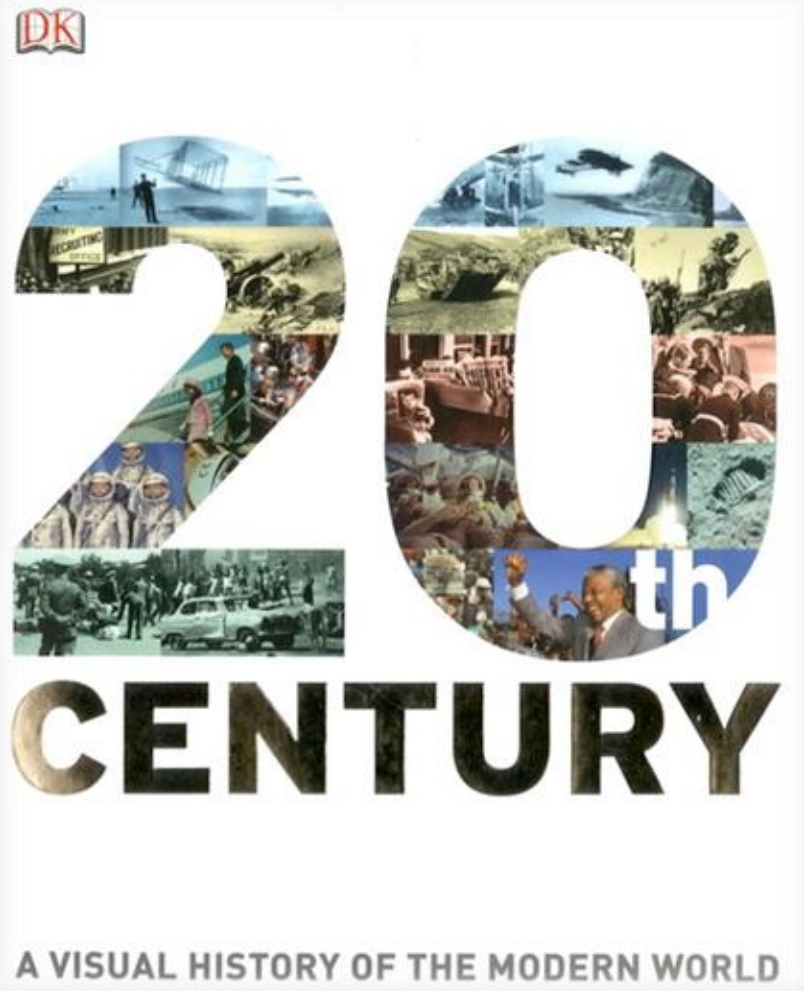
NVLF

EXPERIENCE JOURNEY

June 17, 2026



Brand = Promise + Experience

Brands are addicted to storytelling

Brand = Experience STORY

EXPERIENCE CAN GRAB OR PUSH AWAY

- 85% would pay 25% more to ensure superior experience
- Design-led PT firms outperformed S&P 228%*

- 82% stop doing business due to bad customer service
- 79% share bad experiences
  - Warn
  - Discourage
  - Vent

*10 Year Period

STORYTELLING

Observer: What would this feel like if it were happening to me? This is symbolic. It is a simulation. I have a semantic memory of something outside of me. Stories tell us what happened or what might happen.

Information > Imagination > Meaning > Sharing

EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Actor: Embodied immersive cognition. I'm participating in the location, smells, sounds, physical movement, emotional intensity, and social context that my brain "Zip Files" into an episodic memory. I remember exactly what I was doing and where I was. Neurologically, the brain is going through a chemical amplification. This experience becomes part of my personal narrative. My experiences become stories I tell that are anchored by what matters to me emotionally, what was surprising, what was socially meaningful, or what changed my expectations.

Senses + Emotion + Action + Social Interaction + Memory + Meaning + Advocacy + Story that is very easy to retell

Who Pioneered Intentional Experience Design?

amazon

35% $ “frequently bought together” “who bought this also bought”

Time/Personalization/Credibility

- Simple
- Intuitive
- Visual
- Ergonomic
- Elegant
- Drama of “white”
- Master of “unboxing”
- End-to-end UX

Sears
Wish Book for the 1977 Christmas
The answers to real economy and convenience
in your holiday shopping are right here in The Wish Book®. . .
price cuts, exceptional values, great new gift ideas—over 15,000 items
in all, every one of them just a simple phone call away
Get an entire wagonload of
5 of our all-time favorite toys
AND WE'LL INCLUDE THE
RED WAGON FOR JUST $1
THAN OUR TOTAL PRICE
OF $20.78 FOR THE TOYS
5 toys plus wagon separately total $28.77
$21.78 set
without batteries
HERE'S WHAT YOU GET:
• Bugs Bunny® Toothbrush* . . sells for $4.4
• 40-piece Medical Kit . . sells for $2.99 on pa
• All Steel Cash Register . . sells for $4.95 on p
• 10-piece Nesting Blocks . . sells for $4.99 on
• Talking Telephone* . . sells for $3.39 on pa
• 2-foot Steel Red Wagon . . sells for $7.99 bel
Little Red Wagon. T-design handle grip. All nuts and bo
resist rust. Tires, 5½x1 in. Body, 24½ x 12 x 3 in. Enamel f
79 N 85523C—Wagon only. Unassembled. Shipping weight
Wagon with 5 favorite toys listed above
79 N 44195C2—Shipping weight 19 pounds
SEARS
XL-200
SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.
INCORPORATED.
CHEAPEST SUPPLY HOUSE
ON EARTH
OUR TRADE REACHES AROUND
THE WORLD
Capital and Surplus
OVER
ONE MILLION
Dollars
REFERENCES
BY SPECIAL PERMISSION
National City Bank
German Exchange Bank
(NEW YORK)
Metropolitan Nat'l Bank
Corn Exchange Nat'l Bank
(CHICAGO)
CONSUMERS GUIDE
THIS BOOK
TELLS JUST WHAT YOUR STOREKEEPER
AT HOME PAYS FOR EVERYTHING HE
BUYS — AND WILL PREVENT HIM
FROM OVERCHARGING YOU ON
ANYTHING YOU BUY
FROM HIM
CATALOGUE No.
78 TO 96 FULTON
73 TO 87 DESPLAINES
AND 13 TO 31 WAYMAN STREET
CHICAGO ILL. U.S.

STARBUCKS

INSCRUTABLE HIRING CRITERIA

- Everyone is a "cast member"
- Unflagging smiles and energy
- Can never say "I don't know"
- Never point
- No visible tatoos/piercings
- Hair/Fingernails/Height
- Autograph practice
- Zero litter ("Protein Spill")

Frontline Alignment/Training/MoT

Ritual

Ritual = Meaning

r = nimble, casual, interpersonal. More meaning than a habit.

Sunday breakfast, afternoon coffee, morning meditation, Red Robin Birthdays

R = majestic, venerable in both volume and stance. More coordinated, formalized, and large scale. Transcendent meaning and consciousness that something special is happening:

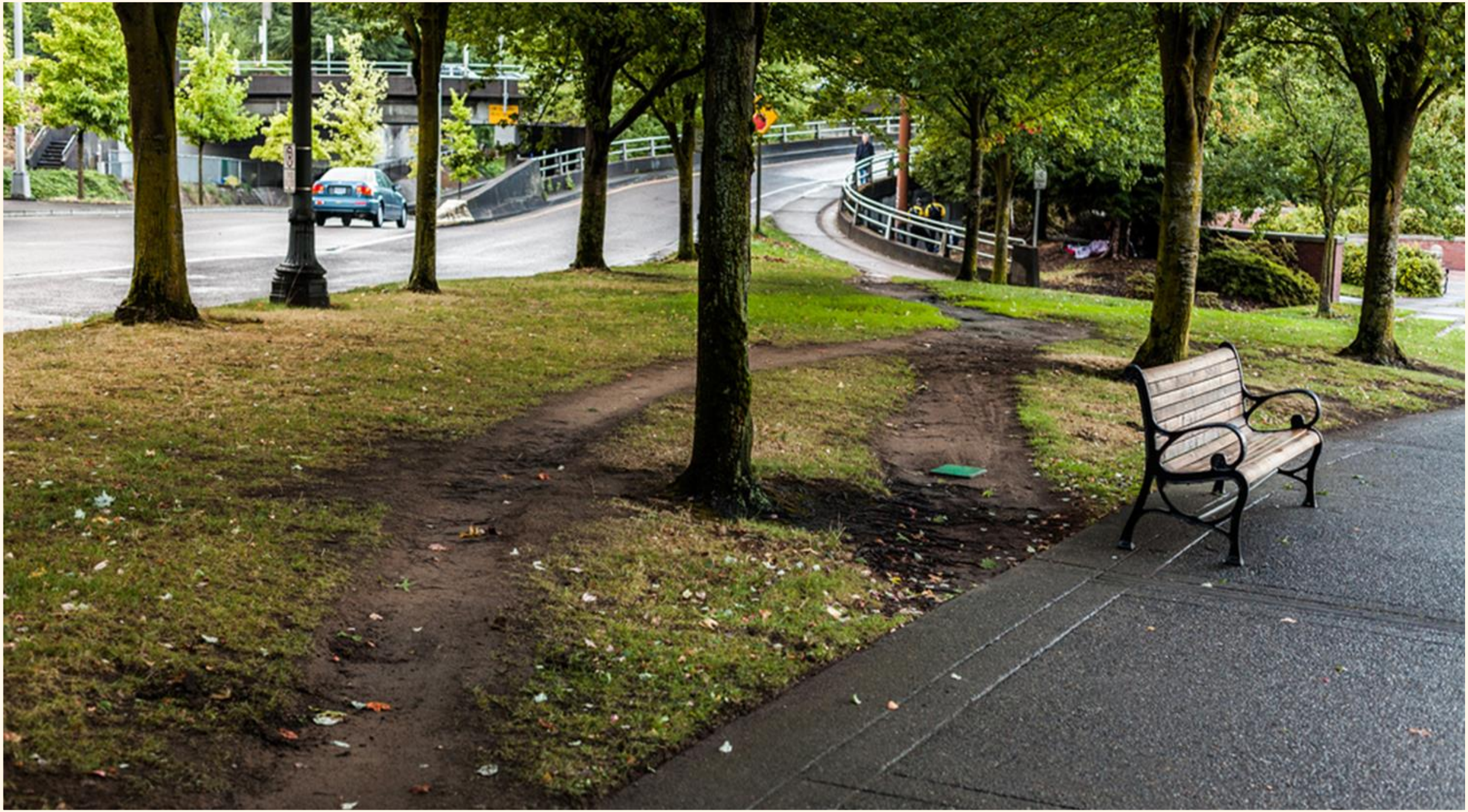
- ✓ Community and Connectedness
- ✓ Awareness and Intentionality
- ✓ Spirituality

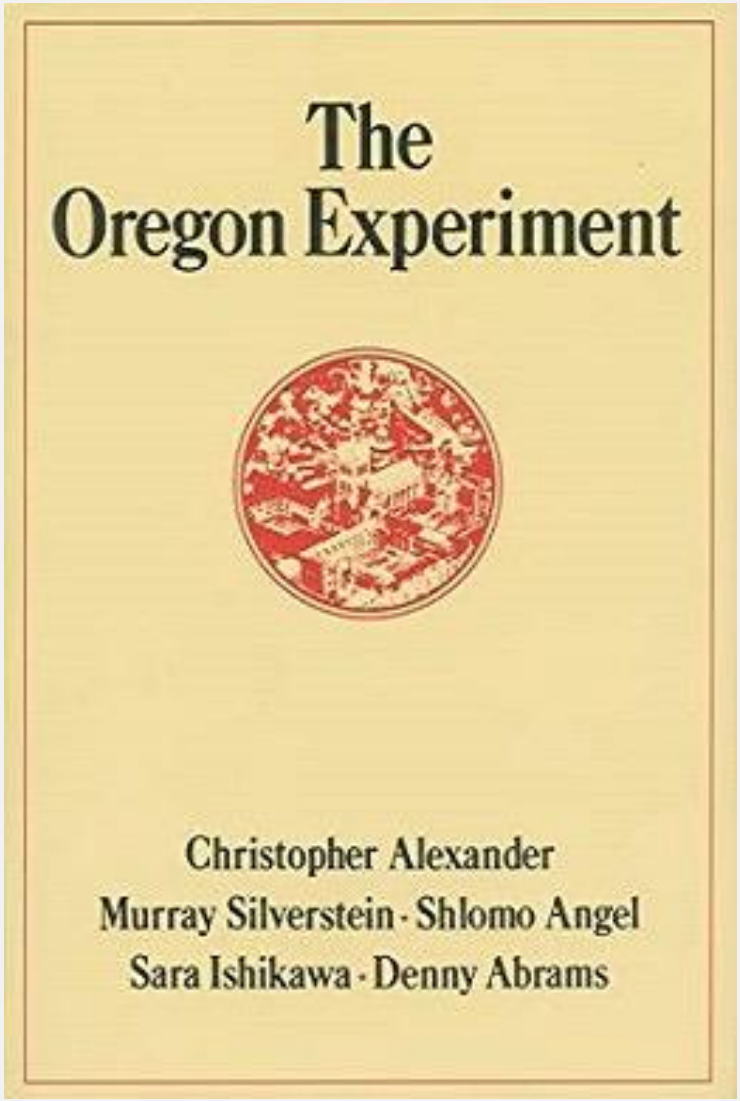
Religious rituals, sporting events (Ohio State v Michigan, Army v Navy)

Intentional Experience Design In Action

Removing negatives > Boosting positives

The aim of the wise is not to secure pleasure, but to avoid pain--Aristotle.





The best design processes
are those that adapt
to the problem you want to solve -
and not the other way around.

Don’t design experiences.
Design for experiences.*

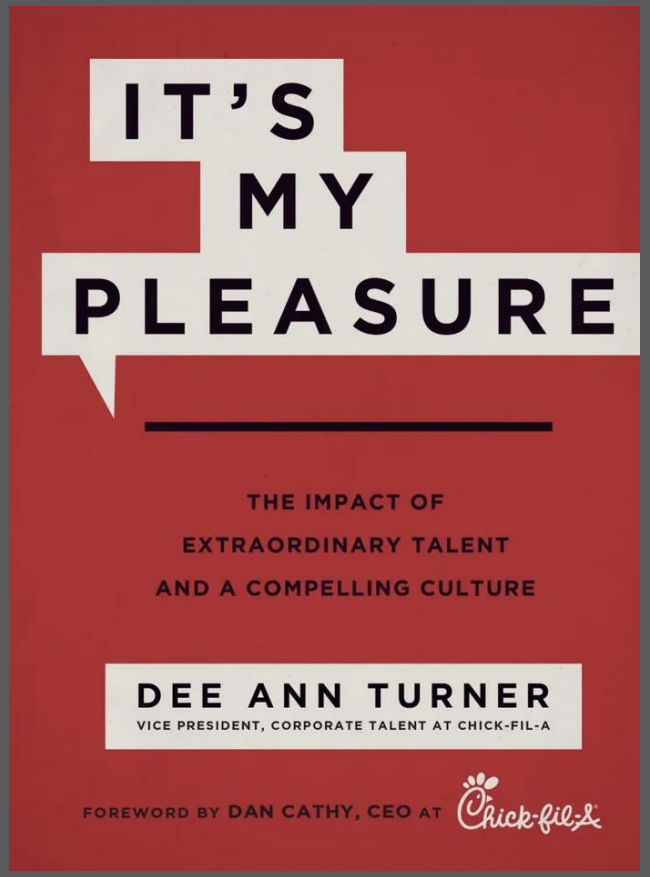
Don’t Fight the Dirt Path!

4 MOMENTS OF TRUTH

- Zero = Search
- First = First Sight
- Second = Experience (TT)
- Ultimate = Engagement

Trademark Transactions

(MoT)


IT'S MY PLEASURE
THE IMPACT OF EXTRAORDINARY TALENT AND A COMPELLING CULTURE
DEE ANN TURNER
VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE TALENT AT CHICK-FIL-A
FOREWORD BY DAN CATHY, CEO AT Chick-fil-A

Chick-fil-A

“We’ve been here!”

Evidence-based

A customer service company who sells shoes

10:43 customer service call!

Time/Reliability/MoT

Hourglass Traffic Lights

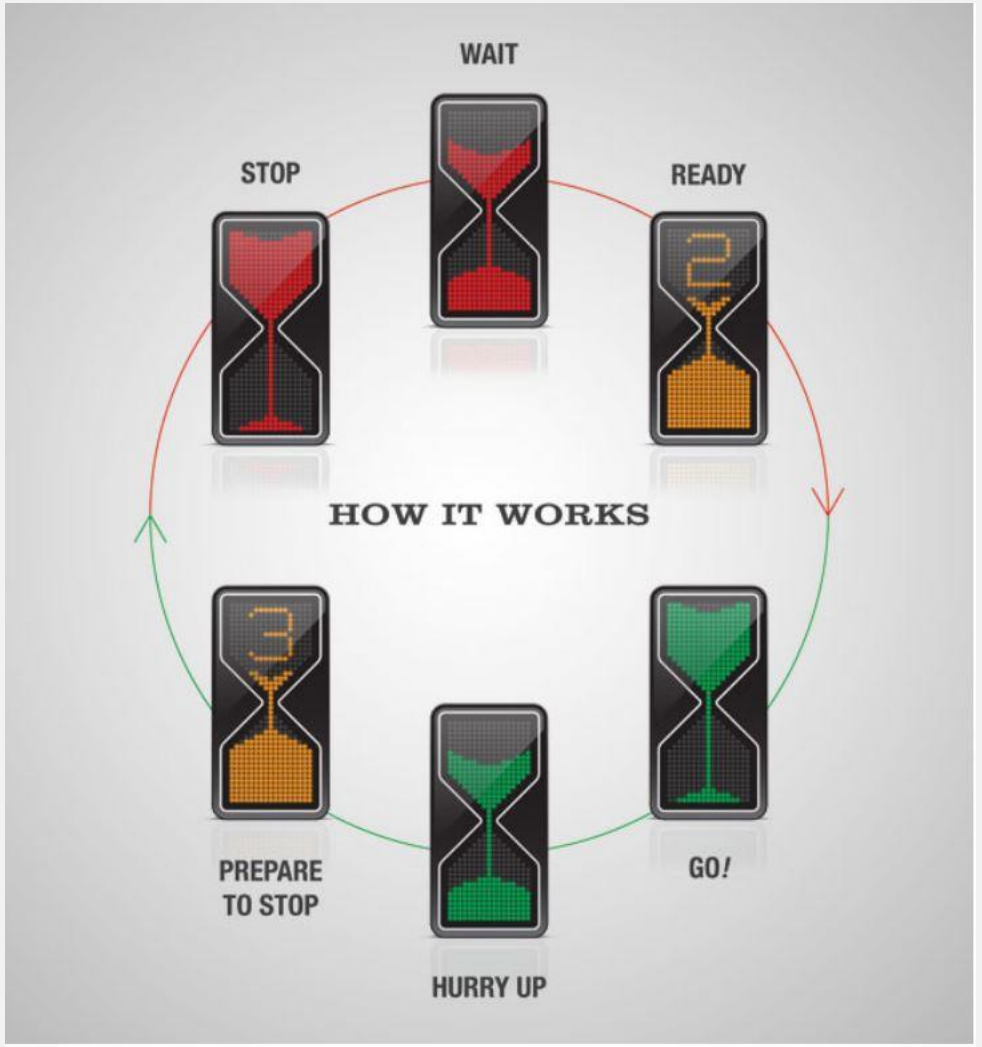


Image credits: Thanva Tivawong

Overnight Test Drives

(try ownership on for size!)

Experiential/Trial-inducing

Roger's

Jogging Personnel

Free shuttles

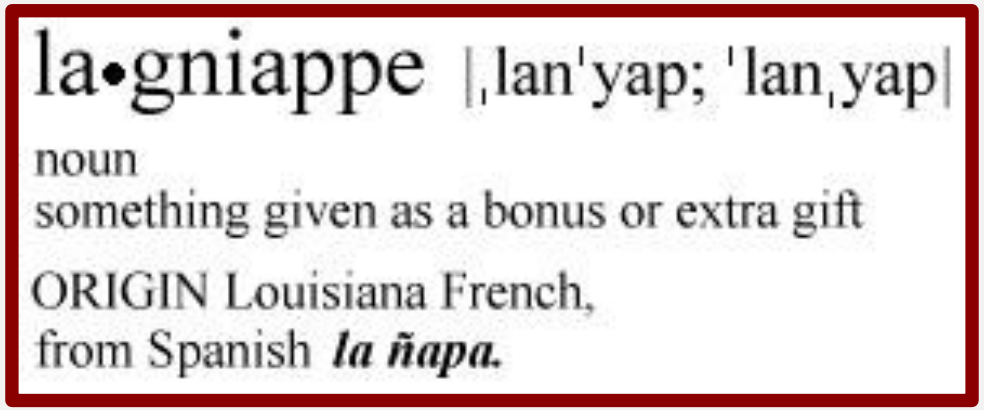
Fear of unknown servicemen

Anti-phobia/MoT

The Invisible Appetizer

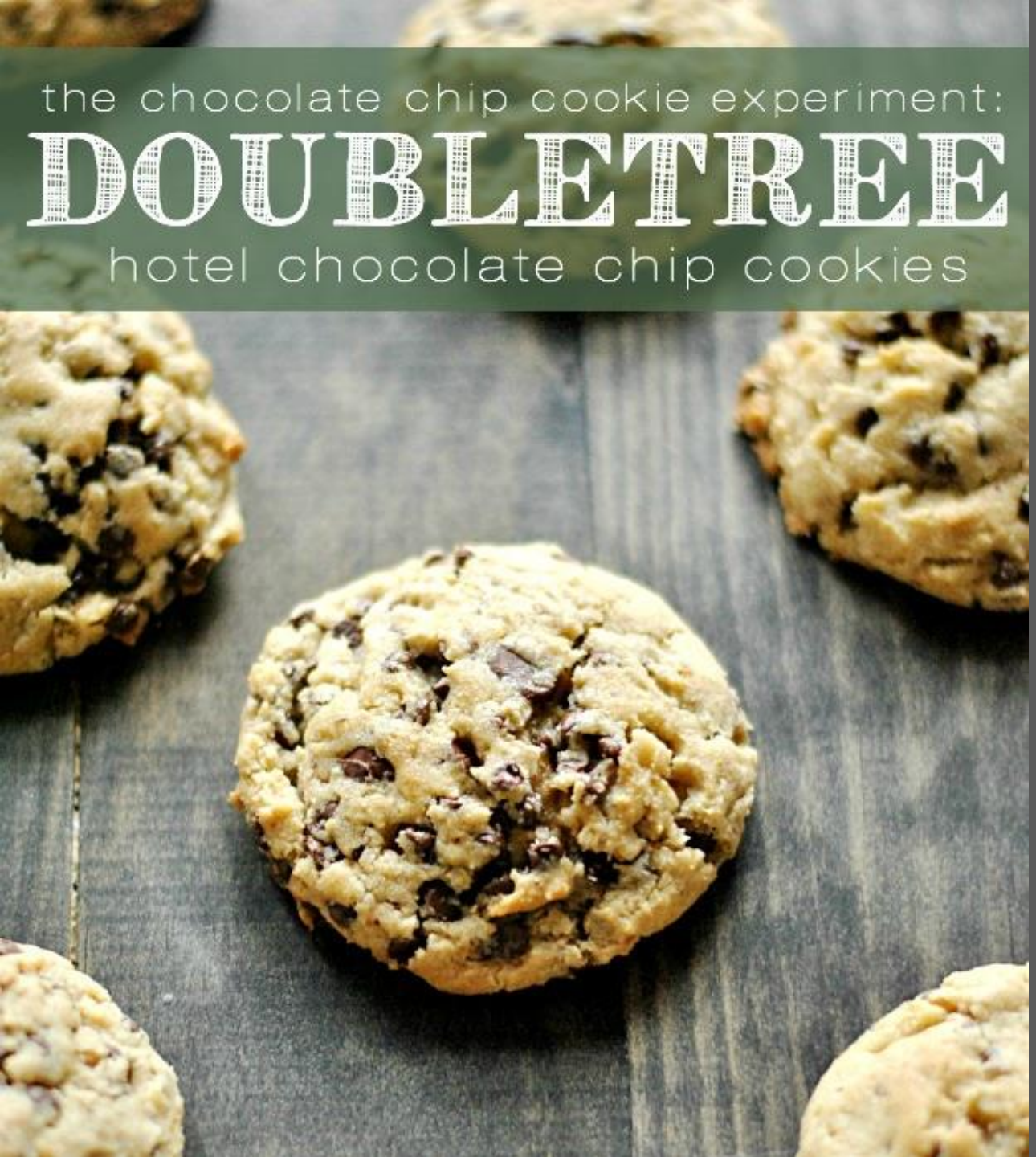
Average spending increases ~3.0% when pleasant aromas are present. Up to ~23.%. No other sense triggers such strong nostalgia and instant feelings/cravings

Lagniappe



“Something extra”

“Simple pleasure”



Sweet Dreams baby!

Ye Olde Baker

FIVE GUYS®
BURGERS and FRIES

Generous Bag Pour

TIFFANY & CO.

Free cleaning for life

Doggy Bag comes back with love!

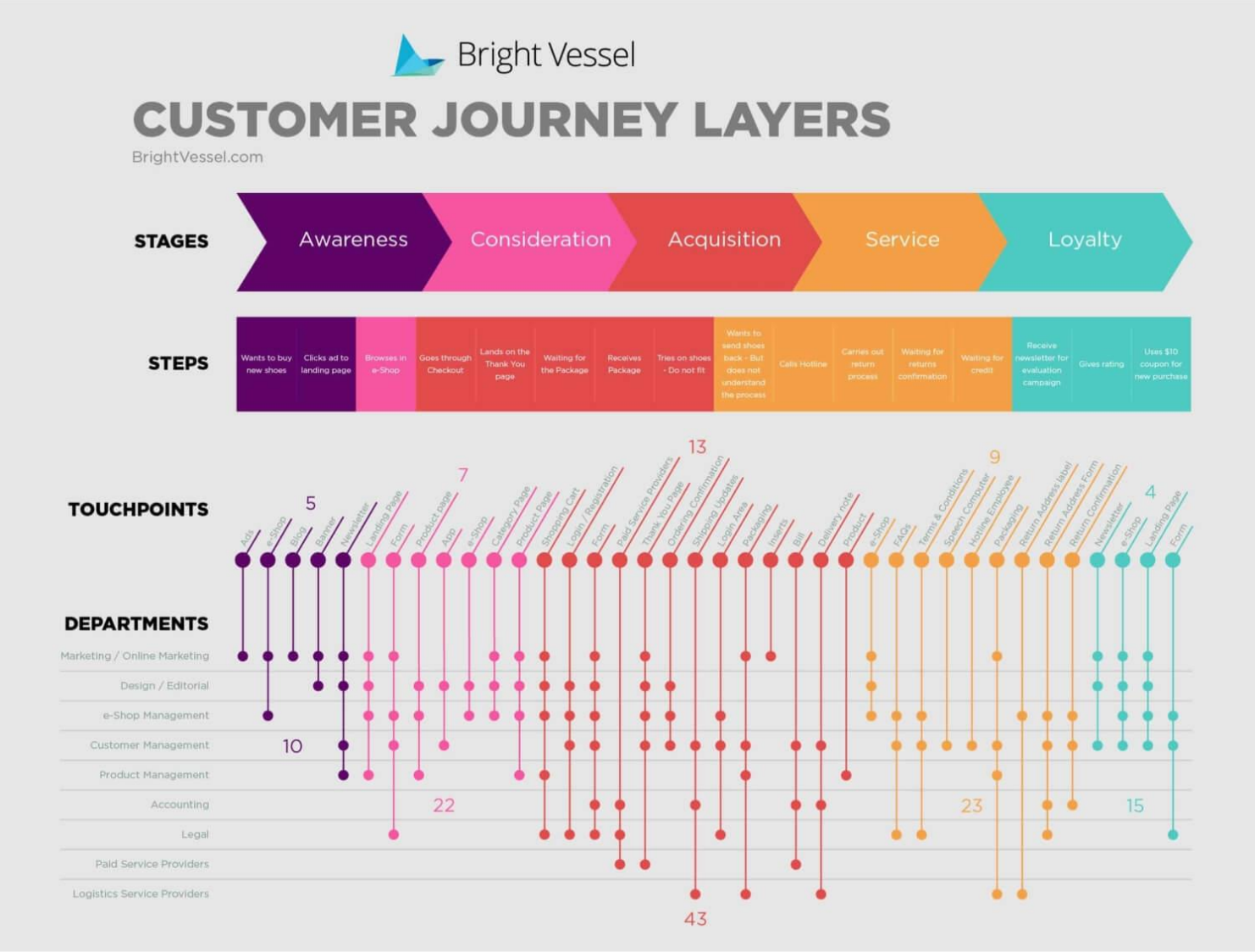
A properly managed experience design has no dead ends

WHEN DO YOU KNOW YOU'VE SUCCEEDED?
Begin with an audit (self/user)

Strongly Agree (1) or Strongly Disagree (5)

1. NVLF always listens to me and remembers my preferences and needs
2. My NVLF experiences are meaningful and memorable
3. Because the NVLF knows and understands me, my experiences are always timely and relevant
4. RNVLF staff and employees are always thinking ahead for me
5. Consistency and relevance are maintained regardless of the many experiences over time
6. Over time, I've come to trust the NVLF more and more; and I'm willing to deepen my relationship with them
7. I plan to share my positive NVLF experiences with others

Experience Design is a team sport



CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAPPING
WHO IS THE CUSTOMER?
AGE?
INTERESTS?
VALUES?
ATTRIBUTES?
THE "I"
THE CONTEXT OF A CUSTOMER
THIER GOALS AND SUCCESS
INSURANCE
RELEVANT CONTENT
SELF ACCOMPLISHMENT
GETTING RAISE
INTEGRATION
A GOOD PRICE
AN EASY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
HOW DO WE HELP CUSTOMERS REACH GOALS?
CROSS DEVICE EASE OF USE
CHECK-INS NOTIFICATIONS
UNDERSTAND UNIQUE NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS
PERSONALIZED
ALLOW FOR FEEDBACK AND TESTIMONIAL
PROVIDE ADVICE
METRICS OF SUCCESS
CUSTOMER ADVOCACY
ENGAGEMENT
TIME SPENT DURING ENGAGEMENT
MARKETING METRICS
PROVEN TECHNIQUES
•CREATE PERSONAS
•FOLLOWING UNIQUE BEHAVIORS
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT IS WORKING?
CREATING HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE
FINDING OPPORTUNITIES
COMPLETING KEY ACTIVITIES
LESSONS LEARNED
•YOU LEARN BY TESTING
•MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS AFTER THE SALE
RELEVANCE POST-PURCHASE
•YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO GAUGE SUCCESS
•MEET CUSTOMERS AT THEIR STAGE OF THE JOURNEY
•CUSTOMERS ARE NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL

THE JOURNEY OF A VETERAN CONSIDERING COLLEGE

A journey of transition, discovery, decision, and transformation.

Every veteran's path is unique.
This journey highlights common moments that shape the decision to pursue higher education—and what happens along the way.

1 TRANSITION
Leaving the military brings a mix of pride, relief, and uncertainty about what's next.

Key Question:
What's my purpose now?

2 EXPLORATION
Questions about college begin to surface. Conversations with peers, family, or fellow veterans spark curiosity.

Key Question:
Is college the right path for me?

3 INFORMATION SEEKING
Researching options, understanding benefits, and learning about admissions, costs, and credit for prior experience.

Key Question:
Can I afford it? Where do I start?

4 DECISION POINT
Balancing opportunities and concerns. Weighing time, finances, family, and the unknown.

Key Question:
Can I commit to this and succeed?

5 TAKING ACTION
Applying, completing FAFSA, connecting with a school or advisor, and preparing for the next chapter.

Key Moment:
I'm making it happen.

6 FIRST STEPS
Starting classes and navigating a new environment. Building routines, finding resources, and meeting new people.

Key Moment:
I belong here.

7 GROWTH & PURPOSE
Overcoming challenges, gaining confidence, and seeing progress toward goals. Envisioning the future.

Key Moment:
I'm building the future I want.

WHAT YOU MIGHT FEEL

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Uncertain Overwhelmed Excited for change	Curious Hopeful Skeptical	Motivated Overwhelmed Informed	Conflicted Anxious Determined	Relieved Excited Empowered	Adjusting Challenged Supported	Confident Focused Proud

SUPPORT ALONG THE WAY

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• Fellow Veterans • Family & Friends • Transition Programs	• Peer Conversations • Veteran Communities • Mentors	• School Websites • VA Education Benefits • Advisors & Counselors	• Family Support • Veteran Mentors • Financial Guidance	• School Advisors • Enrollment Support • VA Certifying Officials	• Veteran Student Orgs • Tutoring & Support • Faculty & Advisors	• Career Services • Alumni Networks • Continued Mentorship

YOU'VE SERVED YOUR COUNTRY. NOW INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE. College can be the next mission—and you don't have to do it alone.

SERVICE » CAMPUS » CAREER

NVLF-informed journey map for a veteran considering college

NVLF lens

Partner with universities to improve the higher education experience, build belonging, and create campus-to-career pathways.

85+ affiliated institutions

80,000+ military-connected students

1,000,000+ total students influenced

2021 foundation launched

1 Consider · 2 Choose · 3 Belong · 4 Lead · 5 Scale · 6 Prepare · 7 Launch

REFRAME MISSION

Formative moment

Service experience becomes evidence of leadership, discipline and resilience. College is considered as the next mission.

Key question: Is college the right next mission for me?

NVLF touchpoint

NVLF frames military-connected students as campus assets with distinctive needs.

FIND LANDING ZONE

Decision filter

The veteran looks for real support: admissions help, benefits guidance, financial aid, accessibility, family support and peers.

Key question: Who here understands my path?

NVLF touchpoint

NVLF-affiliated institutions and Mil-Vet offices become signals of fit.

BUILD BELONGING

Early trust

Community events, mentoring, campus guides, benefits navigation, wellness programs and family-friendly activities reduce isolation.

Key moment: I am not doing this alone.

NVLF touchpoint

MCAs act as peer force multipliers for the campus Mil-Vet office.

LEAD ON CAMPUS

Identity shift

A student may become or work with a Military Community Advocate: 4-6 hours a week, service scholarship, project funds and resume-building impact.

Key moment: My service becomes campus impact.

NVLF touchpoint

MCA projects build mentoring, wellness, policy improvement and campus recognition.

CHANGE THE SYSTEM

From support to influence

Leadership Fellows, Leadership Forum, Advancement Awards and the Digital Resource Hub help campuses share proven practices.

Key question: How can the campus become military-inclusive?

NVLF touchpoint

NVLF develops student leaders and campus leaders together.

CHOOSE PATHWAY

Career clarity

Pathways connect leadership experience and academic work to Entrepreneurship, Health & Wellness, STEM and other career directions.

Key question: Which field matches my skills and purpose?

NVLF touchpoint

Pathways adds coaching, professional development, mentorship and practical experience.

LAUNCH CAREER

Next mission

Career workshops, internships, employer connections, Service Gradlign job matching and lifelong learning options translate military skills.

Key question: Can I turn college into a career launchpad?

NVLF touchpoint

The journey ends with confidence, not just enrollment.

Experience flow

Uncertain (curious) → Seen (validated) → Connected (supported) → Empowered (useful) → Influential (respected) → Focused (prepared) → Confident (career-ready)

Support along the way

Mil-Vet Services · Military Community Advocates · Peers, family, mentors · Faculty + career services · Campus leaders + donors · Employers + community allies · NVLF national network

Sources synthesized from NVLF public materials and partner announcements; detailed citations are provided in the accompanying response.

NATIONAL VETERANS LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

Thought Starters for NVLF Rituals

Small rituals with meaning that veterans may carry for a lifetime.

Rituals tend to stick when they are simple, voluntary, repeated, identity-affirming, and tied to belonging, purpose, and service.

1 START THE NEXT MISSION

- Next Mission card
- First-day challenge coin
- Boots to Books handoff
- First notebook inscription
- First class walk-in

2 BELONGING & BUDDY SUPPORT

- Buddy check ritual
- "Leave no one behind" practice
- "Why I'm here" round
- Quiet place on campus
- Name your strengths

3 REFLECTION & RESILIENCE

- Mission brief
- "Before I walk away, I call..." card
- Semester ruck check
- Two-minute after action review
- Carry a phrase

4 FAMILY & REMEMBRANCE

- Family recognition moment
- Empty chair
- 15-second moment of silence
- One person behind me

5 LEADERSHIP & LEGACY

- Earned patch, pin, or stole
- Letter to future self
- Graduation handoff to an incoming veteran
- "My service continues through..." pledge

6 CAREER & LIFELONG SERVICE

- First internship or job reflection
- Annual personal service day
- Service → Campus → Career mindset

SERVICE | CAMPUS | CAREER

The strongest rituals help veterans carry service forward, build belonging on campus, and turn growth into lifelong purpose.

Minimum Loveable Experience

“World-class experience design is a world in which everything is bought, and nothing is sold.”

THANK YOU!