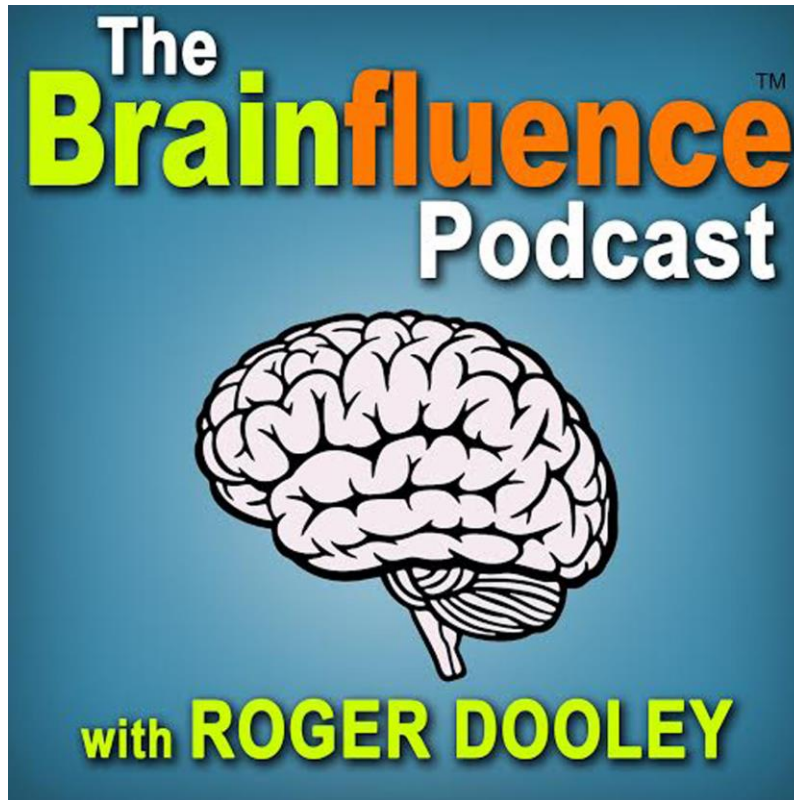


Ep #138: The Customer Loyalty Loop with Noah Fleming



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Roger Dooley

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Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast with Roger Dooley, author, speaker and educator on neuromarketing and the psychology of persuasion. Every week, we talk with thought leaders that will help you improve your influence with factual evidence and concrete research. Introducing your host, Roger Dooley.

Roger: Welcome to the Brainfluence Podcast. I'm Roger Dooley. Our guest this week is a return visitor, and he's one that I've had the good fortune to meet in person. Noah Fleming focuses on an important topic both in his work and in his writing. He's the author of Evergreen: Cultivate the Enduring Customer Loyalty That Keeps Your Business Thriving. We talked about that book at Noah's last visit way back in Episode number 43. Noah's new book is The Customer Loyalty Loop: The Science Behind Creating Great Experiences and Lasting Impressions.

Welcome back to the show, Noah.

Noah: Thank you very much. You said that was Episode 43?

Roger: Yeah, you're-

Noah: What episode are you at now?

Roger: This, I think, will be 138-ish, so we're-

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Noah: Congratulations. ...

Roger: Almost 100 episodes ago. I guess time flies when you're having fun.

Noah: That's amazing. Congratulations for that.

Roger: It's a matter of just survival or grinding away at it, I think, but persistence sometimes pays off. Sometimes it's just persistence, but it's fun. Really, when I look back at the amazing folks I've been able to talk to, that really makes it interesting and fun and worth the effort.

Noah: Right.

Roger: Anyway, Noah, congrats on the new book. So many books about sales and marketing are sort of experience- and opinion-based books, but you incorporate a lot of behavior, science, and psychology research to back up your recommendations. Unlike books from academics, too, that may take that same approach, you include a lot of real-world experience and very sort of actionable tactics. I think that our listeners are really going to find The Customer Loyalty Loop to be in their sweet spot, since most of them enjoy a science-based approach to business that at the same time is really practical, so congrats on that.

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Noah: Thank you. Yeah, you know, it's funny, because I love those books as well that bring in the consumer psychology and everything that's going on, but like you said, I try and bring in the real-world experience, so I'm out there every day working with clients. Some of these clients, for example, in really bizarre and interesting industries that a lot of people would think, "Why are they even interested in these sorts of things," but what I'm finding is, more importantly, they see results when they start to apply some of these concepts.

I think that's really cool, and I think ... One of my favorite things about Cialdini's first book, which is kind of the classic consumer psychology book, is he also spent time in the ... Even though he was an academic, he spent a lot of time in the field in that book actually working with these companies to make sure that these concepts of persuasion were really valid and true. I love that approach. When I had the chance to meet Cialdini, he said, "There is real power there in being a ... by not just the academia point of view, but, again, the real-world experience." I think that's a great point.

Roger: Yeah, he was on the show again just a few weeks ago, and it was great to talk to him about his new book, Pre-Suasion, which took him 30 years, but I guess it was worth the wait. Have you read that one yet, Noah?

Noah: I've read bits and pieces of it. I was lucky and fortunate enough to spend some time with Dr. Cialdini last year where he was talking about the book, and he talked about how it took a long time to write. The really interesting thing that I found is that we

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were both looking at a very similar concept, in my opinion. The concept of Pre-Suasion is very similar to what I call the first stage of the customer loyalty loop. I found there was just some sort of interesting commonality there that we were kind of both looking at the same area of focus and how that applied to business today.

Roger: Yeah, makes sense. I think something that Cialdini has done, too, in preparing for Pre-Suasion, he actually went out into the field to observe master salespeople and other people who were doing the real-world job. Might not be the same exact thing as actually going out and being a salesman for 20 years, but nevertheless, he really tried to learn from the people who were the best at what they were doing and incorporate that knowledge. I thought that was pretty interesting for, as you say, a guy who is primarily an academic, but that's why he's so good, I guess.

Noah: I absolutely think so, and I think that's why his book was such a classic, because it wasn't just ... You know, his first book, it wasn't just the academic point of view. The best thing about that book, which I talk about in The Customer Loyalty Loop, by the way, is that for 10 years, that book did nothing, and, you know, he loves to talk about this where he went back to work and little did he know that that book was slowly becoming this cult classic within education, within sales and marketing divisions of schools and different companies. It wasn't until 10 years later that Influence became such a best seller. I love that part of the story.

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Roger: Right, well, about seven or eight years from now, we can look back at our books that are both fighting for the top of the New York Times Best Seller List years after introduction. Noah, you're pretty loyal to the concept of loyalty, it seems. Why is loyalty so important? Why are you making that your focus?

Noah: It's funny, as a customer loyalty expert, I actually really dislike the term "customer loyalty," and I dislike it for a few reasons. One is that it implies that the customer has a duty to be loyal, and I've based the majority of my work in saying, no, that's absolutely false. The customer has no responsibility to be loyal to you. A customer is only loyal after their last engagement with us, after their last experience with us. That concept is so important, but we have to think about it across a very broad spectrum. The customer has no duty to be loyal. It's up to us to create the loyalty.

Now some experts will tell us you do that through a great concept like "wow" customer service, but then they don't actually tell us what "wow" customer service is or how we do that. I talked about this in my first book, Evergreen, where I said, "Everybody says it's five times more valuable to keep the existing customer. The problem is nobody ever tells us how to make the existing customer five times more profitable, how we earn five times more revenue from that customer." That's what I've tried to apply to the work that I do with my clients and then into my writing.

Roger: Yeah. I think that "wow" factor can be kind of overrated. I read a book fairly recently called The Effortless Experience, and the

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premise of those authors, whose names escape me right now, is that customers really aren't out there looking for a "wow" experience. They aren't looking for the company that screws up but then recovers in heroic fashion, these sort of great stories of the Zappos customer service rep who talked with a customer for 10 hours and that sort of thing. What they're really looking for is an experience that is as smooth and effortless as possible.

I look at Amazon. I'm a loyal Amazon customer. You're in Texas. We experienced a few years ago about an 8% price increase from Amazon because suddenly we had to pay sales tax where in the past we hadn't, and from other mail order companies we still don't in most cases. I surprisingly found my behavior didn't change much. To me, that is sort of true loyalty because their experience is so smooth and so predictable that it simply wasn't worth the hassle of trying out other companies and seeing if they could come close to meeting that standard of service. For all the great stories about companies that totally wow their customers and go out of their way to create an individualized, amazing experience, I think that a lot of people are looking more for that "just let me do what I want to do as simply as possible and get it right every time."

Noah: I think that's absolutely true. While I think there's a time and a place for those moment ... By the way, just go back to it quick, The Effortless Experience was written by a couple of guys named ... Matthew Dixon, I believe, was the key author. I wholeheartedly agree with you, and I talk about this in the book. There's extreme value in just being good and consistent. In fact, my next book is going to be called From Dismal to Good

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instead of From Good to Great, because if you can just be good consistently-

Roger: Sounds like a parody book, Noah.

Noah: This is very serious, trust me. I'm actually going to write this book, because if you can just be consistently good and deliver on the expectations that you've promised in your sales and marketing, answer your phones, respond to e-mails timely. I had one company where ... I like the company and I buy from them often, but then I sent a customer service e-mail and I didn't get a response for literally months. I'm talking months. Then they respond to it like no time has passed. Then I respond to that because they responded to my question with a question. They didn't even answer me. Now, I'm waiting again.

I think if you can just be consistently good, and there is a lot of power in that concept of the effortless experience, but more importantly, just be good most of the time throughout the whole experience. That's what The Customer Loyalty Loop's about, thinking about all the customer moments that you have throughout the entire customer journey. The customer experience does not start once a customer buys something from you. The customer is experiencing the whole time.

They're experiencing the first time they read about your business. The first time they see an ad from your business, they're starting to experience. The first time they try and call your business, the first time they see something from a

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salesperson, they're experiencing. That experience keeps going. What I wanted to look at in this book was how can we tap into what the customer's thinking at each stage there and make sure that we're doing things in a way that's going to set the stage for them to continue buying from us again and again and again.

Roger: Just to kind of play devil's advocate, it seems like loyalty might be achieved by just sort of doing things right. As long as you don't screw up too badly, you can create loyalty. The emphasis on new customer acquisition that, of course, you and basically every other expert takes issue with, that businesses spend three-quarters of their time and money on acquiring new customers instead of working on developing existing customers, that's the common wisdom, but, of course, most businesses, even though they hear, "focus on your existing customers," don't do it. They just keep trying to get new customers. Is that really a bad strategy? Can you sort of keep your existing customers on autopilot if you're doing a good job and actually spend most of your effort trying to bring new customers into that fold where, hopefully, most of them will remain?

Noah: Yeah. It's an excellent point. I will be the first to tell you that, yes, you need to be focusing on your existing customers. In my first book, I called it the addiction to sex. We're addicted to the glitzy, sexy marketing concepts. That said, a new customer and new customers coming in are really the lifeblood of your business to keep that business flowing, so you absolutely need new customers. Again, though, with the customer loyalty loop, what happens is even after we've given a great experience and

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somebody's done business with us, even after they've had a fabulous time staying at our hotel or purchasing a product from us, the marketing, the loyalty-building needs to continue. You can put it on autopilot. You can keep that customer in there. You just need to recognize that that process doesn't stop.

Again, what I've tried to look at here is, okay, so if we've got four stages that the customer is going through in the typical customer journey, and I have four, what happens in that fourth stage, and I call that the happily-ever-after stage, you need a process for retention. You need a process to generate testimonials. You need a process for word of mouth. One of the things I say in there is, "Stop measuring NPS scores," because I am so fed up with these net promoter surveys that I get that say, "How was your service? What would you give us, one through 10?" and I give them a nine and I say, "I'm absolutely willing to recommend you to friends." Then they come back and they say ... Nobody ever asks, "Well, why weren't you recommending us to friends?" Because you haven't asked me to do it. You haven't given me a process. You haven't given me the tools to do that.

When I talked earlier about some of these companies that come to me and I work with, companies that are making million-dollar oil rig manufacturing products, these huge pieces of machinery, why is that important to them? Because they recognize that there's a point after that sale that they can get a testimonial, they can build a case study, they can get that word of mouth, but they have to have a process in place to ask for it. They have to have a process in place to get the customer back through the door. Again, it's not just enough to say, "We provide

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world-class customer service," because everybody says that. You need to think about what are the business processes that you need in place through each stage of the customer experience to keep that customer coming back.

Roger: The first stage that you talk about, Noah, is imagination before persuasion. You started to allude to that, what's happening even before the customer places the order. You've got the ads they've seen and so on, but explain how companies should think about this other than just sort of a sales funnel process. How do you change that experience so that it's actually part of that loyalty process?

Noah: Again, if you think back to ... We originally started talking about Cialdini's new book, which is Pre-Suasion, and he's essentially saying you have a chance to pre-suade before you have a chance to persuade. Essentially, I'm saying something very similar here. We have a chance to set the stage of the experience to come before we actually try and sell them. I think back to some of the famous examples in the book, like the Shackleton ad, which I'm sure some of your listeners know what that is. If you don't, look it up and read that ad. The story behind that ad is it generated 5,000 responses because it painted a picture of the experience to come. It painted a picture in the mind of what was actually coming, and so they had this massive response rate to this ad.

One of the famous and best examples of this is Schlitz beer, and this comes back to Claude Hopkins, who wrote one of the best-selling books in sales marketing of all time. Jay Abraham,

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who's still a living guru of modern marketing, he called this preemptive marketing. What they said there was that in that first stage, you have an opportunity to implant essentially the movie that you want this prospective customer to see, the imagination of what the experience is to come, and you have a chance to essentially preempt all of your competition right there at that moment by thinking about and showing them what to expect, what to come.

Again, the Schlitz beer story was Claude Hopkins walked through the beer factory and he saw all these great things happening. He saw 12 scientists behind glass walls in a white room. He saw this bottle-washing machine that was washing bottles 12, 13, 14 times. Claude Hopkins, this marketing consultant back in, I think it was 1919, he looked at them and he said, "Why aren't you talking about these things in your sales and marketing material?" The beer guy said, "Well, because everybody does these things. It's nothing special."

Claude said, "Yeah, but nobody's talking about them," and so they built a marketing campaign around this concept of preemptive marketing essentially where they started telling the story of not just all the great value that was going into the product, but what was to come once you experience that. That's really what's happening in the first stage. You need to think about how you set the stage for the experience to come.

Roger: Right. By focusing on some of those cool things that were going into the process, even though they weren't unique or competitive difference, by being the first one to the consumer

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with that, they sort of occupy that space. Their competitors really could only respond, "Well, I guess we do that too," as opposed to sort of owning that concept in the customer's mind.

Noah: Yeah. There's a very simple workshop you can do if you have a team of people or your marketing team or your sales team, but you can sit them down and you can say something like, "Okay, everybody make a list of what's everybody in our industry doing. Everybody's doing the same thing. What's everybody in our industry doing that's not necessarily differentiated but that's interesting, it's valuable, our customers would appreciate it, and nobody's talking about it."

That's essentially what they did with Schlitz beer, and you'll find those things in our businesses. What I think is that in that first stage, we can really set the experience of what's to come. It's really giving this opportunity to solidify ourselves as the mainstay, top provider in our industry and then saying, "Look, here's what to expect. Here's what's coming down the pike. Here's the experience we're going to deliver, and here's what makes us unique and different." Even if you're not that differentiated, you can still differentiate. You can differentiate your difference, if that sounds correct.

Roger: Probably in that same phase, we seem to be talking about Cialdini a lot here, but he's certainly a key influence for all of us. You talk about the waiter study with mints. What does that have to do with building business loyalty?

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Noah: That's one of his classic studies, right, in that the servers would bring the mints and then the tips would go up. We can think about that, and we can look at what's the bias here that's happening. How is that actually playing a part? I think it's playing a part in that, again, we're just offering additional value. We're setting ourselves apart, and we're looking at the experience and we're not doing it in a way that's malicious or ill-intent, but we're actually just providing additional value and to really, again, implant in the customer's mind that we've thought this experience through. We're going to do everything we can to bring you to a place of happily ever after.

The second stage is once you're bringing them through this imagination for persuasion, now you have a prospect. You have a lead. What you need to do in this stage is understand that you need to remove ... You and I, before we started, we were talking about this concept of resistance. The big key in stage two is you need to remove all resistance and friction. Now here's where I talk in the book about ... having these tactics and laws of persuasion can get you into trouble. Those tactics and laws of persuasion are so powerful that they can help you get the first sale, but they might harm you from getting the second, third, or fourth sale. Think about that for a minute. Why if you could get the first sale would they impact you from getting the second, third, or fourth sale?

This is where we come to another psychologist, another great thinker called Eric Knowles. Eric Knowles talked about alpha and omega persuasion strategies, and he said, "Alpha strategies are like the Cialdini's laws of persuasion. Use them to increase desire. You use them to create this concept of a

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greased shoot where the customer is sliding down just saying, 'yes, yes, yes, yes,' but omega strategies work to reduce resistance and friction." What he said was you need to remove these things.

Now why is this important? This is important because if we're so good at sales and marketing today, we're so good at conversion marketing, and we're constantly getting better, but if we don't remove the skepticism, if we don't remove some of that resistance very early on, then we might have a problem later on, where the problems that come up are things like the expectations gap, where the customer says, "I believed you were going to deliver something far different because your marketing said this, and now I'm experiencing this." If you think about consultative sales process, which is huge, this is really about removing resistance and friction because you're constantly, again, adding value. Sometimes you need to slow down your sales process to speed it up. This is, again, just about building trust and cementing trust and taking all that stuff out of play early on so you don't have a problem later.

One of the concepts I said in my first book is that you know you have a loyal customer when they don't complain about the small stuff. Think about that. The odd blip, the odd mistake, the odd time you screw up and loyal customers typically just brush it off because they know better, because, again, you've already cemented the trust. You've removed the resistance, you've removed all the friction, but if you've got them and you haven't done that, then these are the people that say, "Hey, wait a minute. Something's a little off here. You got me to buy this, and now I'm experiencing something different." That's really the

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key to the second stage.

Roger: Right. I think it kind of leads into this whole topic of manipulation. That's something that I get asked about all the time when I'm speaking is, "Well, you're talking about these techniques of persuasion, influence, and so on. Isn't that manipulative?" Of course, the short answer is if you are simply tricking the customer into buying something that is not going to be particularly good for them or what they need or they're going to regret their purchase, then it certainly would be manipulative. That's not the way to build a business, because you will have a one-sale customer and very few businesses can survive with that model for very long. As you say, you've got to be sure that you aren't so effective in selling that you end up selling the wrong thing or the customer isn't really ready for what you're selling.

Noah: Right.

Roger: Back to the mint thing. I was thinking a little bit about that, and sometimes when I'm a new customer for a company, they'll send me a card. I'll get a postcard in the mail, or like a little greeting card in the mail or even sometimes a small gift. How important is the personal touch do you think? Because I always have the feeling that, okay, somehow their CRM system kicked out a label, it went to the warehouse and somebody slapped it on a box and sent it as opposed to, yes, they were really pleased that I began to do business with them.

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Noah: Yeah. One of the things I say is it has to be meaningful, it has to be memorable, it has to be personal. Now you're absolutely right. That's the problem with things like send-out cards, which is a big thing that a lot of small businesses use. The problem is because it's not meaningful, it's typically not memorable, and it's certainly not personal. You haven't signed the thing. It's been computer-generated. There's great examples out there of companies that have thrived on making things meaningful, memorable, and personal.

There's a company that was talked about in Forbes that, I think, delivered over 15,000 handwritten note cards to customers, and the results that came from that were massive, this huge demonstrable impact. Now some of the listeners who are with larger companies might be saying, "Well, there's no way we can do that. We have hundreds of customers." I would say, "Well, there's absolutely a way you can do it if you have hundreds of customers." Now if you have millions of customers, that's where things get a little bit more difficult. That's where you run into trouble, when things are being done, again, with this sort of corporate-speak applied to them. There is no sort of meaningfulness surrounding them.

Then you run into situations like Wells Fargo, which we have. There was one thing that was written on their website, one mission, one set of core values, and everybody's running around doing something entirely different. I think if you can just remember those things, that all your customer touch points should be meaningful, they should be somewhat memorable, and they should at the very least be personal. I think that's incredibly important.

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Roger: It was a few years ago now when I did a blog post about a thank-you note that I got, and I happened to know the individuals from a conference and just a thank you for speaking or something like that. It was a very nice little handwritten note, and I knew what and actually wrote about was that this was a service that they use. It was like a VA type service that specialized in handwritten notes, and they're quite inexpensive, but rather than just sending out a machine-generated note of some kind or not doing anything at all, it had that personal touch. It was signed by the operators of the conference.

I thought it was great and something that could really be emulated at quite low cost for most companies. Depending on the value of your sale and so on, it might not scale completely, but in most cases. Obviously, if you count the relatively low volume and having a very personal note written by the salesperson, by the CEO, or whoever would be the relevant one would be optimal, there are ways to scale this that don't cost that much money but still have that somewhat personal touch to them.

Noah: Let me share an example with you, and, again, we're kind of talking about process here that would happen in the fourth stage, which ... We've kind of skipped the third stage now, but the fourth stage is this concept of happily ever after. One of the tools that I give a number of my clients ... Again, think anywhere from a \$20 million to a billion-dollar privately held company. I give them a tool that I call the Pick-3, and the Pick-3 is really simple. It's that whoever is engaged ... Let's say it's the CEO of a \$20 million manufacturing company and he's going to

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run the Pick-3. Now he's going to be the sole point person doing customer retention-related efforts.

What we do is I give him a list of 30 or 40 options of little things that he can do each and every day, and then he just picks three clients and he engages in those. The whole process takes anywhere from five to 15 minutes. Now the really cool thing is that they start to see results instantly that week, because now you've got a company that typically does no outreach, typically has no retention process in place. You give them a very simple retention process. Now we're doing three outreaches a day. We're doing up to 15 a week. Then you multiply that by months, and then you start to get more people involved and these things start to snowball.

Again, going back to that concept of a simple handwritten note, one of the tasks might be for today send three handwritten notes to three of your customers. The whole process takes that person, that CEO, that president 10 minutes, but it makes a huge amount of difference because he sends something that's meaningful, that's memorable, that's personal, and then it has that impact on the customer. It makes them go, "Holy cow, nobody's ever done this before." My clients love this because what they find is that none of their competitors are doing anything like this.

Again, we start to run into some of those challenges, like, well, you know, how do we keep doing this so it's not like we're sending somebody a box of cookies every three months? We change up the touch points. It might be something simple as

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sending a simple e-mail and saying, "Roger, you know, I saw this on the New York Times and I thought of you. I thought you might find this valuable," or it might be far more simplistic like connecting with you on LinkedIn. I give numerous tasks, and what I find here is companies now start to create their own that they can pull in. The idea of just doing something that simple, three tasks a day, that's a retention process, so you don't have a CRM that's spitting out, here's your send-out card, here's your auto-populated mail merge text. You're actually forcing them to do something that has an impact.

Again, I've talked to so many companies that say, "We don't have time to do this. There's no way I could fit that in." Then you get them to try it just for a few days and they start to see the results that come from it. Suddenly, those referrals that they were expecting from their NPS scores, they start to actually come because they're now doing something. Suddenly, they have customers that are giving them testimonials because one of the tasks is to ask for them. This is the type of thing that I'm talking about in the fourth stage, is we need to have the process in place to do these things to keep the customer coming back and keep them in the loop.

Roger: Yeah, and it's really all about ROI. I think that probably most of us feel like we don't have time to add another activity into our daily schedule. We're trying to eliminate activities, and the last thing they want to hear is, "Hey, you need to do this in addition to what you're doing," but as soon as they see that there's a positive return on that time, there's probably some lower-value activity that can be eliminated or pawned off on somebody else.

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Why don't we get to the third phase, experience choreography, since we sort of skipped over that one. What's that about, Noah?

Noah: Sure. The third phase is now quite simply you have a customer, so somebody has decided to engage with you. Now in the book, I talk about how stage one and stage two can happen really quickly. Again, there's not always time to be thinking about the Schlitz beer ads and reducing the friction, reducing resistance. Sometimes you have a customer that's boom, slap, and they're ready to buy and they're there. What can you do in this stage to, again, make that experience meaningful and memorable?

The classic example of this is the single most important person in the hotel, and that's the doorman. The doorman is the single most important person because he's the first person you see and the last person you see. I'm sure, Roger, you could share with us the science behind why the beginnings and the endings are almost the most important, but then you have the moments that happen in the middle.

Now, again, we talked about this earlier, this idea of "wow" experiences and things that we can create. What I would say, I call them remarkable moments. Just look for things that you can add to your experience or do once you have the customer that's remarkable, that's something they want to go home and talk about, something that doesn't necessarily have to cost a lot of money, but something that is valuable. This doesn't mean,

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again, doing gimmicky things like sending pie on pie day. It means just building things into your actual experience that are different, that are better, that are more valuable than what your competitors are doing.

I give a number of examples, again, from hospitality to service to manufacturing companies, to everybody in between to how you can start to think about what this means in your business. The story I give is called the Bentley and the Butler, and the story is essentially if you go to a five-star, high-class hotel, they often have a house car, and they'll often tell you ... The classy example that I had was the St. Regis Hotel in San Francisco where I checked in and then they said, "There's a Bentley out front you can use." "What do you mean there's a Bentley out front I can use?" They said, "Yeah, sir, just let us know where you want to go and we'll take you in the Bentley." This is a remarkable moment, because I don't want to go home and tell people about the pillows, at least in some cases, but what I want to go home and tell people is that they had a freaking Bentley I could use. To me, that's valuable.

There was another hotel I stayed at where they said before I checked in that, "Just so you know, there's a Lexus SUV here that you're free to use." That wasn't they were going to drive me around. That was actually, "We have a Lexus that you can use and drive around." That's something pretty remarkable. That's something that I want to talk about.

Again, I know I'm giving easy examples like the hospitality industry, but in the book I give you a number of examples, and I

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start to give you ways to think about how to build these into your experience. You need to think through what's happening in that experience, what's happening at the beginning of the experience, what's happening at the end of the experience, and then what can we do throughout the entire experience to make it sort of flow naturally rather than having a great beginning, a tapered off experience, and then a great ending, which is what the typical customer experience looks like. Again, they'll try and build in these things that sort of have these peaks and valleys, but you want to make it consistent all the way through.

Roger: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Now I've read a lot of marketing books, particularly doing the podcast, and probably averaging one a week or more, because not everything I read makes it on here. I have to admit, yours is the first book that has mentioned or had a small section on colonoscopies. Explain how that fits into the experience.

Noah: That's a classic study which was done by ... I want to say Murray Seligman either wrote about it or he actually conducted the survey. I can't remember. What they did was they gave a group of men colonoscopies, which is a very serious and important procedure, but it's something that needs to be done, but it's also very painful, very discomforting. Then they gave another group of men the same colonoscopy. Now there was a difference. In one colonoscopy, the colonoscope ... It was a shorter experience and the colonoscope did not move. I'm sorry, the colonoscope did move. It was done, the normal procedure, and it was five minutes or whatever, very painful. Then they gave another group the same colonoscopy that lasted longer, but it was stationary. It did not move.

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What they found was that the second group was more willing to come back and have the colonoscopy again. What this tells us is that people are far more willing to endure something that might be a little discomfoting. They might be willing to engage in it again, provided it's not as painful. Here you have this experience that was shorter and it was painful, and those people, they don't want to do it again because it was damaging. Then you have these other people where, you know what, it took a little bit longer, it was still discomfoting, but it wasn't as painful. These are the people that said, "We're willing to come back and do this again."

You apply this now to your customer experience and think, how does the experience end? How can you make that ending as pleasant as possible so customers are willing to engage in that experience with you again?

Roger: Yeah. It's also sort of a peak experience, too, because if the peak pain is worse, that's probably more memorable in the same way that your high point, your visit to the St. Regis was having this amazing car at your disposal. That's the peak moment. Probably the bed was fine, the pillows were fine, but that's not the thing you remember. You remember the car.

Noah: Yeah, it's the peak end rule, which is the classic peak end rule. There's similar stories of that, for example, where somebody sits and listens to these amazing \$12,000 headphones and they listen to a Beethoven symphony and it's the most wonderful experience they've had in their lives. They've never heard the

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music like this. They've never been able to enjoy it in such profound ways. They're hearing instruments and things they've never heard before.

For a whole hour they listen to this, and then what they do in the last 10, 15 seconds or so, there's a big ... I'm going to simulate this here now, but there's a big noise, a big pop, a big sound or a big screeching thing where they've got to rip off the headphones, pull them off. What they found is that that ruins the entire experience. The person forgets the whole great hour he just had. The person forgets the whole great experience he just had because of that single ending.

Now think about this again in an experience. You have a great meal at a restaurant and then you have a problem when you're trying to pay your bill. That can jade the memory of the entire experience. Think about that when you're engaging a service with somebody. Everything is great. The product gets delivered. Everything's fine. Then all of a sudden something happens with your sales rep or your customer success person or whoever you've got. He says something rude. He says something off base. What do you remember? You don't remember everything good. The customer remembers that one single thing. This, again, applies to that peak end rule. Think about, again, how you can avoid that pain and make it a far more flowing and enjoyable experience.

Roger: Right. You know, this has been an enjoyable experience, and I think with that peak finish there, we're just about out of time. Let me remind our listeners, we are speaking with Noah Fleming,

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customer loyalty expert and author of both Evergreen and the new book, *The Customer Loyalty Loop: The Science Behind Creating Great Experiences and Lasting Impressions*. If you like Brainfluence, I think you'll find Noah's clear and science-based approach combining some really actionable tactics to be in your sweet spot too.

Noah, how can our listeners find you online?

Noah: They can find me online most of the normal ways. They can follow me on Twitter. They can check out, find me on Facebook. They can go to my website, which is noahfleming.com. I write a newsletter every week. It goes out once a week. It's on Tuesdays. Again, it's sort of packed full of these insights, but more importantly, with some practical, pragmatic information. Then, of course, they should absolutely check out both of my books, *Evergreen* or *The Customer Loyalty Loop*, which has just recently come out.

Roger: Great. We will link to all of those things and any other resources we mentioned on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast. Noah, thanks for being on the show, and good luck with the book. I really loved it.

Noah: Thanks for having me back. I appreciate it.

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Thank you for joining me for this episode of the Brainfluence Podcast. To continue the discussion and to find your own path to brainy success, please visit us at RogerDooley.com.