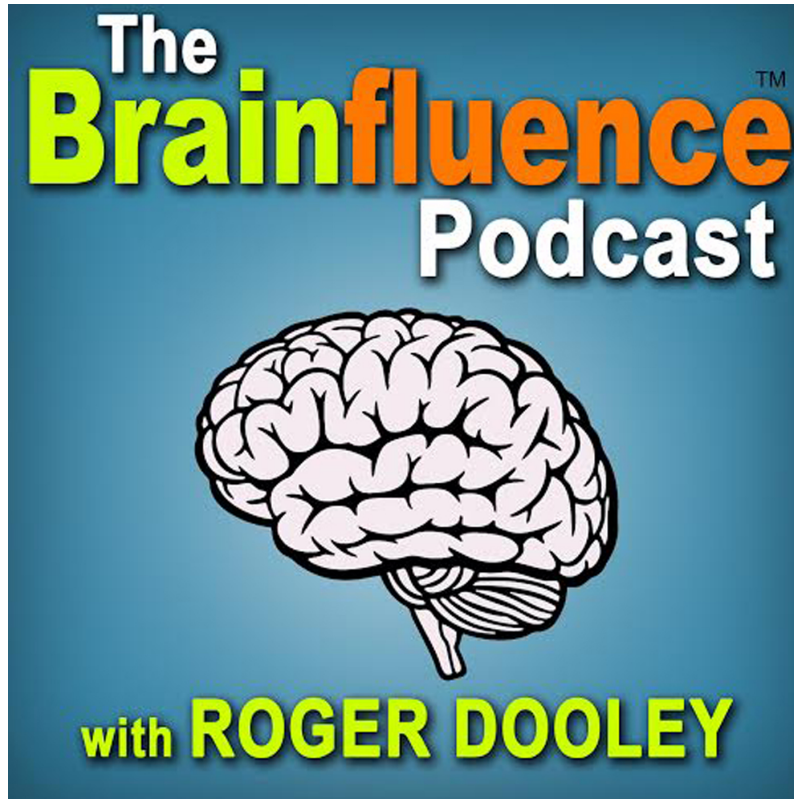


The Ultimate Customer Experience with Micah Solomon

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Roger Dooley

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Welcome to Brainfluence, where author and international keynote speaker Roger Dooley has weekly conversations with thought leaders and world class experts. Every episode shows you how to improve your business with advice based on science or data.

Roger's new book, *Friction*, is published by McGraw Hill and is now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookstores everywhere. Dr Robert Cialdini described the book as, "Blinding insight," and Nobel winner Dr. Richard Clainer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

To learn more, go to [RogerDooley.com/Friction](https://www.RogerDooley.com/Friction), or just visit the book seller of your choice.

Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence. I'm Roger Dooley. Our guest this week has a unique perspective on customer experience. Micah Solomon is an authority on customer service, customer experience, consumer trends, hospitality, and company culture. He's a consultant, keynote speaker, trainer, and training designer, and he's the author of multiple books, including his latest titled *Ignore Your Customers and They'll Go Away: The Simple Playbook for Delivering the Ultimate Customer Service Experience*. Welcome to the show, Micah.

Micah Solomon: Well, thank you so much, Mr. Dooley.

Roger Dooley: Well, Roger, please. Micah, although your main emphasis is in the customer service and experience space, you've got some history in the music industry, right?

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Micah Solomon: Well, the way I got into being a customer service and customer experience consultant and speaker, and as you mentioned, author, is because I owned... I know this is going to sound very quaint at this point, but I owned a company that manufactures CDs and DVDs for independent musicians and filmmakers. Believe it or not, it's still doing well, but I sold it to our biggest competitor.

Micah Solomon: What they loved about my business and what I realized at the time was our key competitive advantage was our customer experience. Our CDs and DVDs weren't any rounder or any shinier than anybody else's, but the way we treated the customer was extraordinary. When I sold that business, I felt that I should reinvent myself and I looked at what I was good at. This was it and wrote my first book at that point.

Roger Dooley: Well, that's great. Now, it seems like the music industry, not your business, but as a whole has been kind of bad at focusing on customer experience. When Napster showed how easy music distribution could be, the music industry didn't say, "Wow, we could really make things great for our customers." Instead, they sued Napster and sort of doubled down on digital rights management. I think that clearly they had to do something about... Well, they most likely had to do something about free distribution of their important product, but I think that they could have invented the Music Store instead of Steve Jobs. Had they said, "Wow, we got to get paid for this stuff, but we can deliver a better customer experience than putting stuff on"—not to disparage your original business, Micah—but “putting stuff on plastic and shipping it around.”

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Micah Solomon: Yeah, and so hopefully that did happen pretty well with iTunes, but it definitely did take a while and it was certainly a third-party.

Roger Dooley: Yeah. Well, it happened, and I think that's something that markets tend to do eventually. If there's a better solution out there, someone in the market will find it. It's not just the music industry. I think that many traditional industry players are really bad at big innovation because it screws up the current business.

Micah Solomon: Oh yeah.

Roger Dooley: Kodak might have owned digital photography, but wow, that would have really messed up their film business, and of course, it eventually did, but they didn't do it.

Micah Solomon: Right.

Roger Dooley: Before we get much farther, Micah, the title of your book is Ignore Your Customers and They'll Go Away. You aren't advocating that our listeners actually ignore their customers, right?

Micah Solomon: Well, not usually, though if there's one that's just driving you bonkers. My feeling on that is that only the CEO really should be able to fire a customer. Generally, I'm saying the opposite, that if you want to have fewer customers, yeah, don't give them much attention, but if you want them to become loyal to you, then learn to personalize, learn to be courteous. Learn all of the things that make the magic happen.

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Roger Dooley: You've got 11 chapters in the book and most cover a different aspect of how to deliver a great customer experience. Is there any one thing, Micah, that you think is most important and sort of one overriding thing that brands or companies should do?

Micah Solomon: No. There's not one thing, but I would say that success with customers is built on first providing what I call a perfect product. Now, we all know that nothing is perfect, but essentially Six Sigma perfect, so very close to perfect within reasonably foreseeable circumstances. Then, you need to have it nice, caring delivery. You need to have people who would deliver it in a caring manner. Then, when things go wrong, you need what I call a problem resolution process. You can't just say to yourself, "Well, we made this perfect product and nothing's ever going to go wrong." You need people to be trained on how to work with upset customers.

Micah Solomon: I think if you have those three you are going to please a lot of customers, but you could still remain in the commodity space, which maybe that's good enough for you if you're selling on price. If not, then I would add a fourth element, which I call anticipatory customer service. That's just going a little bit beyond being reactive. It's anticipating what the customer is likely to want, it's answering questions the customer hasn't even necessarily formulated themselves.

Roger Dooley: What would an example of that be, Micah?

Micah Solomon: Well, a lot of the things that we do with personalization now is very helpful. Certainly, the title, the Ignore Your

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Customer is one way that customers feel ignored is if they come back to your business again, you don't understand their preferences. In the actual moment, speeding up how you're talking or slowing down how you're talking depending on the customer in front of you.

Micah Solomon: Some customers are all business all the time, some customers are all business in the morning. Customers tend to be more impatient in the morning, but they're pretty chill after 5 or 5:30 in their local time zone, and so adjusting to... The customer, a typical reactive business might require the customer to say, "I'm really in a hurry", but an anticipatory business will be sensing that and will adjust to it.

Roger Dooley: How do you do that? Is that something that might be aided by automation or AI? Or are you talking about having those people who are doing the interaction be very good at this, whether it's through natural ability or training?

Micah Solomon: Well, ideally the first thing will be to hire the right people, though I know that starting in the middle of that can be hard. If you want to hire the right people, you need to start looking at more than just being able to plug in them in right away because they have the right skills and the right technical training. You want to hire for personality traits because these tend to be fixed by the time we're adults, and there are certainly exceptions, certainly exceptions. I don't want to overstate it, but if you wanted to know what those are, this is very rough. They spell WET COAT. Imagine a big, wet dog outside if the Petco Superstore, and you will hopefully never forget these.

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Micah Solomon: The traits are warmth, which is just liking people, empathy, which is a little bit more involved. It's sensing what someone else wants before they say it. The T is teamwork, so even if you were... You mentioned Steve Jobs, Steve was great at taking credit for stuff and often great at doing stuff on his own, but I don't know that I would put him as a customer service representative because he wasn't necessarily the most teamwork-oriented person in the world. You need someone who's willing to work with their team to provide a solution for their customer. Then, C is conscientiousness, and this is a broad psychological trait, which includes detail orientiveness. Even if you're warm, you're empathetic. You work with your team. If you don't write down or type down in your calendar, then you promise to follow up with a customer, then you're not being conscientious. You're not probably providing great service.

Micah Solomon: Then, the last one, the O is optimism. An optimistic, explanatory style. A customer can bite your head off and you could... You have a few choices, but the most black and white choices are either you can blame yourself, feel miserable, crawl under the cover, never come back into work. Or, you can dust yourself off, you can think, "Well, I'd like to do a little better all the time, but I think maybe the customer is just having a bad day. I'm going to dust myself off and go back to work."

Micah Solomon: Hiring for trades, whether you use my WET COAT or not, is very valuable. However, most of us already have employees, so what do we do? Well, training is very important in all of these elements. Also, you mentioned AI. The way to use AI if you're going to use it is what I call

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a triangular approach. The three vertices would be the customer, the agent, and the AI. The customer can interact directly with the agent, and the agent can be using the AI behind the scenes to fill in details that she or he might not have in front of them.

Micah Solomon: Or, the customer might start with the AI as in... Sometimes when you go to the dynamic FAQ, the search thing on a website, it's powered by AI, kind of like Google is. You got there, you don't even realize that you're interacting with AI, but it could start there. Or, it could start with the chatbot, and then the human can come in and the AI is behind the scenes at that point, but it is still assisting things that are trivial like finance hacking number and so forth. Yeah, AI can help. More traditional systems like CRM can help. Hiring the right people will help and training them on serving customers will help.

Roger Dooley: Right. Yeah, I'm glad you brought out the aspect of working with existing people because we're closing in on something like 300 episodes of this show and I've had various guests, many of them emphasize that you've got to have the right people doing the job, whether it's for customer experience or some other aspect of business. There seems to be two schools of thought. One is, "Well, you got to hire the right people because people are difficult to change and you probably just need to get the right people in there in the first place."

Roger Dooley: Or, the other school of thought, and I've had some successful business people who basically say, "Hey, I've gotten into horrible situations in companies and have turned things around without any sweeping changes at

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all, not mass layoffs, no big changes." Maybe one or two personnel changes, but often it's just a case of sort of unleashing people's talents and letting them know what's expected of them and what the company needs to survive. I think you're given two paths. If you're hiring new, then try to hire the right people to begin with, but if not, then go with the appropriate training and try and get them to adopt some of those same things or embody some of those same principles that you're talking about.

Micah Solomon: Well, that's exactly right, and the training isn't the whole thing. It's some of the other things that you mentioned, Roger. Making it clear that what the purpose of the company is, what the purpose of the employees are, what the purpose of what they do every day is is extremely important. Are you just following the checklist that you've been given for things to do today? Well, that's fine, but if you know the reason behind the checklist, then maybe you can improve on the checklist. You mentioned innovation. Maybe you can come up with better ways to do things. Maybe it's time to step outside of what your checklist duties are. Maybe it's time to spend more time on part of them. Then, once you serve the customer for the underlying reason... Like at Mayo Clinic, the incredible healthcare institution, the bedrock principle there is the needs of the patient come first.

Micah Solomon: Any employee, whether they're a naturally empathetic employee or not, understands that the needs of the patient come first, so they overhear a conversation where the patient's family is talking about how poorly they were treated and so forth, hopefully this wouldn't happen, but if they hear it, they can go up to them and say, "Absolutely,

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I can help you with that." They're not going to redo the surgery if let's say they're in housekeeping, but they can get you to the right person because they understand the underlying purpose.

Micah Solomon: The issue with hiring a lot of the wrong people, part of the problem if you do that is that you may never get to this beautiful point where you have what I call positive peer pressure. We think of peer pressure as a negative. There's only one teenager in the history of teenagers probably... I'm just postulating this here, but there's only one teenager in the history of teenagers who thought of cultivating tobacco, drying it in their barn, rolling it up. The rest of them either learned to smoke either from Don Draper or they learned to smoke from their peers. We think of peer pressure as a bad thing, but peer pressure can be a good thing as well.

Micah Solomon: There is a psychologist who did a big study that's across cultures. Deborah Rosenberg, and it's a fantastic book, and it's a fantastic concept. When you walk into the Apple Store, why is everyone so eager to please? Well, partly it's because they were hired well. Partly, it's because they were trained well. All the managers initially at the Apple Stores went to the Ritz-Carlton training, so they were trained well. Third, it's the positive peer pressure. People just understand that when you work here, the way things are done here is to be excited about the product and to be excited about serving our customers. Would you ever get to that point of positive peer pressure if you hired all the wrong people? Well, maybe.

Roger Dooley: There'd be a difficult slog I think, Micah.

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Micah Solomon: Yeah. Well, to use one of your favorite terms, you would have a little more friction than you might otherwise.

Roger Dooley: That's right. Take a lot of effort, for sure. Well, while we're talking about positive thinking, you talk about automatic positivity. Why don't you explain that concept?

Micah Solomon: Automatic positivity. This is what I also call a culture of yes. This is the default in your culture is going to be, "The answer is yes. Now, what's your question?" When you walk into Nordstrom, and I am here in Seattle so I can wave to them right now, but you walk into Nordstrom, one of your feelings, because the stores are so beautiful, maybe, "Wow, this is going to be expensive." You wouldn't necessarily be wrong about that, but your other feeling is going to be... Except for twice a year when they have the quite amazing sales, but the rest of the year you realize you're not at a bargain basement place. The other thing that you're going to notice right away is, "Wow, these people really want to say yes to me. They really want to say yes to me." That is their default.

Micah Solomon: That plays up quite wonderfully at Nordstrom. I have an example in the book where my salesperson, Joanne Hassis, H-A-S-S-I-S, I always try to plug here, I asked for something they didn't have, a particular kind of short-sleeved shirt. She couldn't provide it for me, but she found me the URL of a competing retailer where they had those shirts, so they're trying to get to yes, even if it doesn't help them make a sale right then. Richard Branson has very few right now, but they're growing quickly... He has his Virgin Hotels.

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Micah Solomon: One thing you'll notice in your room, well, they call it a chamber, but in your chamber, or also in the hallways at Virgin Hotels, is these very simple phones. The phones have an alphanumeric keypad, but other than that they only have one big button and it says, "Yes". If you press that button, whatever you ask for, they're going to get it for you, as opposed to a traditional hotel guestroom phone which has... I counted usually about 12 extra buttons, which gives you 11 changes to call the wrong number. I pressed bellstand, but really should have pressed... I don't know.

Roger Dooley: The concierge, perhaps?

Micah Solomon: Yeah.

Roger Dooley: Those functions overlap often.

Micah Solomon: Exactly.

Roger Dooley: I've had the same dilemma, like, "Is this housekeeping thing? Or should I just call the front desk?" It's such a simple thing but that makes sense, and of course, to underscore it with the yes. Although, I would say that a lot of companies out there... None of the ones that you've been talking about right now, Micah, but a lot of companies really view the job of their people as to enforce the company's rules and to protect the company from abuse by customers or from giving away too much. That's exactly the wrong attitude if you want to deliver a great customer experience.

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Micah Solomon: Exactly. The only exception is in issues of security, safety, and privacy. I've been to four-star hotels where the self-locking gate at the swimming pool is propped open with a cinder block because they're trying to be nice to the parents who are doing a load-in for the kid's birthday party. That is not cool. That is a place where you should have said, "I'm sorry, regulations prohibit that." Other than safety, privacy, and security, you really want to strive to get to yes. There's a lot of ways to do it. One is to be very visual about it, which is why Virgin Hotels has the big cartoonishly large and red lettering that says, "Yes". There's ways to get to it that only happen once the... The modeling, the positive peer pressure or the positive examples from people higher up in the organization.

Micah Solomon: Now, this is an example. This isn't about getting to yes, but if you go to the Disney parks, why are they so clean? Well, partly because it's the positive peer pressure. "We all know this is how we do it here." Partly, it is from people higher up in the organization. You see ladies and gentlemen in their suits even, Heaven help their wearing a suit in Orlando or in Anaheim, but in their suits and yet they well clean up trash. They'll excuse themselves from the international visitors they are hosting and they'll clean up the trash. That's how people learn that there's a default there of cleanliness, so a default of yes is a similar idea.

Roger Dooley: Right, and I think that example setting is important, too. The idea, especially perhaps for people from other cultures where management folks are more exalted than they are in the U.S. The thought that your executive guide would say, "Oh, excuse me", and go pick up some trash

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must seem pretty bizarre. I think another example you have in the book is the now-famous lengthy conversation of a Zappos customer service rep with a customer that lasted like 11 hours or something-

Micah Solomon: Right.

Roger Dooley: Insane. That I think is probably less useful and a sort of guide to, "Okay, this is how we should always do things at Zappos", because it's... More as an example of how, "Hey, this is an extreme example of how if we need to behave with a customer, we will do it and we won't sacrifice the customer to whatever our company objectives are", which in most companies, the objective is to get the customer off the line as quickly as possible.

Micah Solomon: Right. I use that example with trepidation, and you framed it exactly right. My book is Ignore Your Customers and They'll Go Away, and that's an example of Zappos apparently thinking this customer needed a massive amount of not being ignored. Now, the exchange at the beginning of the book is super awkward. I print it verbatim and it's me and Tony Hsieh, the famous CEO of Zappos, and my first question for him about a 10-hour call is, "Did they get bathroom breaks?" His answer, other than giving me intense side-eye is...

Roger Dooley: It's a valid question, although-

Micah Solomon: That's what I thought.

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Roger Dooley: Yeah, yeah. I'm sure as the highly-exalted founder and CEO sitting there, the last thing he wanted to hear about was bathroom breaks.

Micah Solomon: Exactly, exactly. His wonderful Chief of Staff Jamie rescued us and found out that both of them did take breaks. What I do is I go into companies, and I'm known as the Customer Service Turnaround expert. If I'm going to turnaround your customer service, I just want to be clear. I'm not going to do it by saying you should spend 10 hours on a phone call with any customer because there's no way that pays off directly. It is, as you were saying, Roger, it's him hanging his flag really high saying, "We will do whatever it takes to get to a yes with this customer."

Micah Solomon: What I think is more interesting and realistic to customers is the fact that there's a lot of breathing space at Zappos in their contact center. They run at what's called 60% seat occupancy, where the norm is more like 80%. Now, what this means is that anyone can extend a conversation to bond with a customer and have all of that variability in the length of the call without having to worry about it, as you mentioned. That's very powerful and that's how they can bond over something more simple.

Micah Solomon: The example I overheard at Zappos, which I use in the book, is this wonderful contact center employee named Madison, and she's bonding with this older woman over narrow feet and how hard it is when you have narrow feet. It's just beautiful and it's just minor, but the fact that she can have the call be 10 minutes longer is what it took to get to a yes with that customer.

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Roger Dooley: Yeah, and I think it's important that companies measure the right metrics. I know years ago, I had a direct marketing business, and this was just pre-eCommerce, so most of our orders came in over the phone. In other words, our phone reps weren't just solving problems the way they are today. Typically, today the orders are going to come in electronically and it's going to be customer service issues that come in via phone, but in this case, they were doing both. They were handling customer service issues, technical issues, and taking orders.

Roger Dooley: The person who for a while won the sales contest every month by taking the most orders ended up... When we looked at the metrics a different way, we looked at how many calls she took, her strategy was to minimize the time with each customer so if a customer had a problem, she'd get that customer off the phone. If a customer was taking too long to order, she'd find a way of either concluding the order or concluding the call. It paid off in high sales numbers-

Micah Solomon: Right.

Roger Dooley: But when we looked at it, we were actually losing sales with the calls that she took. It totally flipped our analysis on its head because we had been measuring the wrong metric, and once we measured the right metric, we could see that she wasn't our best salesperson. She was actually our worst salesperson. Sometimes those things aren't always obvious. Speaking of measurement, how should... This is a thing I've been focused on lately in my writing is the measurement of customer experience. How do you find out how your customer experience is

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perceived by customers? I've seen some of these attempts to measure customer experience be actually so intrusive or effortful that they diminish customer experience. How do you think people should do that?

Micah Solomon: This is a complicated question. The Net Promoter Score is one way that people do it, and specifically that they're able to track whether it's going up or down over time. I have a very interesting part in my book, *Ignore Your Customers and They'll Go Away*, where Safelite Auto Glass was pretty happy with their customer results, but they wanted... Their Net Promoter Score was very high for their industry, but they wanted to do deeper and so they stopped paying so much attention to the score itself and instead went into what are called the verbatims, which are just the longer answers provided by people who take the survey. When they went into that, then they found out more creative ways to help their customers, a lot of which were based on... This is not going to surprise you, but they're based on people having a clearer feeling for who was coming to their house and when they were going to get there. Sometimes there's a limit to what a Net Promoter Score can tell you.

Micah Solomon: If you already design your own survey, please only have a maximum of five categories. Nobody can tell you whether their customer experience was a seven or a six, for Pete's sake. Don't have 10 or even 11 possible answers. Have at most five, and always ask the most important question first, which was, "How was your experience overall?" Or, if you prefer, "Would you recommend this to a friend?" Then, ask the detailed questions. The reason for that is if you get them focusing on these detailed issues like how

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quickly they answered the phone and so forth, then that is going to affect when you finally get to the question that you actually care about, which is how overall happy or satisfied they were. Then, you're going to be affected by all of this analysis that you just did, which maybe you should only be doing after you give your gut answer.

Roger Dooley: Right, and of course, it's important to record even partially completed surveys as opposed to-

Micah Solomon: Oh, good point-

Roger Dooley: Waiting for the final submit button because I just wrote about an experience I had at a... not a five-star hotel chain, and I just had one comment that I wanted to make and they hit me with this incredibly long series of questions. As you described, all from one to 10, where I'm rating the pillows from one to 10, the outlets from one to 10-

Micah Solomon: Yes, how can you possibly do that?

Roger Dooley: And I was unable to skip over that as well. I tried to just bypass it and get to the point where I could find a free-form answer box and it gave me an error, "Got to answer everything to proceed."

Micah Solomon: Oh, that's not good.

Roger Dooley: It's like billed out, but this is so effortful. There's also something called... Well, cognitive effort, and when you force people to make these granular choices of rating things that they didn't even notice in the hotel and coming up with, "Is that a six or a seven or an eight?" Either

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people just completely blow the whole thing off and you get meaningless data, they just go check, check, check, check, check to get through it, or if they actually think about this stuff, you're really exhausting their brains.

Roger Dooley: I don't know, I think there is a better way and I think what you're saying makes a huge amount of sense. Fewer choices and I would also put those open-ended answers up for... If somebody has a comment that they really wanted to tell you, one thing that was good or bad... I usually skip those surveys simply because they usually like those list of a hundred questions where you've got choices from one to 10. I don't even open the emails, I just delete the emails. If I do open the email, it's probably because I wanted to say something that I found particularly good or particularly bad. Give people that chance to do that right out of the gate.

Micah Solomon: Exactly, and when they do that, don't batch your responses. If someone's super upset about something, get back to them right away. You can't wait. You're not doing anyone a favor by waiting a couple of weeks and batching your responses.

Roger Dooley: Or not responding at all, which seems to be the typical case. It's pretty rare that I've filled out one of these things and ever gotten, A, a prompt response, or usually any response at all. It's like they go into a black hole somewhere, which I think that'd be exactly what's happening.

Micah Solomon: That might even be exactly what happened, and that happened to me the other day. I was at a very nice hotel,

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but there were two things and they were actually safety related. I mentioned them and I never heard back from them and I thought, "Well, that's not ideal. Maybe they only get back to you if it's something they don't feel like getting lawyered up on or something."

Roger Dooley: Right. Yeah, it's like, "Just make this one go away. We don't want to admit that we've heard about this issue."

Micah Solomon: The best thing to do is to partner with a company like Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. They're very data-oriented, even though they're obviously so touchy-feely as well. They use Gallup for their polls. If you can't afford to do that, I'm just going to recommend call Apple support and then look at the survey you get afterwards because it's really good. It asks the most important question first. I think it only goes up to five. That's a pretty good model, and there's lots of terrible models out there. Just because some ginormous company that you think would know best does their surveying one way, don't be sure that's the right way.

Roger Dooley: Good point. Just one last topic I want to cover and that is the wow factor. In my book Friction, I kind of make a case for in terms of building customer loyalty, the wow factor or a wow factor is less important than minimizing customer effort. I would, I guess, hold Amazon up as an example of that where they have tremendous loyalty with their customers. I'm probably more loyal to Amazon than any other brand out there, and they have never wowed me. I've never experienced a great moment of delight from Amazon, but they just are so good at what they do. It's like having a vending machine on your phone where you

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just push the button and either later that day or the next day, or the most, the day after that, it's there.

Micah Solomon: Yeah, but using Amazon as an example, it's like using the Moon launch as an example. We're never going to be Amazons, Roger. If we'd started delivering in half an hour, they're going to deliver in 20 minutes. It is not a winnable battle. I think reducing friction is very important, and if there's too much friction, customers are just going to run away. I don't think that can be your whole customer service strategy unless you are an outlier, unless you are Uber or Lyft or Amazon, who are transformational companies because they're so extraordinary in how much friction they took out of the process.

Micah Solomon: I love my local driver who takes me to the airport. I just love him and I would always use him over Uber or Lyft, except he can only drive one person at a time, and with Uber and Lyft, there's always someone available. That is revolutionary, and yes, I live on an island. I'd be here Robinson Crusoe-ing it if it weren't for Amazon, so absolutely, but I think for most of us, we can't be more efficient than Amazon. We can't be more efficient than Uber, so beyond reducing friction, we need something memorable, and that's where I think wow can coexist with your important concept of reducing friction.

Micah Solomon: Also, if you're going to strive to wow people, you need your employees to understand that it's not always the right time for wow. It's not always the right time for wow because people are in a hurry, some people don't even care about it. It's not always the right time for wow.

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Roger Dooley: Right, and I agree. I've got a perhaps funny headline that "Delight Is For Dummies" in the book, and I say that not because I believe that delight is a bad thing. I love being delighted. I've stayed at Ritz-Carltons and I've never had one of their like phenomenal experiences, but it's always been wonderful. I know if something went wrong I could probably get it fixed real easily. Delight is actually a good thing, but often I think companies can screw it up where they're so focused on saying, "Wow, how can we exceed expectations?" Then, somebody calls in with a problem and they're on hold for 20 minutes, or they get bounced through three different departments to resolve it. They've basically screwed up their whole experience right there.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, and I recognize nobody is going to out-Amazon Amazon, but I think if you can maybe in some ways out-Amazon your competitors or just make sure that your processes are as smooth as some of the companies that you mentioned, and then when you're at that point, go for those occasional wow moments as a way of differentiating yourself from the competition. At least you'll know you won't be shooting yourself in the foot with your own processes.

Micah Solomon: That's exactly right. Yeah, sometimes it's the best companies that have the worst service resolutions. You remember Car Talk? The Car Talk Guys?

Roger Dooley: Oh sure.

Micah Solomon: Right, and they would talk about some... These examples are out of date, but we'll just some at the time big American car company that had so many defects, and

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this was a long time ago. They've gotten much, much better, but had so many defects that they were overwhelmed and they didn't know how to handle the complaints. Then, you would have... They used a Japanese company that's very, very famous for having very few defects. They don't deal well with the problems, either, because they're just so surprised. They didn't see this coming, so they're terrible with the service resolution as well. It's always at the worst performers. Sometimes it's, as you said, they just don't know what to do except shuffle you around when a complaint finally comes in.

Roger Dooley: Right. One funny story I've got in my book, since we're talking about Japanese automotive companies-

Micah Solomon: Tell us the name of that book again, Roger. It's Friction. Is there a subtitle?

Roger Dooley: Yeah, it is Friction. That's enough. That and Roger Dooley will do it, but I relate the story of their first Japanese cars that arrived in this company and they were experiencing a lot of problems in cold weather. The Japanese executives couldn't figure out why because Japan gets very cold, too. I mean, they've got mountainous regions particular where they're certainly as cold as many parts of the United States. Finally, they realized what the problem was. These stupid American drivers were not covering the engine with a blanket at night. They just expected to park their car on the street and fire it up in the morning and have it go. Once they figured out that there was this cultural difference... I think that that is an example, too, where in Japan there was this custom that drivers would

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exert the extra effort to prepare their car for cold weather and that just didn't happen in the U.S.

Roger Dooley: Hey, anyway, that's probably a pretty good place to wrap up here. I want to be respectful of your time, Micah. Let me remind our listeners that today we are talking with Micah Solomon, author of the new book, *Ignore Your Customers and They'll Go Away: The Simple Playbook for Delivering the Ultimate Customer Service Experience*. Micah, how can our listeners find you and your ideas?

Micah Solomon: Well, if you're very good at spelling intensely Biblical names, you can come to my website, which is micahsolomon.com, M-I-C-A-H-S-O-L-O-M-O-N.com. You can get the book, *Ignore Your Customers and They'll Go Away...* You can get it at Amazon, you can get it at the wonderful independent Porchlight, or all your independent booksellers, or you can go to this URL, ignoreyourcustomers.com, and that will give you your choice of either a three-chapter sample or a link to purchase the whole book.

Roger Dooley: Great. Well, we will link to all of those places and to the book and to any of the resources we spoke about on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast. We'll have a text version of our conversation there, too. Just to clarify the spelling, that is not Mica like the mineral, it is M-I-C-A-H. There's an extra H on the end there if you're trying to find Micah's site. Hey, Micah, thanks for being on the show.

Micah Solomon: Oh, thank you so much, Roger.

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Thank you for tuning into this episode of Brainfluence. To find more episodes like this one, and to access all of Roger's online writing and resources, the best starting point is RogerDooley.com.

And remember, Roger's new book, *Friction*, is now available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and book sellers everywhere. Bestselling author Dan Pink calls it, "An important read," and Wharton Professor Dr. Joana Berger said, "You'll understand Friction's power and how to harness it."

For more information or for links to Amazon and other sellers, go to [RogerDooley.com/Friction](https://www.RogerDooley.com/Friction).

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