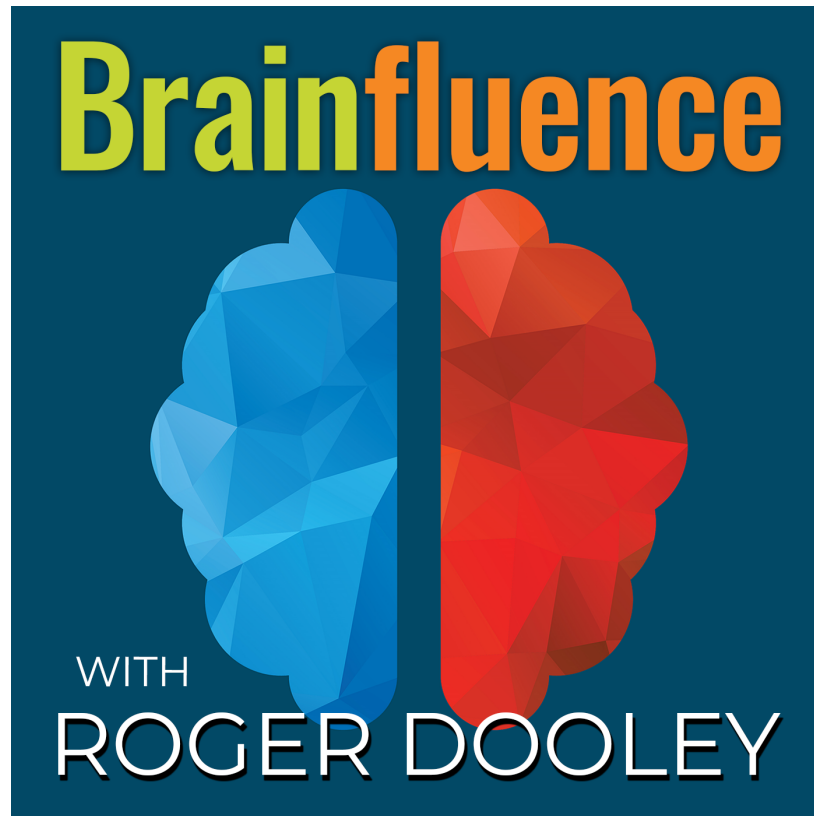


It's All About CEX with Jason Bradshaw

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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 Claimer said, "Reading Friction will arm any manager with a mental can of WD40."

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Now, here's Roger.

Roger Dooley: Welcome to Brainfluence. I'm Roger Dooley.

If you're listening in audio, by the way, this episode is also available in video format. You can find that either at YouTube or at [rogerdooley.com/podcast](https://www.rogerdooley.com/podcast).

Today's episode was a long time in coming. I first met Jason Bradshaw when he invited me to speak at a private customer experience event in Los Angeles, and somehow we lost track of each other for a bit, but we've finally gotten together to record this. Learned, in particular, we shared a common interest in the linkage between customer experience and employee experience. In fact, Jason is the author of the book *It's All About CEX, C-E-X*, which is the essential guide to customer and employee experience. Not that many people have been talking about how those two areas are really fused and you can't have one without the other, so I think this is going to be a

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really interesting conversation. In addition to his role as an author, Jason's day job is as the chief customer and marketing officer for Volkswagen Australia, and he is also a sought-after speaker and consultant in the areas of customer and employee experience. Jason, welcome to the show.

Jason Bradshaw: Hey, Roger. It's so great to be with you today, and of course with your listeners, and to finally connect after almost 12 months of when we first met. I'm glad that we could make it happen today.

Roger Dooley: Right, and considering we've been stuck at home for a good portion of that, too. Now, we're finally here. I guess, it's making it a little bit easier these days, Jason, but how do you balance being a busy thought leader, consultant, and speaker with a day job as an automobile executive?

Jason Bradshaw: Well, look. I'd like to say that it's because I've got great time management skills, but the reality is, I've got a great assistant. It's about, I think, not trying put everything in a box. Things can only happen at certain times of the day, and it's a bit like work-life balance. Everyone talks about work-life balance, but I think it's about blending life. If my best work is at 11:00 PM at night, that's when I should be working, not at 7:00 AM, if that's when I do my worst work. I try to blend everything together so that everybody benefits, but notwithstanding that there are times where it's just got to be the day job, and times when I get to do work that I'm really passionate about, which is helping people improve the lives of customers and employees.

Roger Dooley: Well, I think the one advantage of that is that both areas kind of inform the other. I'm sure you bring a lot of what

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you learn in your consulting and speaking and interacting with other companies to Volkswagen for their benefit. I think that certainly there are some folks who look at that as, "Well, you can't really share two masters," but to me, both areas can benefit from each other. Now, the auto industry is kind of a strange beast, I think. It's really, in my experience over the years, been some of the worst and best customer experiences that I've had. On the worst side, I've been in those sort of zero-sum negotiations where the salesperson, who obviously has more information, at least they used to have more information than the customer did, tries to extract the max amount of money from the customer and then maybe sell some expensive add-ons, and then in general, the model for an auto dealer has been to sell service, which there's nothing wrong with selling service, but if you're basically selling the product, in some cases, at or near cost and then trying to make it up on the back end, there's a tendency to oversell services.

That's the downside, but at the same time, I've had some really great experiences. Probably 15 or plus years ago, we bought our first Lexus, back in Indiana. That was such an amazing experience, where there was absolutely no hard sell. The dealership was like being in a nice living room or corporate reception area or something, and here in Austin, on the west side of Austin, we've got a comparatively new Lexus dealership and theirs is even more phenomenal, with the entire second floor as sort of a customer space, with a lounge area. There's work stations, with and without computers, for customers who are waiting for a car, perhaps. There is a coffee bar with a barista and hot snacks and things, and so I mean, this is just the opposite of the traditional experience, where

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you're waiting for your car to be serviced and maybe if you're lucky, there's some burned coffee in a little hot-pot, and there's some day-old donuts.

How does Volkswagen handle the split? There is always a sort of tension between maximizing profitability, selling the customer products and services, but also providing an experience that the customer is going to enjoy.

Jason Bradshaw: It's interesting, the experience that you share. I've only been in the automotive industry for five years, but of course, a customer for much longer. I was a Volkswagen owner before I became a Volkswagen employee, and I never had a bad experience as a customer. I have an even better one now that I work for the company, but as a customer, I never had a bad experience. Yet, I joined day one in the job, and not surprisingly, there were customers that were having bad experience. I think whether it's the automotive industry or any industry, consistency is really difficult to get, but it's that consistency that actually builds loyalty and growth. At Volkswagen, one of the first things that I did was just get really specific about what we mean by customer experience, and one of the three to five things that we want our dealerships to do every single time they interact with a customer ... We took some of the guesswork out of it, if you like. Okay, that may not suit every customer, but it's about serving the majority in a great, consistent way. What we've seen is that those dealerships that meet or exceed our internal metrics around how they're interacting with customers, they make on average double the profit of those dealerships that perhaps aren't so consistent.

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This isn't surprising to me. In any industry, you can see companies that are going out of business this year because they have failed to respond to the evolving needs of customers. They've stopped listening, or maybe they never listened. Then you hear about other companies out there, of all sizes, small and big, that have an absolutely ingrained voice of customer program that meant when the world changed almost overnight, they pivoted to continue to serve. Now, did they get it right all the time? Was there friction at times? Were there unknowns? Absolutely, but I think the key is always, in any industry is about making it really simple for the people on the front line to execute, and to know what's expected of them. Five years ago, we started with what we called our experience principles. We had five of them. This year, we went a step further and we created ... We changed those principles into promises. There's only three now instead of five. We wanted to get even clearer for our team members, but now we have a pocket card, and in this pocket card is basically everything we as a brand here in Australia promises to deliver to every single customer, but also every employee.

This is the thing, Roger. I think people think that customers and employees are completely different beings, but they're not. They're all human beings. We're all people, right? A customer and an employee, they all want to have success. They all want to have success without too much effort, and ultimately, they want to feel valued. They want to feel a connection. It's the same for customer and employees, and I would say that a large portion of our success from a Volkswagen perspective in the customer space is because we've really doubled down on helping our employees be more successful.

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Roger Dooley: Well, I'm going to sound like a broken record to my regular audience members, but a few months back we had Tom Peters on the show, and he said that your customers can never be happier than your employees, which actually comes from John DiJulius, but he is now the flag bearer for that statement. It's so true, but people think, "Well, I can press my employees really hard so they'll do a better job serving the customers," which really isn't the way it works. "Damn it, work harder and take better care of the customers or you're going to be fired," that's not going to work.

Just have a couple of final observations about the auto industry I'd like your comments on because it relates to customer experience. I'm curious what you see the future of dealerships as, because Tesla, for instance, has famously bypassed dealerships, and electric cars may require far less service than traditional petrol vehicles. Do you think that there is an ongoing role for traditional auto dealers, or are they going to look very different 10 years from now? Then, one other trend that's kind of related to that was, the electric trend, was I just saw an article today before I got on this call with you about how cars in the future will essentially be skateboards. In other words, a flat electric platform that's got four wheels connected by a platform a few inches off the ground that you can drop anything on top of. If you need a cargo van, if you need a personnel carrier, or if you want maybe a luxury sedan, simply pull into your dealer, your service station, or whatever, and they drop the appropriate module on top for you. If something is wrong with either part of your vehicle, it can just be swapped out in a matter of a couple of minutes. Now, I think we're a few years away from that,

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but what do you see, if you looked into your crystal ball, Jason?

Jason Bradshaw: First of all, I think dealer partners have an absolutely vital part to play in the relationship with customers. Manufacturers are great at manufacturing things. They're not always great at serving the end customer or the end user of the product, so I think there is definitely a place for dealer partners. People will have their views around whether the Tesla model works or not, just like people have a view around Tesla as a product, whether it's a good product, right? I think both models can exist, but I think in the next 10 years, dealers aren't going away, and the first reason for that is combustion, traditional combustion engine cars are still here. Every major manufacturer around the world, excluding Tesla, obviously, still produces a combustion engine car. That's going to need servicing much more regularly than an electric vehicle. Secondly, when we think about our electric vehicles, what we can and can't do with them, there's going to be limitations with them from the beginning. There's going to be some things that need to be activated, whether it be by the manufacturer or through a service center.

I see that as dealer partners playing a part in that, but if we step outside the auto industry and look into the mobile phone industry. Now, Apple arguably revolutionized the mobile phone industry with the invention of the iPhone, and you can buy an iPhone from Apple, but I can also buy an iPhone from dozens, hundreds, thousands of mobile phone shops. I think it's going to be exactly the same with automotive. It will get to the point, I don't think it's in the next 10 years. It might not be for the next 20 years, but it'll

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get to a point where, yes, you'll be able to buy from the manufacturer, but there will still be a role to play for retailers. That retail experience will be very different, and if it does go down that path of that article that you were mentioning, it's a bit like personalizing your mobile phone. You swap out your case, or go back to the Nokia days of a 3310, where you literally took off the case, or the plastic covering, and put on a new case on the chassis.

I think that dealers, dealer partners, will absolutely take a part, but what we'll see is that big box, that is jam-packed with new cars. That's going to change much faster. The service centers, I think service will become about convenience as opposed to the box that it's served in. We see brands already coming and picking up the car from your home. You don't really care if they service it in a shed that looks ugly or in a nice pretty building. You just care whether they service well because they're bringing the car to you, right? I think the service locations will change, but the retail locations will change as well. I'll go ... In most cases, I would say even in my experience in living in the States, in most cases the dealership is not in the best place. It's not in the most easy to access place. It's also not necessarily in the most high foot traffic location, so I think we'll see a lot more dealerships of the future moving to experiential hubs, places where people live, and not necessarily a Starbucks model, but Starbucks did an excellent job of creating a place between home and work. The car dealership of the future is going to want to be closer to the Starbucks locations of the world than being an auto mall where people go only if they want to buy a car.

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It needs to be more integrated into life, but I see dealer partners today doing excellent work, and can do a great job for us in the future as well.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Great. I think we've probably beaten the auto part to death, but it's really fascinating to get an insider perspective on how things might evolve. Personally, I'm looking forward to ... I just saw an announcement that Hummer will, in about a week, will be announcing finally their super-duper electric truck. Their, and it has 100 horsepower, Hummer truck from GMC.

Jason Bradshaw: Oh, wow.

Roger Dooley: That should be an interesting announcement. I don't think I'm quite ready for a 1000 horsepower pick-up yet, but it'll be fun to see. Getting back to customer experience, and you talked about making things easier for employees. One of the stories I loved in the book is how, when you were at Telstra, a communications provider, you looked at their customer service people and they had something like a 200 point checklist, or 200 different flow chart boxes to go through in dealing with customer problems. That just seems staggering. That had to be both extremely annoying and frustrating for not just the employee, but for the customer, too.

Jason Bradshaw: Look, it was great in one respect, that you could literally have someone walk in off the street, essentially, put them in front of a computer, hand them the checklist, and as long as they did everything on that checklist, they would get a consistent outcome. Now, that's great from a training perspective, you could argue, but from a customer perspective, the customer would say their first

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name or their surname, or, and the agent would be like, "That's a great piece of information, but I'm all out of pieces of paper to write that down on, and my computer's not ready for that step," because not only was the handbook 200 steps, they mirrored the software so there was no deviation.

Roger Dooley: No jumping around.

Jason Bradshaw: No jumping around.

Roger Dooley: Well, I've been caught in those flow charts, where you want to skip 10 steps ahead because you've already done the things that they've told you to do, and you know they don't work, but they simply cannot deviate from protocol.

Jason Bradshaw: "Have you rebooted your computer?" Most IT support desks say that, right? Before I ring anyone about my computer not working, I always restart it, because get it out of the way.

Roger Dooley: Right. Right, but then they'll tell you, "Well, no, you need to reboot it right now, because that's what it says here on my flow chart." It's crazy. How did you simplify that?

Jason Bradshaw: I think, just to share a story, Starbucks also used to have this process flow. It wasn't 200 steps, but they had this process flow built into their point of sale that if you came up and said you wanted a venti double choc frappuccino, the lovely team member at Starbucks couldn't handle that, because you had to select the type of drink before the size of the drink. Now, Starbucks ultimately changed the software and if the customer starts with size or taste or extras, it can handle it. Ultimately, what we did was exactly the same, at Telstra. We got our people together,

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the people that used the system, used the process, and said, "What's working and what's not working?" When they would say, "This is stupid," sometimes we would have to go, "Okay, yeah, it might be stupid but legally we have to do that bit. What about these other bits?" We took 200 steps to just under 50 steps, which was phenomenal.

Now, it did require some software changes, one of those changes being, an agent could go to any field when they needed to go that field. Mandatory fields diminished. If you've got their phone number, you already have all the information you need to know about that customer because it pops up. You don't need to click a button to say that Jason is Jason, but it was really about listening to the people that were using the tools every day, and understanding, to use Six Sigma term, what the waste was. What were these elements of the process that were just wasteful, that weren't adding value? We stripped it right back. Now, ultimately, what that meant was we could serve more people with the same number of resources, but each of those interactions was 10 times better because the agent wasn't worried about, "Oh, have I done step 155 before I go into 156." It was, "What's your problem? Now, let me use the tools in front of me to try and solve that."

Roger Dooley: Right, and I think the key take-away from that, Jason, is that the answers were there with the people who were actually doing the work. You did not have to hire McKinsey or Bane or somebody to come in and analyze the process and tell you how you could make it more efficient. If you just ask the people, "What's going wrong here, what's good, what works, what doesn't?" If you talk to several of the more experienced people, you will get

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those answers. You just have to listen to them. Then, the other thing is, it's something I keep emphasizing in my talks, is that you probably will have to push back, because somebody's going to tell you, "Oh, we can't change that code. Too many lines of code, that's not in the budget for this year. Maybe next fiscal we'll be able to change that code." Sometimes you've got to say, "No, this is really important to do, and it's got to be done," and if necessary, escalate it to a level of management where they can weigh the pros and cons and the ROI and say, "Okay, yeah. We will invest in changing this code," because otherwise, you get simply boxed in by compliance issues, by the cost of changing code, and so on.

Jason Bradshaw: A friend of mine is a senior executive for Expedia, and he puts it really well. If you just focus on the silo of a business, you're not going to have that breakthrough innovation that ultimately serves your employees and your customers. At Expedia, like many companies, the call center was measured on how quickly they answered the phone, how quickly they dealt with that phone call, and how many calls abandoned, and all the normal call center metrics. No one, well, they did eventually, but no one ever said to the agent, "Is there a way we could stop you getting the phone call?" Of course, once they listened to their agents and took the time to understand what was happening, Expedia had a extremely compelling business case to go and change some of their downstream activity and upstream activity so that the call didn't have to happen. It wasn't about getting rid of the call center agent. They didn't downsize their call center. It was about actually being ahead of the customer problem.

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Their processes, each of the departments had these KPIs that were focused on certain things, but didn't think of the bigger picture. The marketing team's job was to sell more trips. Now, didn't matter when, once they got sold, there was a million questions people had and a call center that needed to answer them, but once they came together and said, "Okay, what's working and not working?" They could make a better experience for the employees so they could do work that is of value, or of more value, and the customer got a better outcome as well. It's one of the reasons why I say in my talks that whatever your industry, stop looking at your competitor and start looking at other industries that are leading in that area where you've got a problem. Now, if you want the best customer experience, don't look at another bank, if you're a bank. All you're going to do, at best, is be slightly better than them. You're not going to leap in front of them, so I'm a big believer that you need to look at different industries to understand just what is possible. It takes those blinkers off, and it helps you deal with that pushback that you're talking about. You get to say, "Well, look over here. They said you couldn't sell shoes online, but there's a billion dollar company that Amazon acquired because you could sell shoes online very successfully, after all.

Roger Dooley: Mm-hmm (affirmative). You mentioned customer effort score, and there's several tools like that. One of the key things about customer effort score is that that effort isn't some absolute standard of effort. You can sort of measure how many keystrokes or how many seconds, or whatever. The effort is in your customer's head, and if you are providing an interaction that is more effortful than Amazon provides, or Uber, or whatever that customer thinks is a low effort process, then you're high effort.

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Doesn't matter about what you're doing, what your competitors are doing. Again, same thing. Don't just look inside your own industry for guidance. Look at the best experiences out there, because that's what you're being compared to.

Jason, one of the other interesting little tidbits I found in your book was that one way of sparking some interaction, you mentioned Disney doing this and other brands do this as well, is putting the employee's hometown on their name-tag, which probably works best if you've got employees from all over the place as opposed to everybody from the same city. It provides just that little bit of interaction where you are more likely to ask ... I know cruise lines do that, and I think that when I've cruised, I've somebody and, "Oh, they're from Budapest," or from Sydney or someplace, and it's like, so you ask them about it. You ask about their home, and before you know it, you have developed a relationship with that person who otherwise just would have been the person putting the coffee on your table, or something. It's such a simple little thing, that I think is actually kind of profound, and something that I've seen done too is PetSmart, the big pet supplies retailer, I don't know if they still do this but I've seen them do it in the past. On the employee's name-tag, they will put a photo, or the employee puts a photo of their pet there.

Jason Bradshaw: Oh, nice.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, imagine when you're checking out and you see that the cashier is a fellow lab enthusiast, or fellow cat person, or something. That, again, lets you, "Oh, how old is your

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doggo? Is it male or female?" So on, and you can get that connection.

Jason Bradshaw: I was meeting with a potential client the other week, and they're in the food business. Not quite fast food, but a convenience food business. I was talking to them about the fact that I didn't see anyone in their stores with a name badge. They're like, "Oh, no, we can't do name badges. People might get stalked, or this or that, and what have you. There's health and safety concerns." They even thought that it was illegal to use them in some locations. I went, "How are we going to create a connection between the employee and the customer?" Otherwise, it's just another cashier going, "I'll have the chicken." "Do you want the chicken? Do you want the chips? Do you want a larger drink?" It's an action point that I left them with, because my favorite meal is, my favorite color is ... It doesn't actually matter what it is, but there's got to be something to create some sort of humanity to the process. I can only imagine at Pet Barn, if you're a fan of Labradors and person serving you has a picture of their lab, you're going to be much more engaged with that person than just if it's a 16-year-old pimply teenager telling you where the dog food is.

Roger Dooley: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, it makes such a huge difference, and that's part of the customer experience, developing that human connection, that can be tough in a typical high volume retail environment, or sort of high volume restaurant environment. Not that you're going to have a 10-minute conversation with your McDonald's cashier. That's probably not going to happen, but it really is such a small thing and it costs nothing to do. It's so cheap. I don't understand why more people don't do it, but I'm sure

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there are concerns about, obviously, one time some employee got tracked down by a customer who was crazy, but, makes a huge amount of sense.

One of your other little tactics I thought was smart was, when you're trying to communicate to people about whether they're doing a good job or a bad job from a customer experience standpoint, I think you could run the risk of going in either direction. If you give them too much negative feedback, it's dispiriting, if you give them too much positive feedback, then they decide, "Okay, well, we're good enough." You mentioned texting people one promoter type comment and one detractor type comment a day. That to me is such a nice balance, because it shows, it give you both sides of it. I'm sure that in some cases, one is a little more powerful than the other, but it still provides that balance knowing that, "Hey, there's both types of customers out there, and here's something that was recognized as being good, maybe you should do more of it, and here's something that was not so good, and maybe we can fix that."

Jason Bradshaw: What I absolutely love doing is demonstrating that the same topic or the same skill area can create both a promoter or a raving fan, or a detractor for your business. I'll quite often, when I'm giving a presentation, where I have access to the information, I'll put up a real customer comment that says, "Oh, Roger was fantastic. He communicated with me regularly, he kept me informed. Yes, there was a delay in my product arriving, but Roger always had my back. He always told me what was going on." Then I'll put up another comment that says, "Oh, Lucy was terrible. My product was late. She never called me. I rang and she wouldn't, she'd take days to get back

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to me." But putting up both of those, it really allows me to paint the picture that intentional communication and processes that can be repeated, e.g., having a regular communication model with your customer when there's a long delay on a product, makes all the difference. Importantly, you can do it right now. The only thing that's stopping you is that you're, as a leader, you're walking past a standard that says it's okay not to do that, do it the good way, right? In every company, I would argue, they have those stories.

Now, the really great companies will have lots of positives and only a few negatives, but they'll still have the stories. I think it's really important to reinforce that it's something that you've got to be consistent at. Even if you're good, every time you slip up, there's an opportunity to improve, or an early indicator that perhaps what customers are wanting is changing. It's not always that you've done a bad job on purpose. It could just be that customers' expectations are starting to change, or that customer has a fantastic experience at Delta yesterday that suddenly becomes the new benchmark, and it's something you should look at. I think that not only does it give you the opportunity to have a really open conversation about the experience, it also is one around getting people focused on the right outcome as opposed to the score. Whether you use net promoter score or customer reference score or customer satisfaction score or employee engagement, there is a score for everything, but the actual gold is in the comments. The score is just a number you put in an annual report, as far as I'm concerned.

Roger Dooley: Well, I mean, people like numbers because they fit in spreadsheets, but something that I always emphasize is,

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ask for that text feedback upfront. Don't make people go through 10 pages of bubble charts to finally, "Do you have any other comments?" People are going to abandon those bubble charts partway through because they're simply too long and too frustrating. If you could just get a simple, quick, one click feedback, I mean, a smiley face, frowny face, neutral face, or maybe something a little more complicated than that but not much more, you get that emotional feedback where people don't have to think about it. "Rate this on a score of one to 10." Immediately that kicks into, for me at least, some kind of rational, cognitive mode where I'm thinking, "Well, let's see. Could have been a seven or an eight, or is it a six?" I've already gotten the emotion out of it. Now I'm trying to calculate what that was, where if you can give people something they can process intuitively, you're going to get not only more answers, because people will abandon those one through 10 things by the time they get to the 10th line of them, but also you'll get a truer answer, I think.

Jason Bradshaw: There's a company that was founded in the US. I can't remember where in the US, but it's called delighted.com. Delighted's now owned by Qualtrics, but the thing that I love about Delighted is, it basically provides a voice of customer or voice of employee platform for any business, small or big, but their target market would be the small business. The thing that I love about their platform is you can't over-complicate it. Even if you are asking the net promoter score question or the customer reference score question, they'll only allow you to ask two questions. You can have zero to 10, but your very next question is just an open, free box comments section. That is it. You can't program another 20 questions, and so, A, it's really quick to implement. B, because it's only two questions, people

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tend, the abandonment rate is pretty low, and they of course got some smarts in the background so you can pull out key words out of the comments and what have you. Literally, you could pull out your credit card and start using that platform, and start collecting feedback from your customers. When I think of tools like Delighted, I'm like, "Why doesn't everybody ask their customers or their employees for feedback?" Now, whether it's a 10-point scale or the smiley face scale, one question can be game-changing in terms of your organization growing.

Roger Dooley: Well, one type of survey I never fill out are hotel and airline surveys, because they are always pages and pages long of rating obscure stuff from one to 10. I think the last hotel I stayed in before things shut down, or at least, I stopped traveling, was a Holiday Inn Express. Not a great brand, nothing like Ritz-Carlton, but it was very convenient. There was a thing about the lighting of the room, that was, I said, "I'll tell them about that." The email comes in. Instead of deleting it like I always delete them, I decided to fill that out. It was just question after question, page after page. Finally I get to a matrix of eight questions rating one to 10, everything about the room. The bed, the pillows, the sleep quality, the electrical outlets. It's like, who could even think about whether the electrical outlets were a seven or an eight? By that point, you are cognitively exhausted. It's like, I didn't even notice them. I can't even rate them. Does that mean they were a 10? Who knows?

This is what people do, and of course, they get relatively few completed surveys because of it. If you do one, especially if you're a regular traveler, are you going to do one of those every time? You know how bad they are.

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Even if you're a once a year traveler, you say, "Oh, I got a survey, and this isn't too bad," but if you are the more regular, oiled traveler, the kind of traveler that most businesses are trying to attract, you don't have time to fill that stuff out. They'll get, say, that simple quick rating, overall rating of some kind, and then a free-form box, so you can tell people, tell them, "Yeah, the room was crazy noisy," or, "The lighting was weird," or, "Wow, the front desk clerk was absolutely phenomenal. She carried my bags to my room for me." Whatever, but keep it really simple.

Jason Bradshaw: Last year I spent four months in hotel rooms. I completely understand your feelings around getting those surveys, and not wanting to complete them. I got a lot of those surveys, and I started a lot, and abandoned a lot. The hotel industry isn't the only ones that do it. There's many industries that have long, lengthy surveys. I think that's a real trap. Is it a voice of customer program, or is it your audit that you're outsourcing to your customers? Imagine, some hotels you stay at, some airlines you travel on, will say ... There's an airline here in Australia and their tagline used to be, "We make flying joyfully simple." Fantastic concept, if you can deliver on it, except for their on time take-off rate wasn't great. The lounges would be overflowing with people because they're not big enough. All the normal things that can go wrong, but then, when you got a survey, it also wasn't joyfully simple. It was long.

I've always said, I've never had the privilege of working in the airline industry or the hotel industry. Both industries I would be very interested in working in, because I think they're so busy doing stuff, they're not actually getting to the root experience that customers are wanting. You talk

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about Holiday Inn Express. I could guarantee it was in a convenient location for you. Doubletree Hilton with their cookies that they have when you check in. There's brands out there that are doing some really intentional things, whether it's about the location or the property or the cookie, in Doubletree's instance. Those intentional things get completely forgotten when your last experience with the brand is your complicated survey about the light switches.

Roger Dooley: Right. No, it's the peak end rule. If the end is the horrible survey, then that's part of your experience. In Holiday Inn Express's defense, they did do some things I thought for a budget chain, very nicely. When I walked in, they had a, I don't know what you call it. It's not a chalkboard, it's one of these little neon things that people can write on. It looks like a glowing chalkboard. They had the elite members or whatever, from whatever parent group of hotels that is, and Roger was written on there. Immediately, for a, really a budget chain ... That never happened to me at Motel 6. Not that I've stayed at one of those in a while, but I have in the past. I mean, I thought that's pretty cool. Then, there was a note in the room, hand-signed by the manager, with my name. Obviously, crank these things out and there was not a Doubletree cookie there or anything that spectacular, but they were clearly, within the constraint of that budget concept, they were trying to provide a good experience. I'll give them applause for that.

Jason Bradshaw: You look at Southwest Airlines or JetBlue, they have raving fans, and they have raving fans because they get the core of their product absolutely right. They make a promise to you every single time, and people choose the

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promise. They know that flying on, in years gone by, that flying on Southwest, you weren't going to get the fancy lounge. You weren't going to get assigned seating. There was all these things you weren't going to get, but they did promise that your bags would get there on time, that your plane would take off on time, that it would be a clean, reliable, respectable service. It's all well and good for an airline to want to have first class cabin and a business cabin and a coach cabin, have lounges and all the rest of it. If that's the promise of the experience you're making, then you've got to get it consistently right. I travel a lot with American Airlines when I'm in the US, mainly because of my frequent flyer status, and the experience you have in the LA lounge is completely different to the experience you'll have in, say, the Houston lounge, or where have you. At Southwest, and I have flown on them, it doesn't matter where you are. You get exactly the same experience.

You can really trust them, and I would say it's the same with the Holiday Inn Express. They've got a ... It might be a budget offering, but they deliver on their promise every single time, and get out of the way of themselves.

Sometimes you just want to know that the bed's going to be a comfortable enough bed. It's going to be clean. The room's going to be clean. The property's going to be convenient to where I'm going to be, and it's going to be hassle free. I think that's the ... If I could give the listeners one tip, it doesn't matter what your promise is to your customers, as long as you deliver on it consistently. Customers will buy simple every single day of the week if they know they're going to get it accurately every time.

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Roger Dooley: Yeah. I don't know many people who are big fans of McDonald's hamburgers, but somehow, they have stayed in business and grown tremendously over the years just because of that. It's pretty much the same everywhere, it's consistent, and they don't usually fail on their promise. They've been through some periods of time where they were failing on their promises, like speedy service, but they identified those and corrected them. We could go on all afternoon here, or morning, as the case may be, but let me remind our listeners and viewers that we are speaking with Jason Bradshaw, author of It Is All About CEX, or C-E-X if you prefer to spell it out, in not quite so naughty terms, which talks about the fusion of customer and employee experience. Jason, where can people find you and your ideas online?

Jason Bradshaw: My website, jasonsbradshaw.com, so it's really important that you don't forget the S. Otherwise, you'll end up at a California real estate company, so jasonsbradshaw.com. Forward slash, sign up. If your listeners go to jasonsbradshaw.com, forward slash sign up, they'll get the first two chapters of my book free, and of course be able to stay up to date with my thoughts on customer and employee experience.

Roger Dooley: Great. Having read those first two chapters, even that will deliver some good value for folks, but I would encourage them to buy the entire book. Okay, and we will of course link to those places on the show notes page at rogerdooley.com/podcast, and also on the show notes page, we will have links to any other resources we spoke about and audio, video, and text version of this conversation. Jason, thanks so much for being on the show.

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Jason Bradshaw: Thanks very much for having me, Roger.

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](http://www.RogerDooley.com/Friction).

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