

Creating a GREAT Project Management Service Experience

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When You Hear the Word “Service” What Do
You Think?



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But What About Project Management as a Service? That's Where This Story Begins.



Academic Research on Service? It was Very Limited (and None on Project Management)

- The best (*only?*) research on service was from USC's Sriram Dasu and Richard B. Chase.
- They conducted interviews and used key work in cognitive psychology, appraisal theory, and behavioral decision-making.
- Their findings were reported here:
 - “Want to Perfect Your Company's Service? Use Behavioral Science,” Harvard Business Review, June 2001
 - “Designing the Soft Side of Customer Service,” MIT Sloan Review, Fall 2010
- They also have a book, published in 2013



It Took Years to Translate Their Research to Project Management. When I Was Done....



Purpose and Outline for What I Want to Cover Today

Purpose: to introduce basic principles of service and help attendees provide great service in their performance as project managers.

Outline:

1. Projects as a service
2. How humans gauge service encounters
3. Digging deeper into the service factors to see what counts on projects
4. Big complications from behavioral science
5. Practical tips on providing great service
6. Summary and recap

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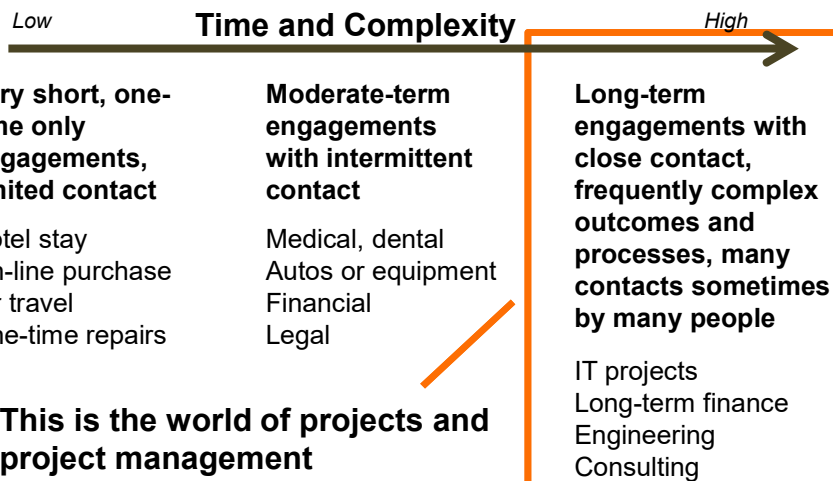


1. Projects as a Service

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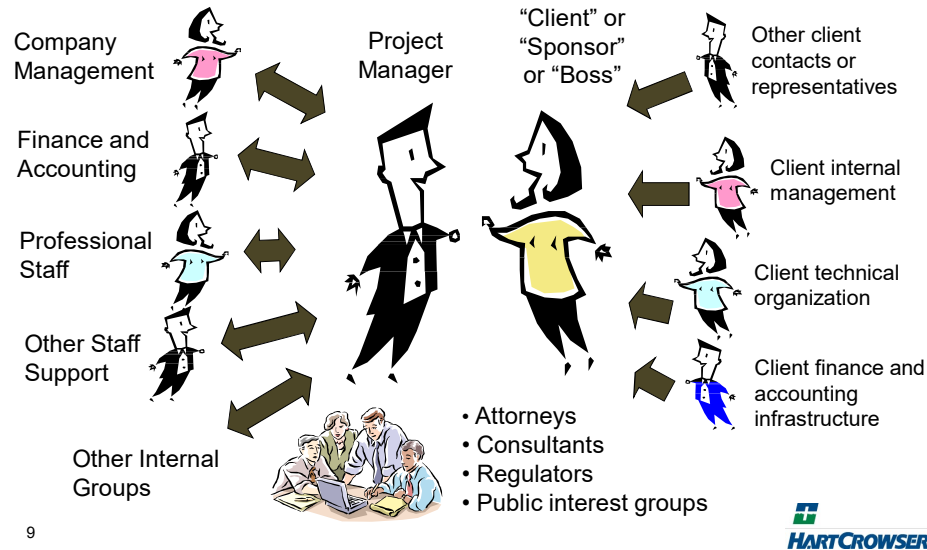
Service Takes Many Forms



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When We Work in Project Management, Who We Serve is Never Simple. My Life...



Why Does This Matter?

- Projects are some of the most complex service engagements.
- Most of us know that some things are required to serve well, but specifics have not been identified, substantiated.
- Your performance providing service as a project manager will be evaluated by stakeholders as closely as any products that you create and provide.

2. How Humans Gauge Service Encounters

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The Researchers Found We Gauge Any Service Based on Three Factors

Three key influences in assessments of service encounters:

We'll call all three factors together "ETC"

All three factors drive or reinforce how people perceive their service experience

Emotions

Trust

Control

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Emotions

- We have both explicit and implicit emotions:

Explicit Emotions

Memories we access about events

Implicit Emotions

Unconscious memories that characterize our feelings during events

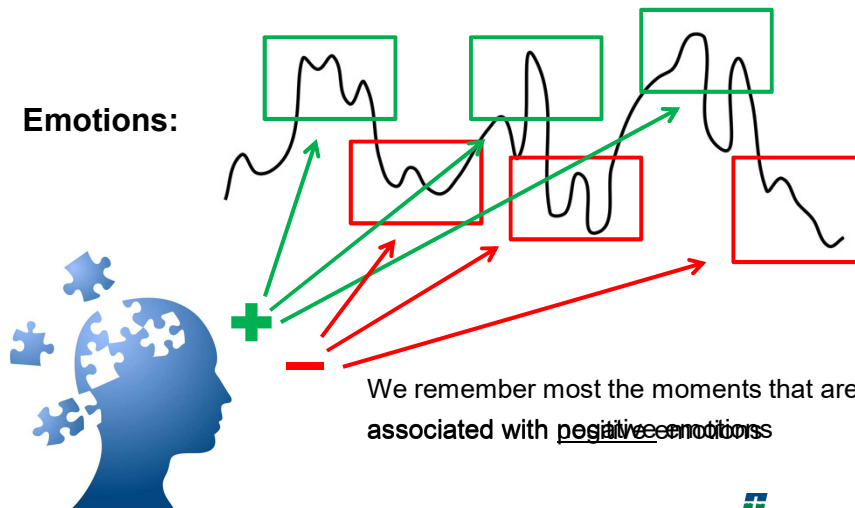
- Emotions strongly influence what we remember about our experiences – emotions connect to our memories.

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Why are Emotions So Important? For One, Our Memories are Hooked to Our Emotions

Emotions:



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Trust

- Trust is a primitive psychological variable. It is essential to a robust and enduring relationship.
- With trust: a sense of comfort.
- Without trust:
 - No engagement
 - Only negative feelings.

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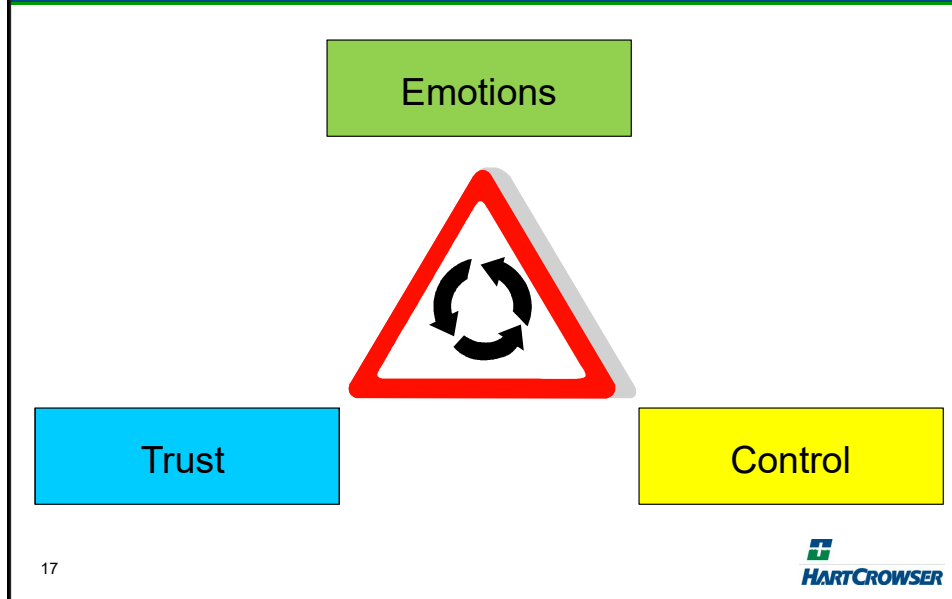
Control

- Control over one's environment and knowledge of how events are going to evolve are fundamental psychological needs.
- Negative events diminish our sense of control.
- Control is linked to trust.

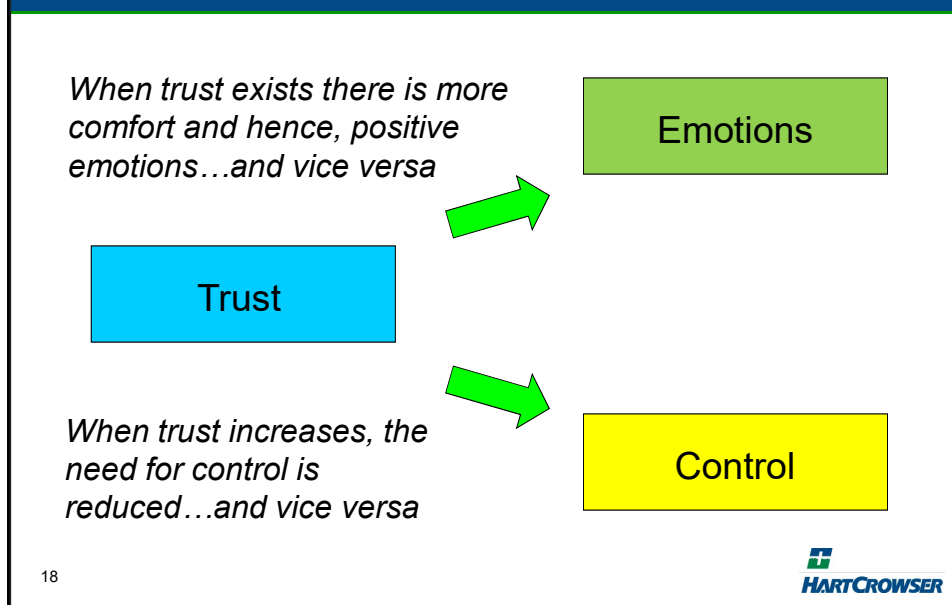
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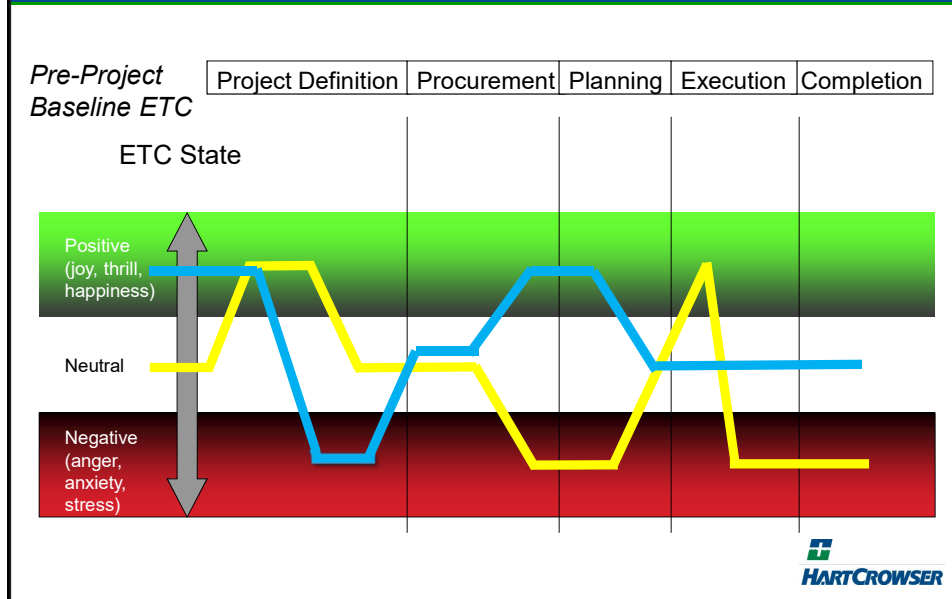
Emotions, Trust, and Control – ETC – Are Not Independent



Trust Has a Major Influence Over the Other Factors



For Projects, Stakeholder ETC Will Likely Vary Through the Project Life-Cycle



The ETC Experienced in a Service Engagement is Our Gauge of Service

- Few adverse negative, many positive emotions; enhanced positive and negative events
- Strong trust
- Sense of control



Good

- Many negative, few positive emotions; little impact on other emotional events
- Little trust or even distrust
- Weak sense of control



Not as Good

HARTCROWSER

3. Digging Deeper Into Each ETC Factor and Begin Relating Them to Our Responsibilities as Project Managers

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Let's Dig Deeper Into ETC. First, Emotions

Emotions

Trust

Control

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Is There a Given Source for Strong Emotions? Yes

- “Appraisal Theory”: it’s our evaluation of a situation that creates emotions
- How does appraisal theory work?
 - First, we anticipate outcomes
 - Then we have distinct emotions when we discover a real or potential change from our anticipated outcome
 - The strength of our emotions corresponds to the importance we place on the change

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“Appraisal Theory” Explains the Source of Strong Emotions

Anticipation $\xrightarrow{\text{time}}$ Outcome \rightarrow Emotions



First we anticipate a future event

Outcome exceeds our anticipation



Outcome worse than our anticipation



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What are Common Project Anticipations and Their Source?

Deliverables?
(quality, timeliness)

Capabilities, systems, performance?

Behaviors?

Outcomes?




Effort?

Communication?
(timeliness, content, method)

What is the source of these anticipations?

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What Can You Do to Provide Good Service? Take Actions to Improve Emotional Response

time

Anticipation → Outcome → Emotions

1. Work to set appropriate anticipations (e.g. "under-promise, over-deliver")

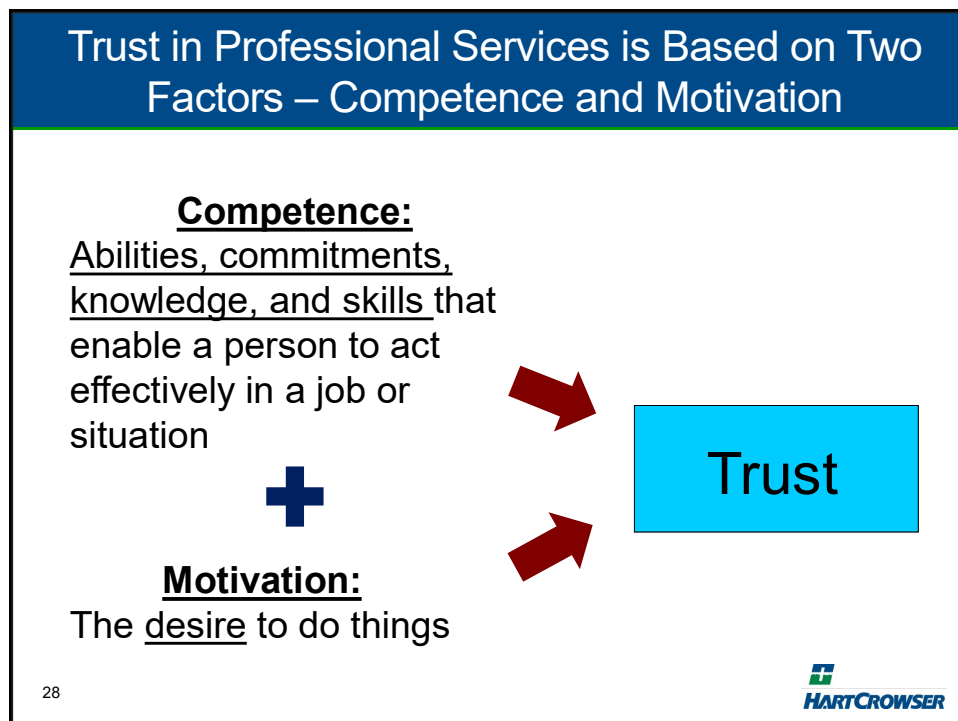
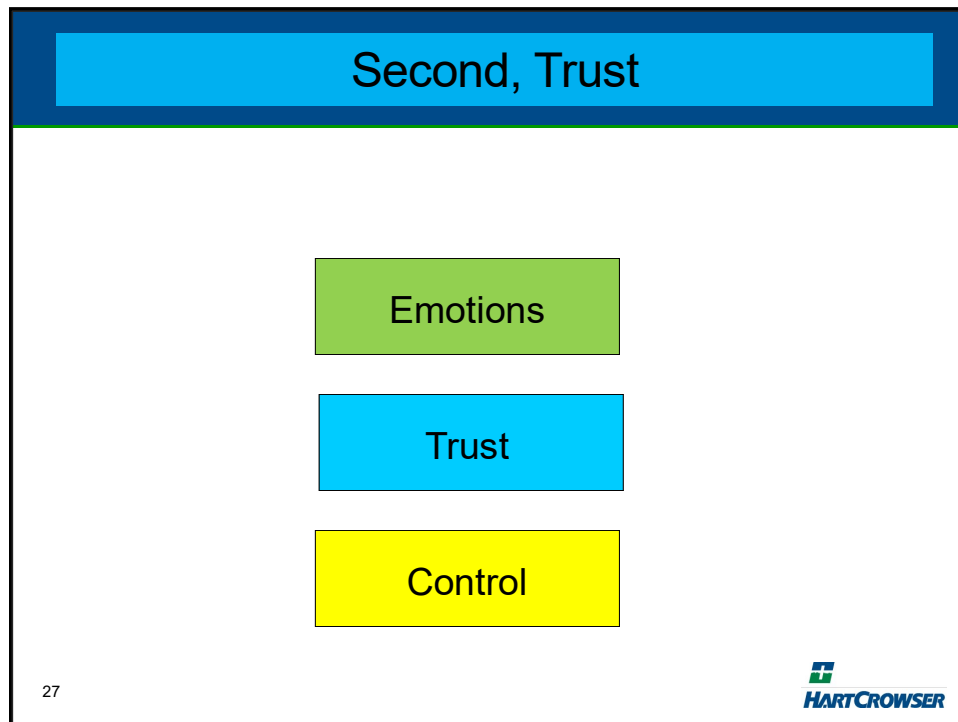
3. Work hard to deliver more and better than anticipated

2. Monitor anticipations and potential outcomes, effect anticipations if needed

4. Respond to make emotional response better (amplify positives, reduce negatives)

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While Competence is Important, Motivation is a Bigger Factor in Building Trust. Why?

Competence



Motivation

- Competence is less obvious than motivation
- Your competence is likely known through some pre-determination selection process – word-of-mouth, reputation
- There is more forgiveness
- Easier to judge – more obvious
- Judged more harshly
- Seen as a reflection of attitude – the way you conduct yourself
- Demonstrated through responsiveness

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Is There One Secret to Building Trust? Yes There is! Prove You are Motivated

The one secret to trust:

Do what you say you will do

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Third, Control

Emotions

Trust

Control

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We Experience Control in Two Ways: Behavioral and Cognitive



Behavioral Control

Those being served directly affect the service provider's behavior, such as selecting options



Cognitive Control

Those being served cannot see what is being done or the manner in which work is performed and they are informed

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How Does This Work on Projects?

Behavioral Control



Sponsor directly controls or guides, such as reviewing/approving scope, making comments on a report

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Cognitive Control



Client or sponsor is provided status reports by the PM – written and verbal – indicating progress



You need to provide both!

To Provide Great Service, Address All the ETCs for Your Stakeholders

a. Emotions

b. Trust

c. Control

Goal/Actions

- Enhance their emotional experience by creating and amplifying positive emotional experiences.
- Show empathy and understanding when external events go poorly for the client, and show positive feelings when they go well.
- Avoid and quickly address negative emotional experiences.

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To Provide Great Service, Address All the ETCs for Your Stakeholders

b. Trust

Goal/Actions

- Start building trust before you ever start working with somebody through your behavior and actions in all settings.
- Create trust by doing what you say you are going to do. Clearly and consistently demonstrate your motivation.
- Consider all methods of conveying your motivation and competence.

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To Provide Great Service, Address All the ETCs for Your Stakeholders

c. Control

Goal/Actions

- Be cognizant of the requirements for behavioral control.
- Provide good systems, a sense of good management, proactive communication, and active control.
- Pay attention to consistency and plan and execute rituals, including consistency of communication.

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4. Behavioral Science's Big Complication

People's decisions and recollections affect their evaluations of the service they receive

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Behavioral Science Has Identified Three Relevant Effects

Sequence

Duration

Rationalization

Sequence effects:

1. We don't remember every moment of an experience.
2. We mostly remember
 1. the trend,
 2. the highs and lows, and
 3. the ending.

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Behavioral Science Has Identified Three Relevant Effects

Sequence

Duration

Rationalization

Duration effects:

1. Unless an activity is much longer or much shorter than expected, people pay little attention to its duration
2. Increasing the number of segments in an encounter lengthens its perceived duration.

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Behavioral Science Has Identified Three Relevant Effects

Sequence

Duration

Rationalization

Rationalization effects:

1. People desperately want things to make sense
2. If something unexpected happens they want one clear reason for why – and will make up a reason if necessary

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Behavioral Science Has Identified Three Relevant Effects

Who's a good individual to be blamed if things go wrong?



Rationalization

Rationalization effects:

3. If things go wrong people view the likely cause as a single discrete thing, most likely an individual, and tend to believe that deviations from rituals and norms are the cause

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How Do These Three Relevant Effects Relate to ETC?

- **Sequence**: we mostly remember the emotional ETC high and low points, the trends in ETC, and the completion.
- **Duration**: if we repeatedly encounter a situation with high (or low) ETC we think it lasts longer than lesser duration ones.
- **Rationalization**: the more involved, engaged, in control we feel when served the higher will be ETC if things go awry.

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Behavioral Science Led the Researchers to Five Principals of Great Service

1. Finish strong
2. Get bad experiences out of the way early
3. Segment the pleasure, combine the pain
4. Build commitment through choice
5. Give people rituals and stick to them

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Sriram Dasu and Richard B. Chase, 2001



5. Practical Tips: Specific Things You Can Do as a Project Manager to Provide Great Service

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First Off, Think About Your Stakeholders and Put Yourself In Their Shoes



Imagine yourself in your stakeholders' shoes.

Think about:

- Their responsibilities, roles, concerns.
- The things you can do to help improve their ETC.

Then do those things!

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Focus on the Five Principals of Great Service (Thinking of ETC the Entire Way)

1. Finish strong

2. Get bad experiences out of the way early
3. Segment the pleasure, combine the pain
4. Build commitment through choice
5. Give people rituals and stick to them

– 1. Finish strong:

- Think about a strong finish from the start.
- Meet all final commitments and don't end with a negative event (e.g. late or poor quality deliverable, conflict).
- Build in a positive finish (party!).

Sriram Dasu and Richard B. Chase, 2001

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Focus on the Five Principals of Great Service (Thinking of ETC the Entire Way)

1. Finish strong

2. **Get bad experiences out of the way early**

3. Segment the pleasure, combine the pain

4. Build commitment through choice

5. Give people rituals and stick to them

2. **Get bad experiences out of the way early:**

- Make performance continually improve.
- Address painful systems and team development issues right out of the gate so issues don't linger.

Sriram Dasu and Richard B. Chase, 2001

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Focus on the Five Principals of Great Service (Thinking of ETC the Entire Way)

1. Finish strong

2. Get bad experiences out of the way early

3. **Segment the pleasure, combine the pain**

4. Build commitment through choice

5. Give people rituals and stick to them

3. **Segment the pleasure, combine the pain:**

- Don't let repetitive things be negative (like status reports or meetings) – make them positive.
- Deal with negative items at once – resolve them.

Sriram Dasu and Richard B. Chase, 2001

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Focus on the Five Principals of Great Service (Thinking of ETC the Entire Way)

1. Finish strong
2. Get bad experiences out of the way early
3. Segment the pleasure, combine the pain
4. **Build commitment through choice**
5. Give people rituals and stick to them

4. **Build commitment through choice:**

- As much as you can, involve sponsors in the project planning.
- Provide options to those you serve when you do planning.

Sriram Dasu and Richard B. Chase, 2001

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Focus on the Five Principals of Great Service (Thinking of ETC the Entire Way)

1. Finish strong
2. Get bad experiences out of the way early
3. Segment the pleasure, combine the pain
4. Build commitment through choice
5. **Give people rituals and stick to them**

5. **Give people rituals and stick to them:**

- Have regular, scheduled status reports or status meetings (make them positive!)
- Be rigid in keeping to rituals – format, timing, protocols, etc.

Sriram Dasu and Richard B. Chase, 2001

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6. Summary

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In Summary

- Service is an essential part of project management – our work is gauged by it.
- The service you provide is gauged by the emotions, trust, and control it provides – and what is remembered.
- Service memories are strongly affected by timing, patterns, and major events.
- Plan ahead and do all the things that you can to provide great service.

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Questions?

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