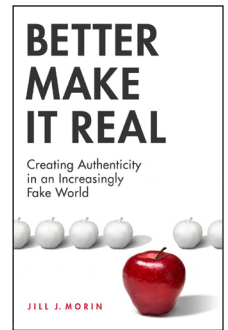


Better Make It Real

The 4Ps and Total Experience Design™—Integrating the 4Ps: why it's essential to organizational authenticity and business success



If just one of the 4Ps falls short, the entire experience falls short.



Total Experience Design—a unique process for defining and expressing organizational authenticity through the design of wholly integrated stakeholder experiences—is guided by the 4P Model™, says Jill Morin, CEO of Kahler Slater, a global interdisciplinary design enterprise, and author of *Better Make It Real: Creating Authenticity in an Increasingly Fake World* (Praeger, 2010, \$32.95).

The 4Ps—*Perception, People, Products and Services, and Place*—form the foundational framework of Total Experience Design, Morin explains. Not one of the 4Ps, she says, can be ignored or overlooked; they must be intentionally designed and integrated—or else. Her argument:

In every business, a total experience has four elements: *Perception*, the organization's image in the marketplace; *People*, the employees who make the products and/or deliver the services; *Products and Services*, the actual goods or deliverables; and *Place*, where the work of the business gets done.

The best total experiences don't just happen—they are authentic, intentional, and wholly integrated. If just one of the 4Ps falls short, the entire experience falls short. Consider, for instance, how the 4Ps can impact a simple, universally familiar experience—eating out at a restaurant. Imagine this scenario:

You read a great review in the paper about a new restaurant in town, a little Italian spot that sounds well worth a try. Not one to hold back—especially when it comes to Italian food—you make a reservation for the weekend. The night comes, and as you arrive and make your way into the restaurant, your expectations, admittedly, are high.

Much to your delight, the place looks just as you thought it would—like the little village restaurants you fell in love with on your recent trip to Tuscany. In a matter of minutes, you're sitting at the best table in the house, and as your waiter appears, it's clear that he's the real deal—a native son of Italy, lovely accent and all. In addition to being charming, he knows the menu and wine list like the back of his Italian hand, and makes some wonderful recommendations, none of which you can resist.

The wine is perfect, and so far, you're in heaven. And then, the food arrives, and it's...awful. If you didn't know better, you'd swear that it came from the food court at the mall or, worse, right out of a can, heated in the kitchen microwave.

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Question: Would you go back? Most people say no—absolutely not. Sure, three of the 4Ps were positive—*Perception* (the great review in the newspaper), *People* (the charming and knowledgeable Italian waiter), and *Place* (the welcoming, I-feel-like-I’m-back-in-Tuscany environment). But one of the 4Ps fell significantly short: *Products* (the awful food!).

Now, switch it around. Imagine that you are at the same restaurant, and that the *Perception* is great, the *Place* is delightful, and the *Products* are not awful, but amazing. This time, however, the *People* are the issue. The waiter from Italy? He’s inattentive, and when he does manage to show up, he’s got a real attitude. Unfortunately, the rest of the team, starting with the maitre d’, is no better. Again, would you go back? Doubtful.

Okay, now imagine that the restaurant gets high marks on *Perception*, *People*, and *Products*, but the *Place*, from top to bottom, is filthy dirty. Most likely, it would be a deal breaker, and you wouldn’t go back. And how about *Perception*—what if it is the problem? For instance, the review in the newspaper is terrible, or there is no review, and you hear a really corny commercial on the radio. Odds are, you wouldn’t even give the restaurant a chance.

Bottom line: If you’re serious about Total Experience Design—striving for organizational authenticity and for truly standing out and succeeding in your marketplace—integrating the 4Ps is essential.



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