

# 5 ways CX is emotional rather than rational

By [Brendon Bairstow-Klopper](#)

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Understanding how emotions influence customer behaviour lets brands craft customer journeys that create loyalty, likeability and sales. It is however not practical to try and account for every emotion and possible action a customer may take.



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It is more sensible to take a macro-level view by the peak-end rule. The peak-end rule says that customers remember their peak-experience with a brand, rather than specific interactions. So, to ensure customer loyalty, you need to create positive emotional peak experiences for customers.

## Customers relate to brands as if they are people

Research shows that customers attribute the same personality traits to brands as they do people. It is emotion-based not rational. This is valuable for marketers who must ensure that the brand personality they communicate stimulates the right emotions with their customers visually, verbally and across campaigns.

## Decisions are made on emotion not reason

Well-known author and organisational consultant Simon Sinek famously said,

“ *People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it.* ”

The part of the brain that drives decision-making, behaviour and our emotional connections is also responsible for feelings such as trust and loyalty. Since our emotional brain processes sensory input in a fifth of the time that it takes our cognitive brain, we make buying decisions driven by emotions we feel at the time of purchase.

## Some emotions are longer lasting than others

Psychologists have shown that negative emotions such as being anxious, feeling sad or desperate last significantly longer than more positive emotions. Understanding this is important when applied to customer experiences since, if someone has a negative customer experience, it will have a bigger impact on them and how they view a brand. So, the way an

experience made us feel will endure long after rational information is forgotten.



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## Sharing is based on emotion

Research conducted into the role that emotions play in what content becomes viral and shareable on social media showed that curiosity, amazement, interest, astonishment, uncertainty and admiration were the emotions consistently associated with such content. However, the most important emotional driver of viral content was happiness. The happier something makes us feel the more likely we are to share it with others.



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## We connect through sadness

The impact of purely emotional content has been shown to be twice as effective as purely rational content. This is because emotional content makes you feel something while factual content such as information and numbers only allow you to rationalise. Our emotional reaction always comes first. Seeing something sad releases neurochemicals which makes us feel stressed and focused on promoting feelings of connection, care and empathy. For this reason, stories that are emotionally engaging are more likely to influence behaviour and inspire action.

While it's true that human emotion is incredibly complex, an understanding of why we feel the way we do and how that influences the way we behave can provide valuable insight to brands and marketers.

## ABOUT BRENDON BAIRSTOW-KLOPPER

Before joining nlighten in 2010, Brendon held a number of customer experience management positions at a variety of local and international organisations. In his career, which spans almost two decades, he has worked closely with leading financial institutions, hotels and retail giants. He has the unique ability to translate his vast insights and understanding into actionable strategy and focused customer experience improvement.

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