

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THINKING

How behavioural science helps you understand,
connect and build deeper relationships

BY
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We've never been more connected yet somehow, more lonely

We're constantly plugged in.

Always reachable. Always scrolling.

More messages. More distractions. More noise.

But how often do we actually feel seen?

We've built a world of smart devices, instant AI replies, and 24/7 everything.

But somewhere along the way, we've lost something. That sense of real connection.

Of being understood. Of being human. Not just another 'user' or data point.

Yes, we've made life more efficient, but not always more meaningful.

Relationships now feel thinner than they used to.

Maybe it's time to remember what really matters.

Time to think about designing experiences that don't just work, but actually mean something.

Because in a world that moves this fast, real connection is becoming rare.

And rare things are valuable. And deserve protecting.

Before we get started, just sit with this question for a second:

What does true connection feel like?

THIS IS PERSONAL

It's probably useful to introduce myself before we get going. I'm Si Elliott, and I've been working in marketing and customer experience for over 20 years, although I try not to say that too loudly. It doesn't feel that long (until I try to explain TikTok to a client), but yes, I've been around the block a few times.

Like many people, I didn't set out to land in this industry, I sort of stumbled into it. I did a business studies degree and quickly realised I was far more interested in marketing, creativity and communication than I ever was in balance sheets or tax codes. Let's just say my accountancy grades reflected that enthusiasm.

Fast forward a couple of decades and the world, and the work, has changed dramatically. I've watched the rise of digital from the inside of the industry, while also observing it from the outside, through the eyes of my two daughters, who are true digital natives. It's been fascinating (and at times slightly terrifying) to see how much of their world is being shaped by products, platforms and experiences that didn't exist when I started out. It's given me a deeper lens on the role we play, and the responsibility we carry, in shaping the human experience in a digital world.

Whilst I'm an advocate of the benefits of digital and a fan of (most) things digital, this does bring some challenges that I've studied over time. With the growth of the likes of Google (1998) and Meta (Facebook 2004) and the vast amount of time people spend on their products and services, we need to be acutely aware of the human impact. Both the positive and negative.

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I must admit, there is some good news. In recent years we've started to see an awakening for people about their digital usage, and understanding the value and power that is held within their data. People are now increasingly mindful of the time they are spending on devices. If you're anything like me, I'd imagine you were slightly shocked when you first saw how many hours per day you were on your mobile. It's quite an eye-opener to think that devices such as the iPhone (which didn't exist in 2006) now garner so much of our attention.

So, what I'm passionate about is understanding how the human experience in this world can become better; not just how we become more efficient but how we enrich our human experience, because the risk and fear I feel for the next generation is that digital becomes the master of us, instead of our tool. The real danger is that humans could sleepwalk into serving the technology rather than the other way round.

Since embarking on the journey of writing this book, AI has exploded into the mainstream consciousness. Developments are so advanced that they threaten to accelerate the trend and balance between human and machine, all with the promise of delivering so many great things to the world. However, we have to be careful what we trade-off. Up until now we've been the most intelligent species on the planet, but we may lose this number 1 spot to AI in the near future.

**'If you want to know what life is like when you are not the
apex mind, ask a chicken'**

***Geoffrey Hinton*¹**

For me this threatens to remove the beautiful human element that sits behind everything. Hopefully my experiences, knowledge and learning over the years will be able to inspire people to look at things

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a little bit differently and be driven towards retaining that unique human touch in life.

I will use the word hopefully regularly throughout the book, because I am full of hope. Many other people I discuss this with are filled with much more concern for what lies ahead, but I hope that the enduring brilliance of humans will overcome these challenges and harness technology for our benefit.