

Do you know what your customers want their customers to experience?

By [Jane Stevenson](#)

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It's a common question that we assume everyone knows or understands. But assuming versus engaging, in order to know, are vastly different.



Image credit: Thought Catalog on Unsplash.

And let's be honest, assumptions are rarely correct. It was Bono who said: "It's not the answers we get wrong, it's the questions."

Start with why

Simon Sinek and many other gurus coined this concept. Not because it rolls off the tongue easily or because it's a cool tagline, but because it works.



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The first question when engaging with a customer, whether it be new or repeat business, should be why. In our industry, it's understanding why they are hosting an event, why that particular audience, why is it important to their brand and what are the event objectives. What experience do they want to their customers to enjoy?

You see, we serve our customers' customer ultimately. Most events are for the enjoyment of an audience that we won't deal directly with, but our customers do, so ask them.

It's too easy for us to tell customers what we think they want their event to be or to copy and past from last years' event because it was great. But consumers today want more, they want different, they want unique.



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If we keep rehashing the same experiences, event professionals lose the edge for their brand and their customers' brands. If we understand the deeper layer of a client needs, we can offer a far more value-driven, creative solution.

By understanding the customer and their ultimate objective, we build trust beyond the product. And it's this kind of relationship that wins you customers for life.

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Understand the decision tree

The human decision-making process is complex; there is a [multitude of conscious and unconscious, rational and emotional, influences](#) at work when we make a buying decision.

By being strategic and developing audience and attendee journeys that consider their needs and scrutinising the positive and emotional triggers, you can truly make event guests feel, think and do in line with your client's objective.

Admittedly it can be a complicated process, so caution has to be applied to not over-complicate or produce plans too challenging to execute.

Consider when roaming the aisles of a supermarket and the promotions team are offering tastings of 20 different flavours of a product. While we may enjoy tasting them all, by the time we get to the end, the choice is too vast to make a decision. And so we walk away empty-handed.

However, when offered two or three varieties, it makes a decision easier and usually ends in a purchase. Studies prove that a small array of choice yields quick decisions.



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Ultimately, we're all pushing to offer a differentiating proposition. And, for that, we must learn to trust our intuition, care enough to listen to the ultimate needs of clients and take assumptions off the table.

ABOUT JANE STEVENSON

Named by CEO publication as SA's most influential government businesswoman in the SME sector in 2012, she's big on vision, strategy and effective communication. Start with a successful business strategy and executive coaching consultancy to leading national brands... add the experience of being a Board and EXCO member of the Nelson Mandela Bay Business Chamber; and stir in some fearless Scottish roots and a dedication to building organisational vision. The result? A motivating, passionate team player.

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