"How to Leave an Impression with your Design"

by

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Design is an emotion. Emotion is part of design.

We are entering an era where the complexity of information is much higher than in the past. As a new designer, you are entering a world rich with information. From the perspective of product design, market competition is fiercer than ever. Many designs of the past have been simple. Now, digital design has transitioned to the stage of "emotional design," and emotional design is something all designers must learn.

What is Emotional Design?

The concept of emotionalization was proposed in 2005 with Donald Norman's Emotional Design[1], a classic masterpiece of design psychology. The following is an excerpt from his book *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things* [2], where he explains his concept:

Emotional design refers to the design of grasping the user's attention and inducing emotional reactions to improve the possibility of performing specific behaviors. In layman's terms, the design stimulates the user in some way, so that it has an emotional impact. Through the function, operational behaviors or temperament of a product, a designer can foster an emotional response. The user has some kind of emotional awareness of the product, which forms a unique imprint on the mind [3].

Emotional design is meant to stimulate users' reflection through certain design methods so as to stimulate user associations and resonate on a personal level. To provide users with a product experience with a human touch, to pay attention to the user's subjective feelings, is the goal and focus of emotional design.

Why Emotional Design is Needed

Fostering an emotional response can create greater value for the products you design. Human beings are naturally emotional beings, and when that need is met, we feel a series of positive emotions. This can improve the brain's ability to solve problems and make decisions while the emotional system changes the way the cognitive system works. This leads to a unique user experience with the design that can help and improve the user's enthusiasm.

Psychological Analysis

Emotional Design is a designer's bible. If you have not had the opportunity to read it, please do so. Reading this is an important step in changing your design thinking, but I will introduce the three essential elements of the book. They are instinct, behavior, and reflection.

❖ Instinct refers to the biological instinct of human beings to gather direct feedback through sensory stimulation. For example, have you ever walked down a hall and brushed your hand across the wall for no real reason? You are instinctually seeking sensory information through touch. This concept applies primarily to design aesthetic, and though people will have different preferences, the overall concept applies to almost everyone. The key takeaway here for your design thinking is to expect your customers to respond to your design based on their sensory input, which may or may not match your original intention.

❖ Behavior refers to the part of the world where humans control the function of everyday behaviors, such as learning and mastering skills to solve problems. It is also unconscious and has a strong connection to the human emotional system as a whole, preparing our bodies to respond appropriately to specific situations. The concept here for design is usability. This is where you would consider how a user will interact and use your product, and how that physical experience will influence the user experience.

❖ Reflection refers to the link between human cognition and thinking that helps us understand the world through rational thinking and logical reasoning. Multi-dimensional

complex emotions are generated in users' psychology. When you integrate emotions, experiences, culture, background and other factors directly into the product, the resulting design is more pleasing to the user. Think back to a product you noticed, and that you obviously remember. That product has a high reflective design because it stuck in your mind. Try to foster that feeling in your designs.

Another theory you need to be aware of to help you become designers is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs [4]. American psychologist Abraham Maslow [5] developed this theory in 1943 [6], and it is useful for you to have at least a basic understanding of it if you aren't able to read the full article. The theory divides human needs into five categories based on needs, and in order to worry about something at any given level, you have to have fully satisfied all the needs in the lower levels. The five categories of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are physiological, security, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. This is a huge topic, but the basic concept is that humans will not worry very much about what their friends think of them if they don't have enough food to eat or a place to sleep. Thinking about where your designs fall on Maslow's Hierarchy will help you determine your target users, which can then help you refine your designs to better meet their needs.

The Purpose of Emotional Design

Emotional design is intended to reduce the negative experience of users in favor of positive emotional communication with them. This kind of emotional communication helps to improve users' loyalty and dependence on products and reduce the loss of users. For example, when dating, one of the biggest mistakes you can make is to make the other party wait. Waiting is an extremely bad thing. Similarly, in design, in order to improve the user's experience, it is necessary to appease the user's emotions and reduce waiting time.

What if there is no way to realistically remove wait times? You can use emotional design to mitigate the negative experience for your users. For example, in the Google Chrome browser, when a network is disconnected, a cute little dinosaur jumping game will appear, so that the users will not be bored when they are waiting, which increases the user's fun and relaxes their stress. You can improve the user's experience and alleviate their negative emotions.

A user's memory is divided into short-term and long-term memory. Short-term memory is also called working memory. The information temporarily stored for completing tasks is usually kept for just a few minutes. When we use electronic products or read something, we are usually using our working memory. Emotional design can help us guide users to help reduce their memory burden. In addition, designers can create pleasant experiences through images, colors, fonts, copywriting, and animations to help users quickly change to the mental setting you want for them when using your product.

Finally, creating identity through emotional design is simple. If you want your design to be remembered, you should make a good impression on the person who uses it. You have to get into the mindset that thinks about more than just the design itself. You also need to think about who is going to use your design and what they will do with it. Think about the culture, historical background, any other important information you know about the potential user, and how you can customize your design to be perfect for them. For example, if you are designing a product for a person with a disability, do your research and learn what their needs are. Once you understand your user, you can design the perfect experience for them. Your product design is only one factor in the user's experience.

Practical Tips for Emotional Design

Emotional design is the key to designing perfect products for the user experience. In today's era of big data and rich graphics, only products with emotional design can stand out. Today's users are no longer content to interact with dull machines. They prefer to have emotional interactions with the products they use. Emotional design can often relieve the negative emotions of users and help them quickly become familiar with products. So, understanding emotional design and how to effectively incorporate it into your work is an indispensable part of a good design process. How do we train ourselves to become a designer with emotional design? The following tips may be of use to you:

- *Practice Fast Sketching*

Practice your fast sketch technique using subjects you see in your day-to-day life. Focus on emotions with these sketches. None of these drawings should take more than a few minutes. The goal here is to force you to notice people's emotions, then slowly to expand that attention to the stimulus that is generating the emotions you are capturing. A few simple strokes can contain rich emotions and great detail. Draw people you know, people you don't know, even people in a movie. Go back over your old drawings and see if you can determine what emotion you were trying to draw on the face and strive to improve over time. This will help you get into the habit of thinking about the end user and their emotional experience when using something you design.

- *Writing Practice*

Writing is another way to express emotions. Trying to interpret the essence of words is a way to train emotional design. You can prepare a notebook to keep with you, then use it to describe a person, a thing, or a story with simple words a few times a day. Whether this description can touch people's minds depends on whether the person writing the paper intentionally understands the meaning conveyed in the text. If you are able to capture the essence of emotion in your writing and strive to put words to what you and others feel, you will train yourself to think more about emotions for yourself and your users.

- *Multimedia Practice*

Multimedia exercises are an easy way for many designers to train emotionally because they are more interesting and present a chance to understand the inner dynamics of various characters. One technique is to download some movies or shows and separate the characters from their original setting. The characters' monologues and dialogues are the best for this. Try to separate the character and the actor. Imagine what the actor did to get ready for their performance. How did they decide what their face would look like, why did they choose the emotion they displayed? For you to understand the inner thoughts of the characters, imagine if you were the actor. How would you get ready to play the role? What kinds of thoughts would help you put yourself in the correct mood to play the part? The best way to experience the emotions of users is

to turn yourself into them and think from their perspective. Then, imagine using your design and see if you can determine how it will make your user feel.

Design is an Emotion. Emotion is Part of Design

Emotional design starts from trying to understand the user's goals and feelings. It is necessary to recognize that society is interaction and communication, and the emotions between people are a significant part of that. Emotional design can add vitality to a product or design, enabling people to establish an emotional connection. Therefore, only by understanding the use of emotional design can we design a people-oriented product.

We are in a new era. Machines have become quite intelligent and will only continue to grow. Looking back at the history of mobile phone development, we can see that what we have today evolved from a giant machine that could only make calls into a multi-language intelligent assistant that fits in your pocket and has become an essential part of all of our lives. The positive impact of these changes will be huge, but negative results are also worthy of attention. Technology is a double-edged sword. As designers, we can use our designs to turn the point of the sword in a positive direction and contribute more positivity to human society. After all, design should be people oriented.

<div align="center">Notes</div>

1. Donald Arthur Norman (born December 25, 1935) is an American researcher, professor, and author. Norman is the director of The Design Lab at University of California, San Diego.

2. Norman, D. A. (2004). Emotional design: Why we love (or hate) everyday things. New York, NY, US: Basic Books.

3. Emotional design refers to the design of grasping the user's attention and inducing emotional reactions to improve the possibility of performing specific behaviors. In layman's terms, the design stimulates the user in some way, so that it has an emotional impact. Through the function, operational behaviors or temperament of a product, a designer can foster an emotional response. The user has some kind of emotional awareness of the product, which forms a unique imprint on the mind - Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things, by Donald Arthur Norman, 2005

4. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" in Psychological Review

5. Abraham Harold Maslow (April 1, 1908 – June 8, 1970) was an American psychologist who was best known for creating Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a theory of psychological health predicated on fulfilling innate human needs in priority, culminating in self-actualization

6. Psychological Review is a scientific journal that publishes articles on psychological theory. It was founded by Princeton University psychologist James Mark Baldwin and Columbia University psychologist James McKeen Cattell in 1894 as a publication vehicle for psychologists not connected with the Clark laboratory of G. Stanley Hall (who often published in Hall's American Journal of Psychology). Psychological Review soon became the most prominent and influential psychology journal in North America, publishing important articles by William James, John Dewey, James Rowland Angell, and many others.