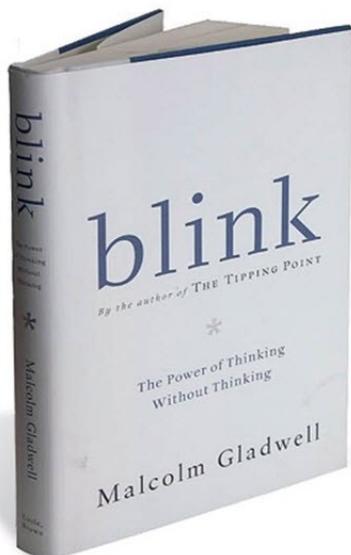


CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PARTNERS

Probing Customer Decision Making



BLINK, Malcolm Gladwell's bestseller was a must read just a few years ago. The book proposes a method we as humans use to process the enormous amounts of sensory data to which we're subjected: the practice of "thin-slicing". This sensory processing act allows us to make subconscious, split-second decisions aided by the sensory input we receive. In his book, Gladwell applied thin-slicing to explain a diverse set of decisions: selecting members for a symphony orchestra; the fiasco of New Coke; the preference for Imperial margarine; the tragic shooting of Amadou Diallo, and other decisions.

Blink and Customer Experience

Writing in 2005, however, it was a little too early for Gladwell to extend his psychological construct to helping us understand and better manage one of today's major concerns: *the customer experience*. Gladwell didn't discuss how thin-slicing could explain why traditional customer satisfaction measurement often is a poor predictor of customer behavior. He missed the chance to describe how all five of our senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing) and the morass of data they deliver can make assessing *the customer experience* much more complex than CSM practitioners ever imagined. But, if we extend his ideas to the customer experience, some interesting speculations result.

Making Buying Decisions

As humans, when making a purchase decision, all of our senses come into play. The captured data may be "thin-sliced" resulting in decisions heavily influenced by subconscious stimuli. Buy a cup of coffee at a new place tomorrow. Certainly cost and location will have an impact on your likelihood of returning another day. But without even recognizing it *thin-slicing* may be instrumental in your decision to return or not. How were the baristas attired? Did they smile? What odors filled the building? How were you greeted? Was the building temperature - too hot, too cold, or just right? How did the cup feel in your hand? What colors and designs filled the shop? And not to forget, how did the coffee taste?

Thin-Slicing the Customer Experience

Customer Experience Partners has developed a process similar to thin-slicing for better understanding the most influential sensory data influencing customers' attitudes toward service providers, retailers and brands. Our two-step process begins with identifying the most critical *touchpoints* involved in a customer event. Then, each *touchpoint* is broken down into its *experiential components*. The resulting optimization model directs remedial attention to the experiential components with the greatest improvement leverage. Want to know how you can capture the right data and set those priorities for action? Contact us.

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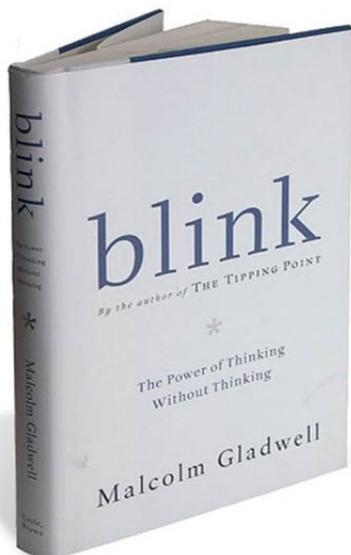
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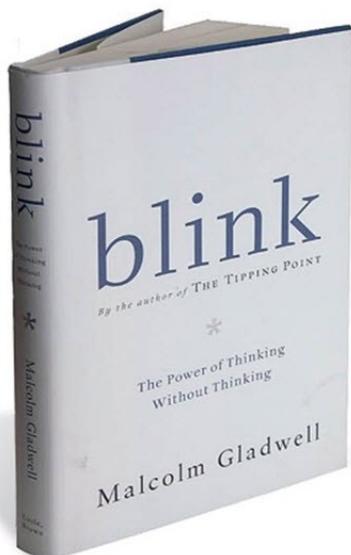
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