

PURPLE GOLDFISH

LITTLE THINGS MAKE THE
BIGGEST DIFFERENCE IN
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

STAN PHELPS, JD/MBA
PurpleGoldfish.com

Purple Goldfish: Little Things Make the Biggest Difference in Customer Experience

1st Edition [Change to 2nd Edition](#)

ISBN 978-0-997XXXX-X-X [Change to 978-0-997-9849838-6-5](#)

Stan Phelps, JD/MBA

Published by 9 INCH

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted or reproduced in any media or form with the written consent of the author.

© 2016 PurpleGoldfish.com [Change to 2017](#)

More info at PurpleGoldfish.com

Printed in the USA by MiniBuk

CONTENTS

Tales from a NYC Rooftop	1
Choose Your Path Wisely	5
What's Your Purple Goldfish.....	7
Why A Goldfish?	9
Why Purple?	13
12 Types of Purple Goldfish	17
Top 7 Key Takeaways.....	23
About The Author	25
Other Books in the Goldfish Series.....	27
Keynotes and Workshops	28

TALES FROM A NYC ROOFTOP

It was a summer evening back in 2009. I was in New York City with a work colleague. Brad and I were at a trendy rooftop bar. One of those places where a bottle of beer is \$14.

We were waiting to meet a few people before heading over to a networking event. I noticed a older gentleman sitting on his own for over 30 minutes. It was obvious that he was waiting for someone. I decided to strike up a conversation about waiting by offering my standard line:

“Do you know that we spend 10% of our life waiting?”

I told him I knew it was true because I once read it online. We laughed and started talking about the etiquette of waiting. I stressed the importance of being on time.

Right then this guy shook his head and said something I’ll never forget:

“There is no such thing as being on time. Being on time is a fallacy. You either are early... or you are late. No one is ever on time. On time is a myth.”

This was a complete paradigm shift for me. I immediately starting thinking about how this applies to business and meeting customer expectations. I’ve always thought that the idea of meeting expectations was a surefire recipe for losing business. It almost guarantees you will fall short. It’s similar to playing prevent defense in football. Prevent defense only prevents you from doing one thing... winning.

This new paradigm has only made it clearer for me. Meeting expectations is the biggest myth in business. Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy and Meeting Expectations. Kids cover your eyes and ears... they are all myths.

In business you either fall below expectations or you exceed them. There is no middle ground. It bears repeating:

“There is no such thing as meeting expectations.”

In a world where 60-80% of customers describe their customer satisfaction as satisfied or very satisfied before going on to defect to other brands, “meeting expectations” is no longer an option.

I went home that summer night and ^{change to started} starting thinking about companies that purposely set out to exceed the expectations of their customers.

NOTES

“The mind, once stretched by a new idea,
never returns to its original dimensions.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

CHOOSE YOUR PATH WISELY

There are two paths that diverge in the corporate woods. Many companies take the wide first path and are happy with just meeting expectations. Others consciously take the narrower and tougher road deciding to go above and beyond to do more than reasonably expected.

You can't be all things to all people. Your strategy defines which path you will take. Don't get caught in the mushy middle. It boils down to the simple issue of meeting expectations. If all you want to do is meet expectations, then you are setting yourself up to become a commodity. If you are not willing to differentiate yourself by creating valuable experiences or little touches that go "above and beyond" for your customer, you will languish in the sea of sameness. Choose your path... wisely.

To under-deliver or over-deliver, that is the question

In today's climate you need to stand out by answering two important questions:

1. *What makes you different?*
2. *Is that differentiator a signature element?*

THE SEA OF SAMENESS

How do you stand out in a sea of sameness? What is your one signature differentiator in customer experience? Instead of being a “me too,” what is the one special thing your company does that is superior and distinctive in the eyes of our customers? What is that little something extra that is tangible, valuable, and talkable? What do you hang our hat on? How do you stand out from your competition?

WHAT'S YOUR PURPLE GOLDFISH



A Purple Goldfish is any time a business purposely goes above and beyond to provide a little something extra. It's a marketing investment back into your customer base. It's that unexpected surprise that's thrown in for good measure to achieve product differentiation, drive retention, and promote word of mouth.

delete comma

NOTES

“The search for meaningful distinction is central to the marketing effort. If marketing is about anything, it is about achieving customer-getting distinction by differentiating what you do and how you operate. All else is derivative of that and only that.”

- Theodore “Ted” Levitt

WHY A GOLDFISH?

Let's break down a Purple Goldfish into two parts:

FIRST THE GOLDFISH

The average goldfish is three inches, yet the largest in the world is nearly 20 inches in size! That's over six times larger!!! Imagine walking down the street and bumping into someone 30 feet tall.



How can there be such a disparity between a garden variety goldfish and their monster cousins? It turns out that the growth of the goldfish is determined

by five factors. It is my belief that the growth of a product or service is similar to that of a goldfish.

#1. Size of the Environment = The Market

GROWTH FACTOR: The size of the bowl or pond.

RULE OF THUMB: Direct correlation. The larger the bowl or pond, the larger the goldfish can grow. The smaller the market, the lesser the growth.

#2. Number of other Goldfish = Competition

GROWTH FACTOR: The number of goldfish in the same bowl or pond.

RULE OF THUMB: Inverse correlation. The more goldfish, the less growth. The less competition, the more growth opportunity.

#3. The Quality of the Water = The Economy

GROWTH FACTOR: The clarity and amount of nutrients in the water.

RULE OF THUMB: Direct correlation. The better the quality, the larger the growth. The weaker the economy or capital markets, the more difficult it is to grow.

#4. How they're treated in the first 120 days of life = Start-up Phase / Launch

GROWTH FACTOR: The nourishment and treatment they receive as a fry (baby goldfish).

RULE OF THUMB: Direct correlation. The lower the quality of the food, water and treatment, the more the goldfish will be stunted for future growth. The stronger the leadership and capital as a start-up, the better the growth.

#5. Genetic Make-up = Differentiation

GROWTH FACTOR: The genetic make-up of the goldfish.

RULE OF THUMB: Direct correlation. The poorer the genes or the less differentiated, the less the goldfish can grow. The more differentiated the

product or service from the competition, the better the chance for growth.

Which of the five factors can you control?

Let's assume you have an existing product or service and have been in business for more than four months. Do you have any control over the market, your competition or the economy? NO, NO and NO. The only thing you have control over is your business' genetic make-up or how you differentiate your product or service. In goldfish terms, how do you stand out in a sea of sameness.

WHY PURPLE?

Purple is an ode to New Orleans and its most famous event – Mardi Gras. It is a homage because there is one word that comes from New Orleans that epitomizes the concept of exceeding expectations. A word that Mark Twain once said, “was worth traveling to New Orleans to get.” The word is Lagniappe. It is a Creole word meaning “the gift” or “to give more.” Pronounced lan-yap, the practice originated in Louisiana in the 1840’s. It was commonplace for a merchant to give a customer a little something extra at the time of purchase. It is a signature personal touch by the business that creates goodwill and promotes word of mouth.

According to Webster’s:

LAGNIAPPE (lan’y p, lăn-yăp’) Chiefly Southern Louisiana & Mississippi

1. A small gift presented by a store owner to a customer with the customer’s purchase.

2. An extra or unexpected gift or benefit. Also called boot. Etymology: Creole < Fr *la*, the + Sp *ñapa*, *lagniappe* <

Quechuan *yapa*. Interesting fact- *Napa* comes from *yapa*, which means “additional gift” in the South American Indian language, Quechua, from the verb *yapay* “to give more.”

ENTER SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS

Mark Twain was so smitten by the word that he wrote about it in his book *Life on the Mississippi*:

We picked up one excellent word—a word worth traveling to New Orleans to get; a nice limber, expressive, handy word—“lagniappe.”

They pronounce it lanny-yap. It is Spanish—so they said. We discovered it at the head of a column of odds and ends in the Picayune [newspaper] the first day; heard twenty people use it the second; inquired what it meant the third; adopted it and got facility in swinging it the fourth. It has a restricted meaning,

but I think the people spread it out a little when they choose. It is the equivalent of the thirteenth roll in a baker's dozen. It is something thrown in, gratis, for good measure.

The custom originated in the Spanish quarter of the city. When a child or a servant buys something in a shop—or even the mayor or the governor, for aught I know—he finishes the operation by saying— ‘Give me something for lagniappe.’ The shopman always responds; gives the child a bit of licorice- root, gives the servant a cheap cigar or a spool of thread, gives the governor—I don't know what he gives the governor; support, likely.

NOTES

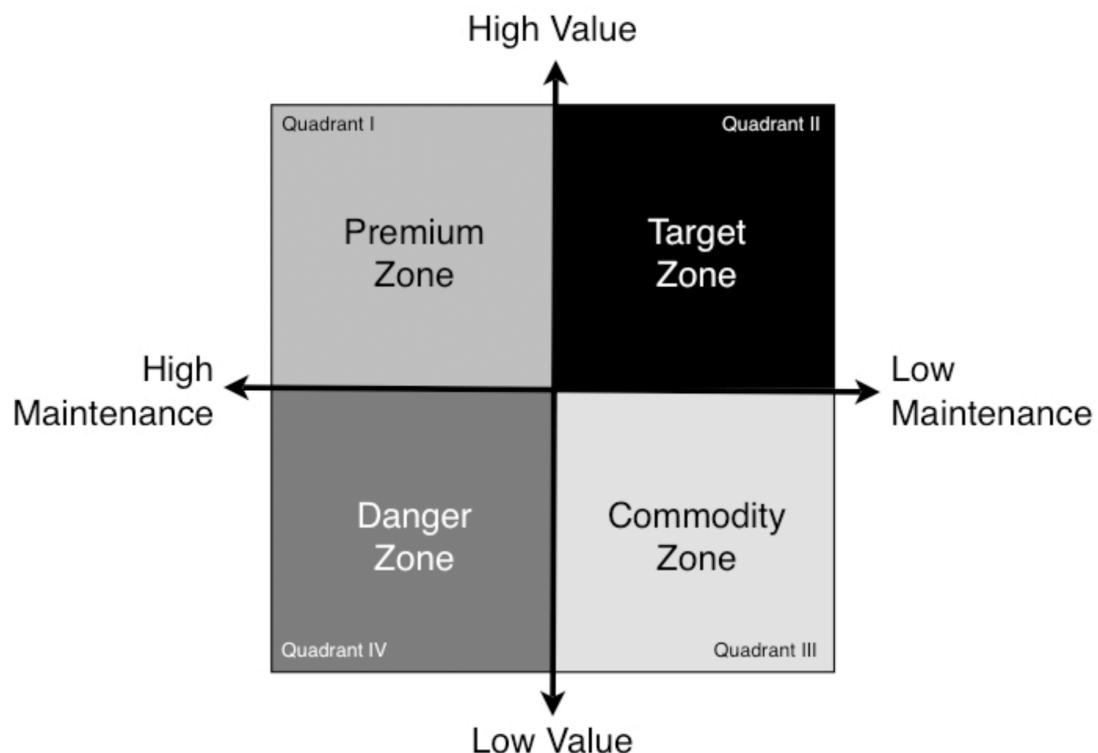
change make to makes

“The thing that make something remarkable isn’t usually directly related to the original purpose of the product or service. It’s the extra stuff, the stylish bonus, the design or the remarkable service or pricing that makes people talk about it and spread the word.”

- Seth Godin

12 TYPES OF PURPLE GOLDFISH

Over the course of 27 months, the Purple Goldfish Project crowd sourced over 1,001 examples of purple goldfish. It turns out there are a dozen different types of Purple Goldfish. Half are based on “value” and half are based on “maintenance” according to the value / maintenance matrix:



The goal is to be seen by your customers as high value and low maintenance.

HERE ARE THE MAIN ELEMENTS:

Value (the what and when of customer experience)

- What are the tangible and intangible benefits that your service or product provides?
- Does your product or service go above and beyond to exceed customer expectations?
- Are you giving that little unexpected extra to surprise and delight your customer?

Maintenance (the who and how of customer experience)

- What is the buying experience like for your customer?
- Do you make things turnkey or simple for your customer?
- Are you responsive to problems / issues for your customer?

HERE ARE THE 12 CATEGORIES:

#1. Throw-ins (value) – little extras that are included with your product or service. They help you stand out in a sea of sameness: Example: Southwest Airlines – “Bags Fly Free” and no change fees on Southwest. [delete on Southwest](#)

#2. In the Bag / Out of the Box (value) - little unexpected things that are added as a surprise. Example: Maggiano's - order a signature pasta dish and they will give you an additional one to-go.

#3. Sampling (value) - an additional taste by offering a free something extra on the house. Example: Bigelow Tea - order a box of tea from Bigelow and you'll be treated to a sample of another flavor.

#4. First & Last Impressions (value) - you have two chances to make an impression. When your customer comes through the door and right before they walk out, hang up or log off. These little extras

make you memorable and more importantly talkable. Example: When you check in the Hard Rock Hote, they'll let you sample a Gibson guitar. Check in, plug-in and rock out.

#5. Guarantees (value) - giving your customers that little extra pledge that you'll stand behind your product or service. Example: L.L. Bean - Leon Leonwood Bean backs his product for life.

#6. Pay it Forward (value) - give a little extra back to the community. Example: Plaza Cleaners - if you are out of work and need a suit cleaned for an interview, Plaza will clean it for free.

#7. Follow-Up / Thank-You (maintenance) - make the little extra follow up with your customer. Example: Rite Aid follows up with a call to check on a patient.

#8. Added Service (maintenance) - the little extra that's an added unexpected service. Example: Safelite repairs or replaces your glass, but they also vacuum your car and clean your windows.

#9. Convenience (maintenance) - the little extras you add to make things easier for your customers. Example: TD Bank is open 7 days a week and some nights until 8 p.m.

#10. Waiting (maintenance) - all customers hate to wait. If it's inevitable, how can you do a little extra to make it more bearable. Example: Pacific Cafe - while you wait for your table, enjoy a glass of wine on the house.

#11. Special Needs (maintenance) - acknowledging that some customers have needs that require special attention. Example: Rainforest Cafe - the restaurant caters to the needs of customer by doing a little extra for those with food allergies.

#12. Handling Mistakes (maintenance) - admitting that you're wrong and doing the little extra above and beyond to make it more than right. Example: Nurse Next Door - this nursing agency in Canada takes the idea of "humble pie" to heart, literally delivering a pie when they make a mistake.

NOTES

delete do

“If you do build a great experience, customers tell each other about that.

Word of mouth is very powerful.”

- Jeff Bezos

[illegible]

TOP 7 KEY TAKEAWAYS

#1. THE BIGGEST MYTH IN MARKETING

There is no such thing as meeting expectations. You either exceed them or you fall short.

#2. CHOOSE WISELY

You can't be all things to all people. You only have two choices as a marketer: Create to spec and face being a commodity or set out to exceed expectations and become literally remark-able.

#3. SHAREHOLDERS VS. CUSTOMERS?

Business is about creating and keeping customers. Customer experience should be Priority #1 in your marketing. Stop focusing on the "two in the bush" (prospects) and focus on customers.

#4. VALUE IS THE NEW BLACK

Don't compete on price. Cater to the 70% that buy based on value. Price is relative to value received.

#5. PURPLE GOLDFISH STRATEGY

Purple Goldfish Strategy is “differentiation via added value.” Finding signature extras that help you stand out, improve customer experience, reduce attrition and drive positive word of mouth.

#6. ACTS OF KINDNESS

Think of lagniappe as an added branded act of kindness. A sign that shows you care. Marketing via G.L.U.E (giving little unexpected extras). A little something thrown in for good measure.

#7. FIVE INGREDIENTS OR R.U.L.E.S

- **Relevant** - the extra should be of value to the recipient
- **Unexpected** - it should “surprise and delight”
- **Limited** - the extra should be something rare, hard to find or signature to your business
- **Expression** - it should be a sign that you care
- **Sticky** - it should be memorable and talkable

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Stan Phelps is a TEDx Speaker, Forbes Contributor, and IBM Futurist. He believes that today's organizations must focus on meaningful differentiation to win the hearts of both employees and customers.

[delete the content hub](#)

He is the Founder of the content hub PurpleGoldfish.com, a site that focuses on customer experience and employee engagement solutions. He believes that “differentiation via added value” is a game changing strategy.

Before founding PurpleGoldfish.com, Stan had a twenty-year career in marketing including leadership positions at IMG, adidas, PGA Exhibitions and Synergy. At Synergy, he worked on award-winning experiential programs for top brands such as KFC, Wachovia, NASCAR, Starbucks, and M&M's.

He has spoken for Fortune 100 brands such as IBM, Citi, ESPN, and Target. Stan has keynoted over 100 events in the US, Canada, UK, France,



[delete image](#)

Sweden, Spain, The Netherlands, Russia, Peru, Israel, Bahrain, and Australia. [add Malaysia, Ecuador](#)

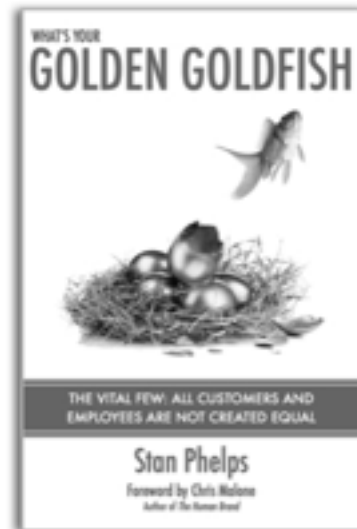
Stan received a BS in Marketing and Human Resources from Marist College, a JD/MBA from Villanova University and a certificate for Achieving Breakthrough Service from Harvard Business School.

Interested in having Stan speaking at your event? Email us at: speaking@purplegoldfish.com.

OTHER BOOKS IN THE GOLDFISH SERIES

add column

add Purple here and
center all three



shift Blue, PGSE over
and add Red here



KEYNOTES AND WORKSHOPS

PURPLE GOLDFISH

Creating Little Things That Make the Biggest Difference in Customer Experience

GREEN GOLDFISH

Going Beyond Dollars to Drive Employee Engagement & Reinforce Culture

GOLDEN GOLDFISH

Taking Care of Your Most Important Customers and Employees

BLUE GOLDFISH

Using Technology, Data, and Analytics to Drive Customer Advocacy

RED GOLDFISH

Becoming a For Purpose Business to Win Employees & Customers

PINK GOLDFISH

darken Pink Goldfish

Amplifying Weakness to Differentiate and Stand Out in a Sea of Sameness

For more information or to book your keynote or workshop, email speaking@purplegoldfish.com