

**Pollitt  
&  
Partners**

**Know your audience.  
Be more imaginative.  
Use the tech. Be patient.  
Think simply and clearly.  
Go with what you stand for.**

**Brands exist on and offline, in the mind, in-store and around us as tangible products and intangible interactions. But what if we could explain brands in a much more exciting way?**

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## **We need to talk about brand experience**

How we feel, taste, think, react to, see and share the world around us has never been more malleable. By crafting the what, how and where of a brand – and the emotions that accompany it – brands can start to tell a compelling story.

Today in retail, very few shops online or on the high street are just places to buy things. Consumers no longer drift through them passively, instead it's a two-way conversation and experience now counts for everything.

But what exactly do we mean when we talk about brand experience? What makes one? As marketers, businesses and creatives, what should we be doing about them – and how do we build the best ones? Engaged audiences, rising sales targets, the cost of physical locations, the push for ROI (return on investment). With so much clamour for market share, what exactly should brands be doing more or less of?

When the experience of a brand is everything you think you know up to this moment – the sooner we realise that brands' future successes rely on what happens next, the more we can make that happen. It just takes a bit of thinking differently.

**Brand experience is all the interactions people have with a product, service, or organisation; the raw material of a brand.**

—  
Marty Neumeier, author of *The Dictionary of Brand*

## Where do we find brand experience?

Experience happens to us and around us. The emotional connection, change in attitude or behavioural shift to the creation of a new habit. It's in the tiniest, trickiest details. From the moment you open the door – or the browser – and each tentative step towards checkout. It's the click and the reward, the physical and the virtual, the non-verbal cues – and even whether you get a hello or not. It's this very omnipotence that makes them curatable practically everywhere.

Because brand experiences are never limited to just retail, we need to look past traditional concepts in crafting them. Where there is no high street, we should be building on reputation or awareness of the area. And where there is one, we should realise that putting in another coffee shop isn't the answer. Experiences should never be boring or have to shout the loudest when they can be so much more.

Brands that are unafraid to explore theatricality could find exciting new connections. From Cyberdog's beginnings in Camden to Punchdrunk's collaborations with Samsung and Rihanna, immersive environments do that bit more to put the audience first, and give them autonomy to choose the experience they want.



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**Experiences don't have to make money, they should impart ideas – Rapha nailed this – it's about the race, the lifestyle, the kit and the machine.**  
 —  
 Dave Judge, International Speaker  
 Owner of Judge XD

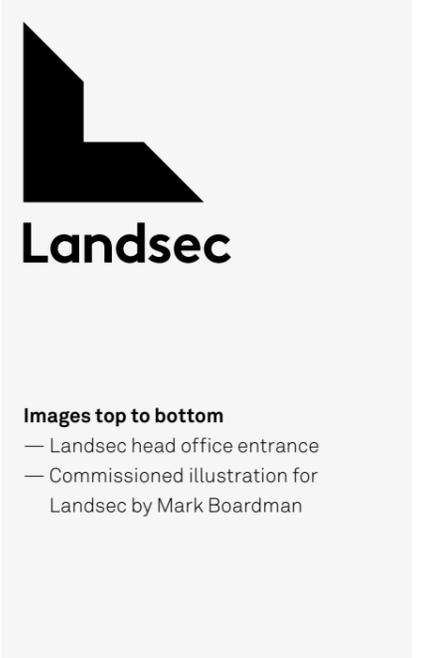
## Everything is experience The Landsec case story

When we worked with Landsec (formerly Land Securities) on their rebrand, we placed experience into a central philosophy the whole company could unite behind. A focus on customers and experiences, rooted in the belief that great places are for people to experience, and made with the experience of great people.

It might feel like an overuse of the word 'experience', but experience is bigger than why you go where you go, or what happens in a workplace or retail environment. It happens in people's minds.

For Landsec, owning the experience of customers and service means as a company they can focus on people, partners, their experience – and the experiences they deliver – at every touchpoint.

“We believe great places are for people to experience and made with the experience of great people.”



**Images top to bottom**  
 — Landsec head office entrance  
 — Commissioned illustration for Landsec by Mark Boardman

## Pushing the boundaries

All brand experiences at their core create a reaction. It's what essentially bonds people to them. When they're immersive, tactile, or simply emotional, we tap into the humanity of what makes us human. Make us laugh, cry and gasp and these positive reactions will work together to reinforce a larger brand relationship.

Challenger brands are adept in changing our views. Push the boundaries of convention and people will naturally want more. It can be as simple as the first time you saw a plate of sushi wobble round on a conveyor belt at YO! The possibilities are still enormous.

Years ago, challenger brands were like First Direct who broke the mould with award-winning customer service. And, today they're banking start-ups like Monzo, who started up as an app, but who are actively putting customer collaboration first to build a different business model from the beginning.

When we use the detail of these moments, we can create a more interesting space. If brands can adapt and create experiences consumers actively want to connect to, we can give people much more compelling reasons to pick them.

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**We can change mindsets when we see brand less as colouring in and more as a source of ingenuity.**

—  
Dave Judge, International Speaker  
Owner of Judge XD

### Brand New Thinking:

Our top 5 tips on brand experience

## 01. Authenticity

Why sticking to your instincts matters.

## 02. Clicks and mortar

How to blur the boundaries effectively.

## 03. The London Bubble

Looking beyond the Capital.

## 04. Tech

Getting under the skin of new technology.

## 05. Loyalty

Brands you love. And you. And you.

## The A-Z of brand experience

## 01. Authenticity

It's got to be authentic. Don't shy away from that word. There is no one-size-fits-all experience out there, so don't just create experience for experience's sake, slap a filter on it and call it authentic. Whenever we work with a brand, we go back to basics. It's the who are you and what do you stand for?

## 02. Clicks and mortar

There's a fear with retailers that we as consumers somehow need to be saved from online. Specifically, from tech giants whose algorithms are not only shaping our shopping purchases, but are now invading our consciousness – and our daily lives – with a frictionless reward system.

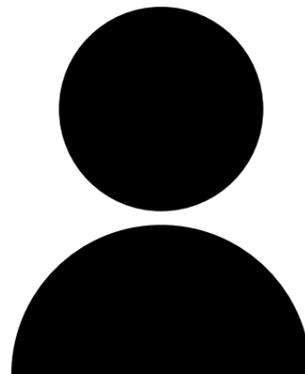
Whether you're the quintessential early adopter and speak to Alexa daily or you think your audience will be the last to purchase on mobile, don't limit your brand's reach in terms of online or off. Some of the best experiences blur the boundaries and use digital in-store, and encourage an in-store experience as a direct result of the click. We always recommend having the flexibility to be omnichannel.

Brand experiences don't have to be all bells and whistles, all the time. Think like a start-up and create interesting possibilities around buying. Use pop-ups as enablers to get more experiences of your brand out to more people in more places – in ways that aren't necessarily traditional.

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**It's important to stick to your instincts when creating any kind of brand experience. When you tap into the core values of who you are – and you stay true to those – it will work, and it really won't when you go against who you are.**

–  
Nick Pollitt, Founder, Pollitt & Partners



## Authenticity and Capco The Covent Garden case story

Beverley Churchill, founder of Churchill Husband, takes us through the evolution of Covent Garden.

Beverley has a career spanning over 20 years in the retail and property industries, building brands and making great places. For the past decade, Beverley has worked as Creative Director of Capco where she has been at the forefront of the strategic repositioning of its one million square foot, £2.4 billion Covent Garden estate now famous for delivering extraordinary customer experiences in shopping, dining and culture through an unparalleled approach to curation, place and service. From 1 January 2018, Beverley became Founder and Managing Director of a new consultancy 'Churchill Husband' offering placemaking advisory services in partnership with Paul Husband of Husband Retail Consulting.

Over the past ten years, under Capco's stewardship and vision, Covent Garden has been transformed into a vibrant world-class destination for shopping and dining, while maintaining the character of the area.

The opening of the world's largest Apple store at the time in August 2010 was a milestone in the reinvigoration of the neighbourhood, which continues with positive momentum through Capco's proactive asset management, strategic investment, development and placemaking initiatives.

Covent Garden maintains a curated retail mix, blending global brands such as Chanel and Mulberry with independent retailers like Nigel Cabourn alongside traditional artisanal market stalls. The dining scene continues to strengthen with openings from Petersham Nurseries and SushiSamba soon to join Frenchie, Balthazar and LIMA Floral.

### Covent Garden financial information

Initial acquisition value: £421.5m

2017 value: £2.4bn



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**Brand experience is not a tap you can turn on or off – it takes time, patience and belief in your vision to deliver it.**

–  
Beverley Churchill  
Former Creative Director, Capco

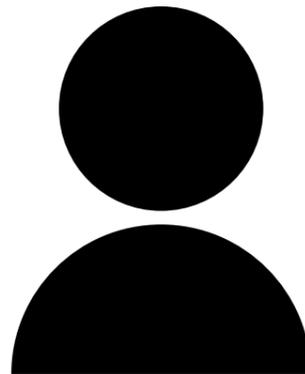
### 03. The London Bubble

Admit it, if you live or work in London, Manchester or one of the UK's big regional cities, the brand experience will mostly be markedly different. It's important as designers to step out of the bubble and address the reality of what's going on in smaller towns and cities, in a way that is both creatively and socially responsible, addressing changes in experience at a local, regional and global level.



**To broaden out the impact of brand experiences and help retail to do better in this climate, we should open up the conversation to landlords; those sticky choices of profit, turnover rates and even the involvement and support of government can really shake up spaces, encourage pop-ups and meanwhile uses.**

— Sean Davey, Strategist, Pollitt & Partners



### 04. Tech

Emerging retail technologies can create new and interesting environments that further the brand experience. Tech-hungry consumers are eager to adopt new technologies and pursue new ways of thinking, which means we can up expectations, too.

Tech enables us to get under the skin of consumer behaviour. Increase dwell time, using sensors and tracking for footfall, test how people are interacting and physically touching products, add in innovative uses of social sharing – and bring in sustainability that resonates with a much wider environment.

Experiences that allow you to bypass queues to pick up everything from hire cars to coffee, or re-ordering straight from your fridge, are fundamentally changing the checkout.

Tech pioneers like Uber and Lyft (and despite the former's detractors) work precisely because of the experience. Tech removes the friction of payment, where people put up with a slightly lower experience (knowledge or having your own taxi) to reap a monetary reward.

**Tech enables us to get under the skin of consumer behaviour... add in innovative uses of social sharing and bring in sustainability...**

## Introducing: The Dandy Lab

A fundamental part of Pollitt & Partners business is to build partnerships with clients and experts who bring interesting and innovative collaborations to the table. The Dandy Lab is one such partnership who we worked with in Bird Street, London on the world's first smart street. Not just a pop-up or a smart tech 'moment', but a street totally powered by sustainable energy, where every pop-up actively explored ways to deliver an engaging high street. Footfall turned into energy – and birdsong – and there was an air filtering bench from Airlabs for cleaner air.

The Dandy Lab's retail pod focused on independent designers, styling them as a live photoshoot for a conceptual lifestyle magazine. A selfie mirror by Clicksys mocked up a fake Dandy Lab magazine cover, encouraging more social sharing by putting the consumer in the centre of the edit.

### The Dandy | Lab

#### Results:

- 85% of visitors took a selfie
- 23% uplift in social media sharing

#### Insights from their Retail Tech Lab:

- Omnichannel conversion: 93% instore sales, 7% online
- Real sales data: 24% instore conversion
- Footfall/hotspots across the street: peak hours 4.30–5.00 pm

## 05. Loyalty

What creates loyalty? Looking after people, changing perceptions and adding different layers of emotion.

A key driver here is Starbucks' cup personalisation initiative. Is this naming a success or a failure? With a 50/50 chance to create a negative brand experience, Starbucks is still willing to take that risk to increase loyalty for the positive feeling you get when someone gets your name right.

As a supplement to their bricks and mortar retailing, fashion house Louis Vuitton used exhibition space at 180 Strand, London for their autumn/winter 2015 collection.

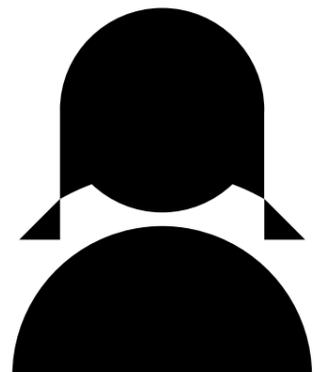
Instead of using one of their stores, this meanwhile space allowed them to reinforce brand identity whilst offering multiple brand experiences. As an exhibition, they removed any purchase ability, choosing instead to reach out to newer, younger, less immediately affluent customers they could influence for future loyalty. So everything could be about creativity, inspiration and connection.



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When you walk into a shop there's an expectation that you might buy something... this is the next generation, we want them to come and be excited by it.

— Es Devlin, Set Designer, Louis Vuitton Series 3 exhibition



# The A-Z of brand experience



## Activation

Creative experiences that get people engaging with your brand.



## Environments

Brand is as much about place as it is about product.



## Internet of things

Harnessing the potential for every product to be connected.



## Moments that matter

Where can small interventions have the biggest impact?



## Queues

Popularity – does success mean people queuing round the block?



## UX

Actively crafting the user experience, in-store and online.



## You

Knowing your audience and speaking to them as an individual.



## Bricks & Clicks

Using digital in-store and blurring the boundaries between online and offline.



## Footfall

Are you taking customers on the right journey?



## Journey

Curating how your customers get from one touchpoint to another.



## Narrative

“A great brand is a story that never stops unfolding.”



## Return on investment

Translating experience into tangible results for your business.



## Virtual reality

Allowing product interaction through immersive VR environments.



## Zones

Keeping it simple means not packing too much into one space.



## Co-creation

Asking our customers to get involved to help you solve the problem.



## Geolocations

Combining digital analytics with actual locations to gain new insights.



## Knowing your customer

Who's in your brand community?



## Omnichannel

Modern brands need to be flexible enough to be everywhere.



## Sensors

Tracking customer behaviours made possible through sensors.



## Wearables

Evolving from exercise trackers to everyday essentials, wearables open up more experiences.



## Data

What are you measuring and is it of use?



## Human

The human touch vs. AI – where does your brand stand?



## Local

Making every experience special using data and technology.



## Pop-up

Why have one permanent location when you can experiment with more?



## Tactile

Interacting with your product and the emotions you want people to feel.



## X marks the spot

Making the right mark – successful brands put the customer first.

# Pollitt & Partners

polly.h@pollittandpartners.com  
pollittandpartners.com  
+44 (0)20 7379 6709

**Brand New Thinking** is a series of events that bring together people from a range of creative and commercial backgrounds to explore new topics related to branding and innovation. Previous events have explored topics ranging from Influencer Marketing to Brand Experience, with speakers from brands including Monzo, Jazz FM and WWF-UK.