

# Design Examples of Customer Experiences – Waiting Experiences at Restaurants

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## Abstract

In general, service industries are expecting the frequent usage of the customer by increasing the customer experiences. The most important thing to increase the frequency is the experiences with strong impressions. Therefore, the customer experiences were designed to harmonize them to the intent of the restaurant brand.

In this report, the customer processes were designed based upon the emotional functions of the customers by using the FAST analysis. The critical points of the design were the timing to maximize the performance. Especially, it is not always true that the higher emotional function is the better service. In order to impress the brand to the customers, it should be better to fluctuate the strength of the emotional functions. In this paper, the design methods of the customer experiences to fluctuate the functions is introduced, based on the design examples of the waiting experiences at the restaurants which were actually studied at the Saizeriya restaurants.

## Introduction

Saizeriya is one of the Italian food service chain who serves the Italian food with the reasonable prices. Similar to the fast food restaurants like McDonald's, no reservation is basically required and "first come, first served" policy is applied.

Although there are 140 seats at each restaurant, they are fully occupied during the lunch and dinner time. Therefore, the customers often have to wait until the seats become available at the entrance.

In the past, Saizeriya had designed the customer floor to maximize the number of the customer seats. However, the strategy was changed and some seat space was changed to the waiting space for the customers.

Since the reservation is basically not accepted, "first come, first served" policy must be strictly maintained. Therefore, the appropriate registration function is studied and the waiting time should be positioned as the previous stage before the cheerful meal. However, the design team had prioritized the capacity of the customers and the circulation planning similar to a conventional method. This may be alike to the waiting space of the hospitals or the banks.

Therefore, the customer experiences was designed to connect to the cheerful meal by analyzing the functions of the customer experiences at the waiting space before designing the waiting space.



Fig1. Waiting aspect at the entrance



Fig2. Image of the additional waiting room

## Customer experiences at restaurants

First, the conceptual image of the customer experiences at the restaurants are illustrated below. The customer experiences at the restaurants begin before going into the restaurants and continue even after going out from the restaurants. Needless to say, the main objective of the customer is to enjoy the meal. They want to enjoy the meal, the drink, the service, the staff, the space, the time and the relationships

with other customers. Thus, the various processes are existing before and after the meal.

### Customer Process at Restaurants (Overview)

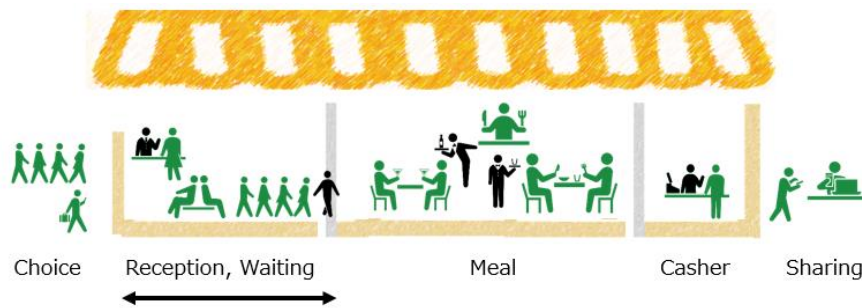


Fig3. Customer Experiences at a restaurant

### Waiting Process at restaurants

The processes of the reception and the waiting is from the entrance to the seats as shown in Figure 3. If there are many vacant seats and the customers like them, the customers can take the seats immediately. If there is few seats available, the customers have to wait at the outside of the dining room until the seat is available.

### Waiting Process at the restaurants (Restaurant side)

The FAST diagram for the reception and the waiting processes are shown below from the restaurant point of view. The basic function of the waiting process is “prepare table condition”. Even if the seats are vacant, the restaurant clerks need to prepare the table and provide the menu in advance.

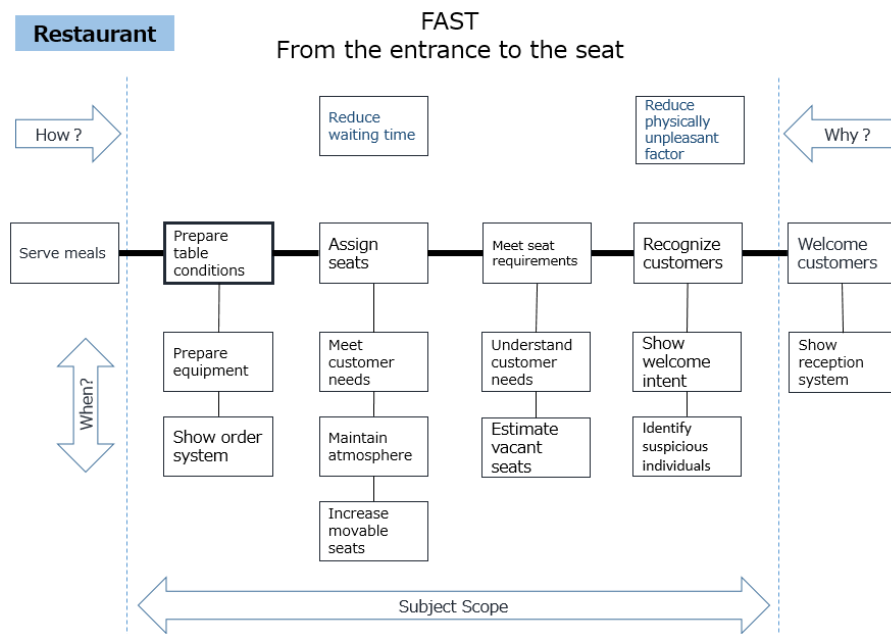


Fig4. Fast: Bussiness Process from the entrance to the seat

### Waiting Process at the restaurants (Customer side)

On the contrary, the FAST diagram for the reception and the waiting processes are shown below from the customer point of view. The basic function of the waiting process is “make meal condition”. The

customers get undressed and check their baggage before being guided to the seats.

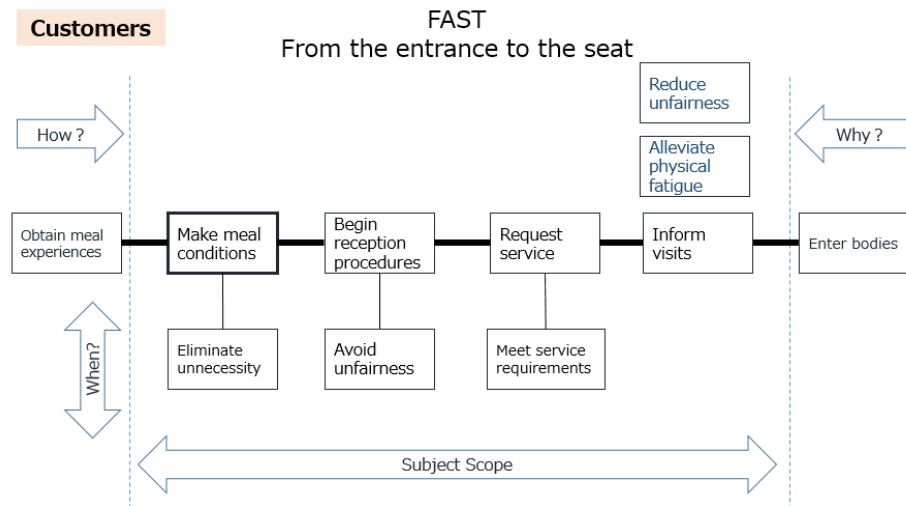


Fig.5 FAST:Customer Process from the entrance to the seat

### Waiting Process at the restaurants

The waiting processes for the restaurants and the customers are linked with the similar functions. This means that the characteristics of the service happens simultaneously. The service is established between the provider and the taker. There is an interaction between the provider who is trying to achieve the functions required for the customers and the taker who is acting in accordance with the service provided by the restaurant. Thus, it seems that there is few difference for the function analysis.

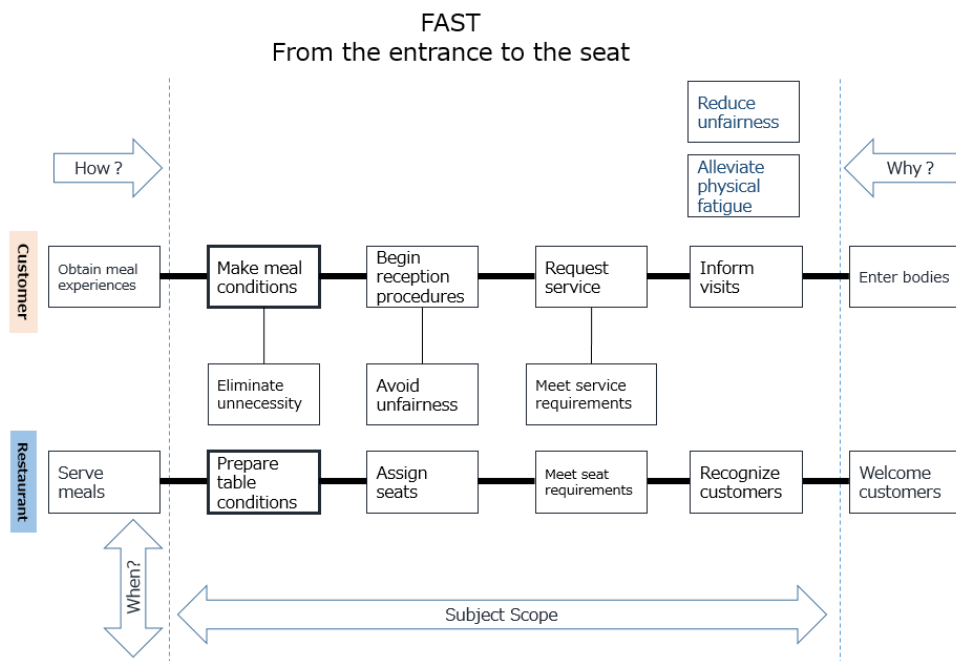


Fig6. FAST Comparison customer process and business process

## Customer Experience at the Restaurant (Emotional Function)

There are some differences between the customer processes and the restaurant processes as reported at the SAVE in 2018. The customers expects not only physical functions but emotional functions. In the business processes, it is mainly required to achieve the physical functions. On the other hand, the customers are not satisfied if only the physical functions are achieved. The differences between the business processes and the customer processes are shown below.

Table 1: Analysis comparison between conventional processes and customer processes

	Conventional process analysis	Customer process analysis
Subject	<b>Business Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Machining process</li> <li>• Production process</li> <li>• Operating process</li> </ul>	series of events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between service provider &amp; Customer</li> <li>• Give product and service to customers directly</li> <li>• Include both before and after processes</li> </ul>
For what	Streamlining business	Increase the experience value of customers
Scope definition	Manager's view point	Customer's view point
Example: dentist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical record management</li> <li>• Maintenance of Therapeutic instruments</li> <li>• Production process of tooth filling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treatment process of carious teeth</li> <li>• Prevention of carious teeth</li> <li>• Orthodontic treatment</li> </ul>

The customers subjectively take their experiences in general. Therefore, it is more appropriate to add the emotional functions to the process from the entrance to the seat. The FAST diagram which is added the emotional functions to the previous one is shown below.

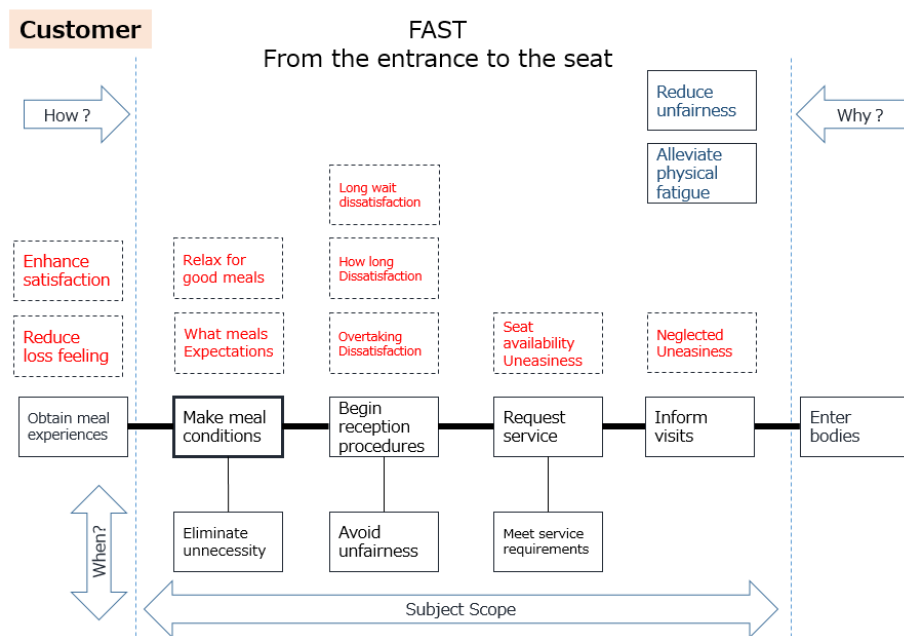


Fig7. FAST Comparison: Customer process with emotional functions

The red sentences above the critical function logic path are emotional functions. If the emotional functions are too abstracted, the basic functions become the vague like uneasiness, dissatisfaction and expectation. In order to make improvement points clear, it is better to describe the emotional functions in detail. The description of the emotional functions should be more realistic to make the improvements more effective.

As shown in this figure, there is the best timing to achieve the emotional functions in accordance with the physical functions. It has become clear in this study that the timing is important.

Furthermore, the possibility to differentiate Saizeriya brand from competitors has become clear. Therefore, it was decided to design the harmonization of the customer functions and the physical functions.

### Design Customer Process by emotional ups and downs

In order to illustrate the fluctuation of the customer emotion, the simulated curve was applied as shown in Figure 8. Various emotions like uneasiness, dissatisfaction and expectation become stronger or weaker from the neutral state. The neutral state is defined as zero. So, the plus side is positive and the minus side is negative. As an example, the emotional change of the customer during the waiting time is drawn as a curve.

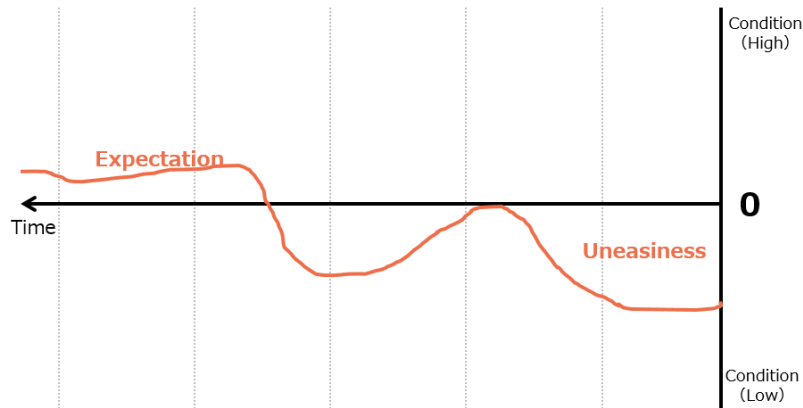


Fig8.Emtional ups and down in the waiting process

As the waiting procedures proceed, it was possible to describe the emotional aspects including uneasiness, dissatisfaction and expectation.

In the waiting process, the physical functions of the customers are liked as the time goes. Therefore, the Critical Function Logic Path was shown in this figure (Figure 9). From this figure, it became easier to understand the current achievement of the functions by visualizing the physical functions and the emotional functions.

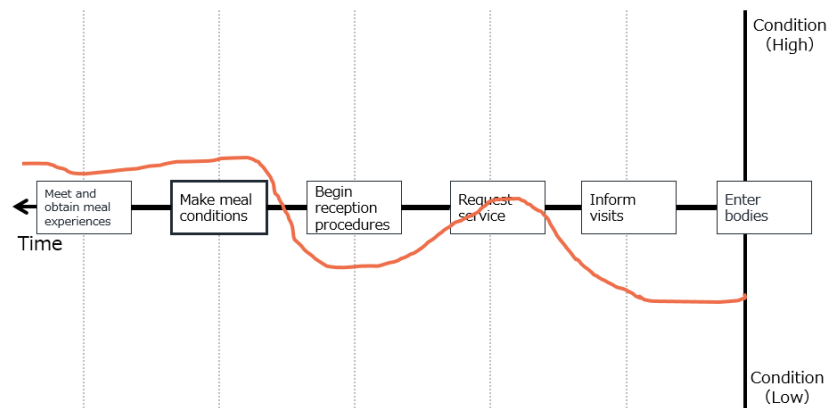


Fig9.Emtional ups and down in the waiting process and Critical Function Logic Path

## Design Customer Processes by the Strength of the Emotional Function

The current customer experiences were relatively negative. The request of the improvement was to enhance the excitement before going into the dining hall. However, it became clear from the previous study that there are some cases to impress the excitement. One of the study was the Peak-end rule proposed by Daniel Kahneman in 1999. In this paper, the memories of all experiences depend on the emotion at both the peak and the end. It was discussed where the peak should be positioned and two cases were proposed to increase the emotion positively. They are shown in Figures 10 and 11.

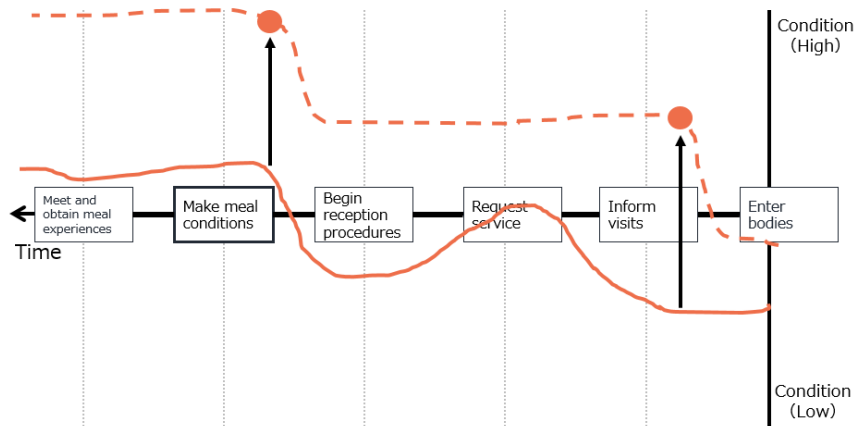


Fig10. Emotional image ( I ) : Initial ups

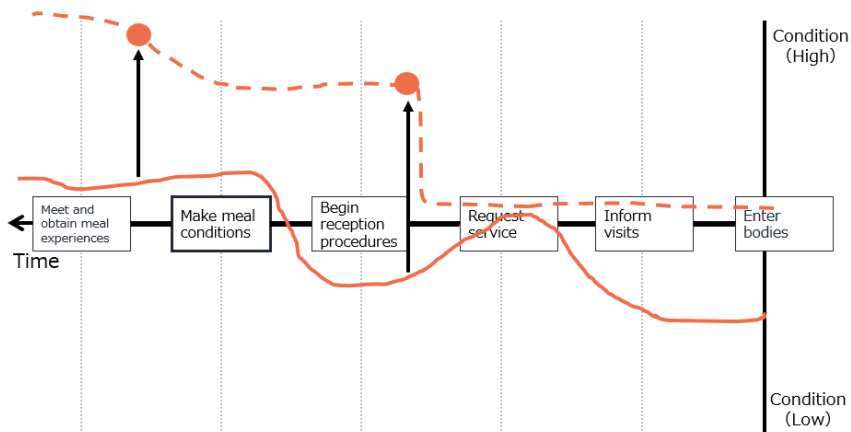


Fig11. Emotional image ( II ) : Later ups

As shown in Figure 10, the customers are impressed positively first and then, the positive emotion is accelerated when the uneasiness factor of the customers is disappeared. In this case, the pleasant time lasts longer and the impression of the customer processes becomes positive.

As shown in Figure 11, the neutral state continues in the beginning and the positive peak appears largely. When the all beginning procedures are finished, the positive emotion is inspired suddenly. So, the expectations of the customers to the meal are swelled. This is the method by the Peak-end rule and the emotion moves from the neutral to the higher positive impressions. Even if the final achievement of the functions are the same, the customer impressions should change by the timing when the impressions are enhanced. Thus, it is proposed that there are two methods for the direction of the improvements.

## Three Aspects to Determine the Customer Processes

As described above, two methods to design the customer emotions were proposed. The next question

is, “which method should be taken?”

There are three aspects to determine the direction of the improvements. First of all, what is appropriate for the waiting impression at the restaurant entrance? It depends on the brand and there should be differences between silent brands and cheerful brands. Not only considering the waiting process, the method must be compliant with the brand concept.

Second of all, the view point of the customer emotions through the whole experiences at the restaurant. The waiting process is stable and calm and the customers may experience the impressive events when they are seated at the dining hall. In the authentic Japanese restaurants, the customers meet few people from the entrance to the seats. But the customers get surprised at the meals one by one and finally, the chef explains the cooking methods to the customers at the end of the meals. So, the customers are impressed that they are hospitalized so gently and the emotional peak becomes highest. Adversely, it may be also possible to serve one of the appetizers during the waiting time and to increase the customer expectations. Thus, it is necessary to design where the peak of the customer emotion should be positioned comprehensively.

Thirdly, the possibility of the realization how to provide the methods to increase the emotional function. It is required to consider the better choice to improve the facilities and the staff with the appropriate cost and the range.

In this team, the pattern shown in Figure 10 was chosen. This is because it is necessary to differentiate the first impressions against the competitors who do not have the reservation system as well. The physical customer processes were not changed. The two steps in the first impression and the latter emotion increase were realized. Various proposals which can be realized within three months were submitted.

## **Conclusion**

The design method of the process of the customer emotions was proposed by simulating the fluctuation of the customer emotions based on the emotional functions from the FAST analysis. Some efforts must be required to increase the customer emotions and it is required to change the facilities and strengthen the service level of the staff. If the timing can be appropriately designed, the customers do not care about the weakness in the function achievements. Therefore, it should be possible to improve the service effectively with the minimum investment.

It is possible to design the services which can impress the customers if the total design of the customer emotions is carried out by looking at the emotional functions desired by the customers.

## **References**

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