

COGNITIVE SHORTCUTS

DUAL PROCESS THINKING

Customers operate in two modes: fast, automatic System 1 and slow, deliberate System 2. The vast majority of CX decisions never reach System 2.

COGNITIVE LOAD

Every unnecessary step, choice or piece of information drains mental resources, increasing errors, frustration and abandonment rates.

AVAILABILITY HEURISTIC

Customers judge likelihood and frequency by how easily an example comes to mind. Recent or vivid experiences dominate overall brand perception.

CONFIRMATION BIAS

Once a customer forms an opinion of your brand, they actively seek information that confirms it and discount evidence that contradicts it.

AFFECT HEURISTIC

Emotional state at the moment of interaction colours every judgement. A customer in a negative mood will rate objectively identical service as lower quality.

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FLUENCY EFFECT

Information that is easier to read, understand and navigate feels more credible and trustworthy, regardless of the actual quality of the content.

HOW CUSTOMERS CONSTRUCT EXPERIENCE

My expectations set the benchmark

Satisfaction is not absolute, it is the gap between what was anticipated and what was received. Managing expectation is as important as delivery quality.

I remember the peak and the end

Customers do not average their experience. They recall it by its most intense moment and how it concluded. The final touchpoint is disproportionately powerful.

Effort tells me how much you value me

High customer effort signals that the organisation has not designed around the customer. Customers interpret unnecessary friction as organisational indifference.

I trust what I can see.

Transparency, visible competence and consistent signals of intent build trust more reliably than claims or credentials alone. Show your working.

I'm more rational than I actually am

Customers believe their decisions are based on objective evaluation. In reality, most CX choices are driven by emotion, context and social signal, not logic.

A great recovery can make me more loyal.

When a complaint is handled exceptionally well, satisfaction can exceed what it would have been had no failure occurred, the service recovery paradox. Failure handled badly is catastrophic. Failure handled brilliantly is an opportunity.

6 KEY EFFECTS FOR CX

PEAK END RULE

Customers remember the most intense moment and the final moment, not the average. Design a deliberate high point and always end well.

LOSS AVERSION

Losing something hurts roughly twice as much as gaining the same thing feels good. Frame value around what customers risk losing, not what they gain.

DEFAULT EFFECT

People stick with pre set options. The default is your most powerful design decision. Make the best customer outcome the default, not the most convenient one.

SOCIAL PROOF

In uncertain moments, customers follow the visible behaviour of others. Testimonials and usage data reduce risk at every critical decision point.

FRAMING EFFECT

Identical information produces different decisions depending on how it is presented. Audit every customer facing message for unintended negative framing.

GOAL GRADIENT EFFECT

Motivation increases the closer customers feel to completing a goal. Show progress clearly and give customers a head start on loyalty mechanics.