



First, Last, and LastING Impressions?

Recently thinking about some "common knowledge" aspects of human relationships - both personal and professional. We've been reminded (ad nauseum!) about how important first impressions are. Ditto for last impressions. No argument there. First impressions establish a context and expectation while last impressions provide the last thing you see/hear about the experience when leaving. What I don't hear much about is a little different take on developing an impression...how about the importance of making a lastING impression?

The lasting impression of any interaction usually occurs somewhere in the middle - between the first and the last impression. When talking with people - friends or customers - I find it very interesting that they will have a particularly good (or bad) experience in the middle of the interaction that really sticks with them. It seems like we'd invest a little more time crafting ideas for creating lastING impressions as some people do for first or last impressions. That focused kind of effort is what sets apart the extraordinary from the ordinary.

Here's my personal priority:

1. Lasting impression: How can I really connect with them and add value in an unexpected way?
2. First impression: How can I make them immediately feel "at home" and ready for a special experience?
3. Last impression: How can I ensure they enjoy closure while still wanting to experience the interaction again (and be an advocate sending their family/friends to me as well!)

If more corporate training programs included this in their Orientation and Training programs, (and reinforced it all on the front line operations), their businesses would exceed expectations and really make a difference in the lives of their customers - both external and internal (employees). I mean, if we're making the effort anyway, who wouldn't want to make a lasting impression as well?

In these difficult times, connecting with people and making our impressions long-lasting just makes good (long-lasting) sense.