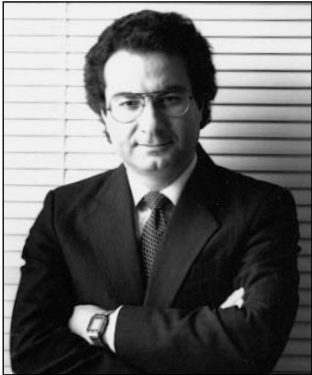


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Envisioning, visualisation and dynamic integration in design

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Good morning, ladies and gentlemen! As time is short I, too, will use innovation as a springboard to dive straight into my presentation.

First, two definitions of innovation taken from the British Standard on managing innovation (BSI, 1999):

- The successful exploitation of new ideas.
- Transformation of ideas into novel products, services and processes.

To bring innovative ideas to market, they have to be designed: so *all innovations are designed.*

This script of my presentation should appear in 'full screen' mode. Use the forward / back arrow keys in Adobe Acrobat Reader to move between pages. A hardcopy can be printed, too

There are no ‘ifs or buts’ about this. The design of an innovation may be rubbish, but it is still design. And this is true even when innovators do *not* use professional designers and are unaware they are involved in design.

For completeness, I should also point out that only a small proportion of design leads to innovation though a much larger proportion represents innovation *from the client’s standpoint*.

Prime interfaces with the future

The future presents us with multiple possibilities. To cope better, we map these out, then formulate strategies to address them. Designing and innovating constitute dialogues and prime interfaces with the future: we design desired futures, then design the means to bring them about.

Two quotes are instructive here. The first comes from Steve Amphlett who was Product Development Director at Caradon MK Electric in the early 1990s. He said: “*MK Electric had great difficulty in getting to the ‘voice of the customer’, so we used a design consultancy to help us communicate with customers in a ‘futuristic’ way*” (Topalian and Stoddard, 1997).

The second is from Harry Rawlinson, Managing Director of the Showers Division of the Baxi Group. He said: “*In product development, marketing colleagues tend to present extrapolations from where we are now. By contrast, designers usually offer us leaps forward in our thinking*” (Rawlinson, 2003). Remember my earlier point about innovation for the client?

Harry also mentioned that, till now, consultant designers have been ‘spot on’ with recommendations on what the market will accept five years ahead. You will recognise that such foresight is a distinct advantage in business!

Envisioning

So we come to *envisioning*. This is the process of *imagining ‘what might be’*—a key tool for ‘previewing’ futures and making them more tangible.

Envisioning also facilitates implementation because we are better prepared for, and more comfortable with, those futures.

Foreseeing and ‘creating the future today’ are characteristics of design leadership, as is a holistic perspective. That is because *effective design is integrated design*.

What kinds of integration?

What do we mean by ‘integrated design’? There are three relatively familiar aspects:

- First, the integration of all components within products.
- Second, a resonance with customers, their lifestyles and work practices.
- And third, the mutually-reinforcing contributors to the ‘total’ product as experienced over a wide range of requirements. So, apart from the physical entity of a product, we include components such

as software, sales environment, promotional literature, advertising, after-sales support and so on.

There are also three less familiar aspects:

- A seamless progression over time — as customer and product grow closer together, as well as grow *forward* together (in terms of expertise and loyalty/commitment).
- Appealing to all senses to heighten experience — a complex area that I will be happy to go into in more detail with examples during the discussion afterwards.
- Finally, design as the principal integrator of other disciplines in business — a prime aspect of *leading through design*.

Visualisation

If envisioning is imagining ‘what might be’, then visualisation is *imaging* ‘what might be’ — the visual interpretation and presentation of ideas. In its widest sense, visualisation concerns harnessing the ‘visual dimension’ of communication.

We know that most of us think in pictures. Also, the visual sense is dominant in learning generally and when coming to terms with changing environments. As ideas take shape, images play in our minds, complete with a soundtrack. Remember those dialogues with the future I mentioned before? Well now we have interactive ‘movies’ screened in our minds!

Visualisation also allows us to externalise and share what we ‘see’ in our minds. In the process, it helps us make ideas more tangible and understand them better.

“Moments of truth”

I would now like to look further into the dynamics of experience. To set the scene, I quote Jan Carlzon who was Chief Executive of Scandinavian Airlines in the mid-1980s. He said: “*All instances when customers come into contact with our organization constitute ‘moments of truth’ — unique, never-to-be-repeated opportunities for us to distinguish ourselves memorably from competitors*” (Peters and Austin, 1985).

Therefore the reality of organizations, products, services and processes is revealed through our experiences of them. As experiences can be designed, design can do much to enrich and manage such experiences by bringing them to life, creating valued ‘highs’ and avoiding damaging ‘lows’.

Design and the management of experiences

Here are some of the principal ‘designed’ experiences in business:

- The act of product creation.
- The development process through design projects.
- The delivery and support of products.
- Corporate campaigns (such as total quality, organizational change and corporate identity programmes).

Consider the journey of experiences that make up the product creation process. *Figure 1* (on page 7) shows a cycle of eleven stages set out in three phases cur-

rently being worked into two British Standards to be published by the end of 2004 (BSI, 2004). As we progress through those stages, we design a problem as well as the project to tackle it. We then design the solution together with the delivery and support systems. Finally, we design the ‘after-life’ — how we build on that project experience.

May I point out that conventional thinking positions the design brief somewhere between the second and third stages. However, a truly creative ‘living’ brief has something significant to say about *all* these stages and actually follows the project right through to completion.

All stages need to be choreographed carefully, ideally so they flow seamlessly one to the next without disruptive fragmentation of the project, or diversion from stated objectives. This is one of the key challenges of dynamic integration.

So, for example, the launch stage is like a flair that lights up the sky, saying “*I’m here, come get me!*”. Unfortunately, though this stage has a crucial impact on the immediate chances of success of new products and services — not least in their overall profitability — it is largely neglected in marketing and design management texts.

Apart from the organization of launch events, the launch stage should involve consideration of the following components (among others): preparing subsidiaries, licensees and agents; distributing stock to sales outlets and warehouses; and commencing work to protect intellectual property.

Foundations have also to be set for tasks *after* the launch: monitoring the reactions of customers, media and competitors; responding appropriately to short-

comings revealed, and capturing the launch experience in a way that facilitates lessons to be learnt and achievements to be celebrated (see *Figure 2* on page 8).

All these components can be broken down into further ‘mini’ experience cycles. So, for example, we can go into further detail about how sales/service staff are informed and prepared for launches, as well as their experiences during training to handle new products and services.

The Customer-Product Experience Cycle®

Next, when a product is launched, the product creation cycle should tie in with the *Customer-Product Experience Cycle*® which kicks in at that point.

This cycle tracks the customer’s anticipated experience with a product from first awareness to final disposal. So in *Figure 3* (page 9) we see the product creation cycle progressing at the top (in light blue) as the *Customer-Product Experience Cycle*® is initiated.

We can add layers to express what goes on in different ways and evolve different perspectives and meanings. So the first two phases of awareness/exposure and interest/relationship building can be likened, say, to attraction, courtship and engagement in personal relationships. Purchase/membership and commitment may be viewed as the equivalent of getting married, and first use/support as closer alignment during the honeymoon period. On-going use/growth may be interpreted as personalisation; while disposal/

goodwill could also be addressed as how the experience might best be built on.

From a first awareness of a product or service through, say, an advertisement, shop window, word-of-mouth or the web, a customer may progress to an interest-building phase. This probably involves obtaining promotional literature, discussions with friends, handling the product in shops, and so on.

The customer now enters the buying process which can be complex, especially the actual purchase. This will involve contacting various suppliers to check prices, discuss potential deals and delivery; seeing the product in operation, perhaps even trying the product out for a period, gaining reinforcement from existing owners, etc.

Figures 4a and 4b (pages 10-11) illustrate the progression of a cycle relating to ownership of a computer ‘unpacked’ in somewhat more detail.

To sum up, experience cycles involve mapping out key events, highlighting players, interactions, support, progression, timescales and so on. We then distil how and where these experiences can be facilitated and enhanced.

By drilling down to, rehearsing and role-playing specific aspects of these cycles, we get good impressions of ultimate ‘lived’ experiences. We refine designs and discover, in Carlzon’s words, “opportunities to distinguish ourselves memorably from competitors”.

Please note that the interfaces between stages are particularly rich sources for serial innovation.

Benefits

To conclude, what key benefits should we seek from such techniques? These can be summarised as follows — envisioning dynamic experiences:

- Promotes a longer-term perspective and generates ‘living’ cradle-to-grave solutions.
- Isolates gaps and inconsistencies in total experiences.
- Helps check user appeal and sophistication in use of products and services.
- Integrates design with other disciplines.
- By wider participation, we promote common understanding and, paradoxically, increase the scope for personalisation.
- Boosts the chances of delivering serial innovations. By ‘serial’ I mean both in several parts of the product offer and in the succession of products. Such serial innovation is extremely difficult to copy, and so generates significant competitive advantages.
- With greater rigour and professionalism, we raise expectations of what can be achieved and encourage greater risk-taking. This also helps reduce acceptance of indifferent solutions.
- Increases the efficacy of design investments.

In other words, by designing, rehearsing and managing total, dynamic experiences, we ‘hit the road running’, increase our chances of success (with fewer

bugs and mismatches), create competitive advantage and raise the market value of our organizations.

Experience cycles as inspiring 'living' briefs

Finally, experience cycles are inspiring, 'living' briefs for design professionals and all other stakeholders involved in creating and sustaining new products and services. The process of creation and subsequent development is more human, involves greater fun and is ultimately more rewarding.

I will be happy to expand further on any aspect during the discussion that follows.

Thank you

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Pre-project phase

Figure 1: The product creation process

Define problem / Plan project

- 1: First awareness and understanding of opportunity
- 2: Feasibility / Clarify opportunity and prepare context

Design origination / Concept creation

- 3: Identify options / Generate solution concept(s)
- 4: Interpret / develop preferred concept

Design development and implementation

- 5: Detail design
- 6: Realise complete product for delivery

Deliver to market and support

- 7: Launch product
- 8: Sustain product in market through periodic augmentation, improvements and updates

Extract maximum value from market

- 9: Create range / Develop integrated system of products to extend market reach
- 10: Withdraw product / service from market

Project phase

Build effectively on whole experience

- 11: 'Lifetime' review of project and product experience

7

Post-project phase

Figure 2: Design project experience — the launch stage

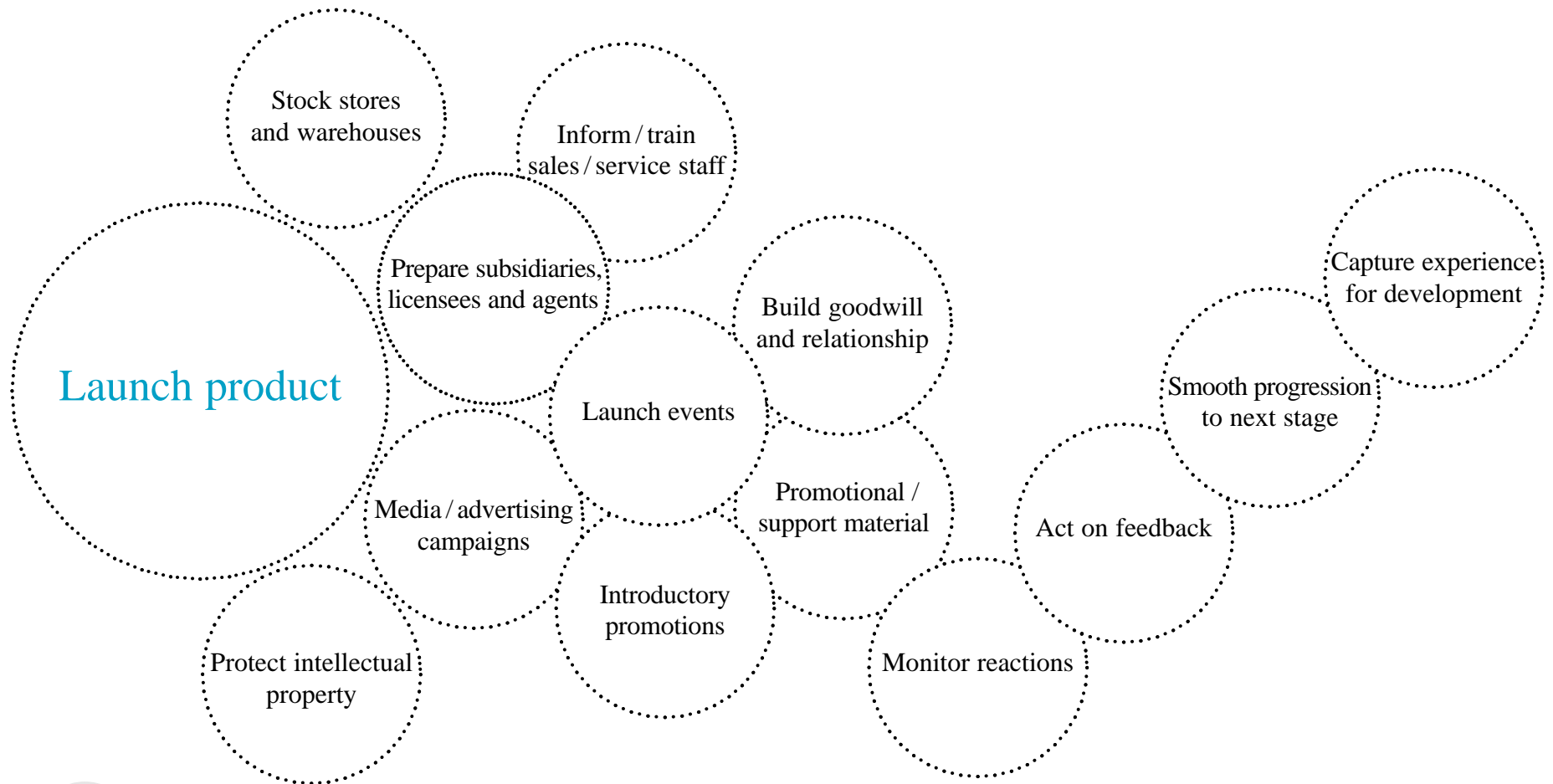
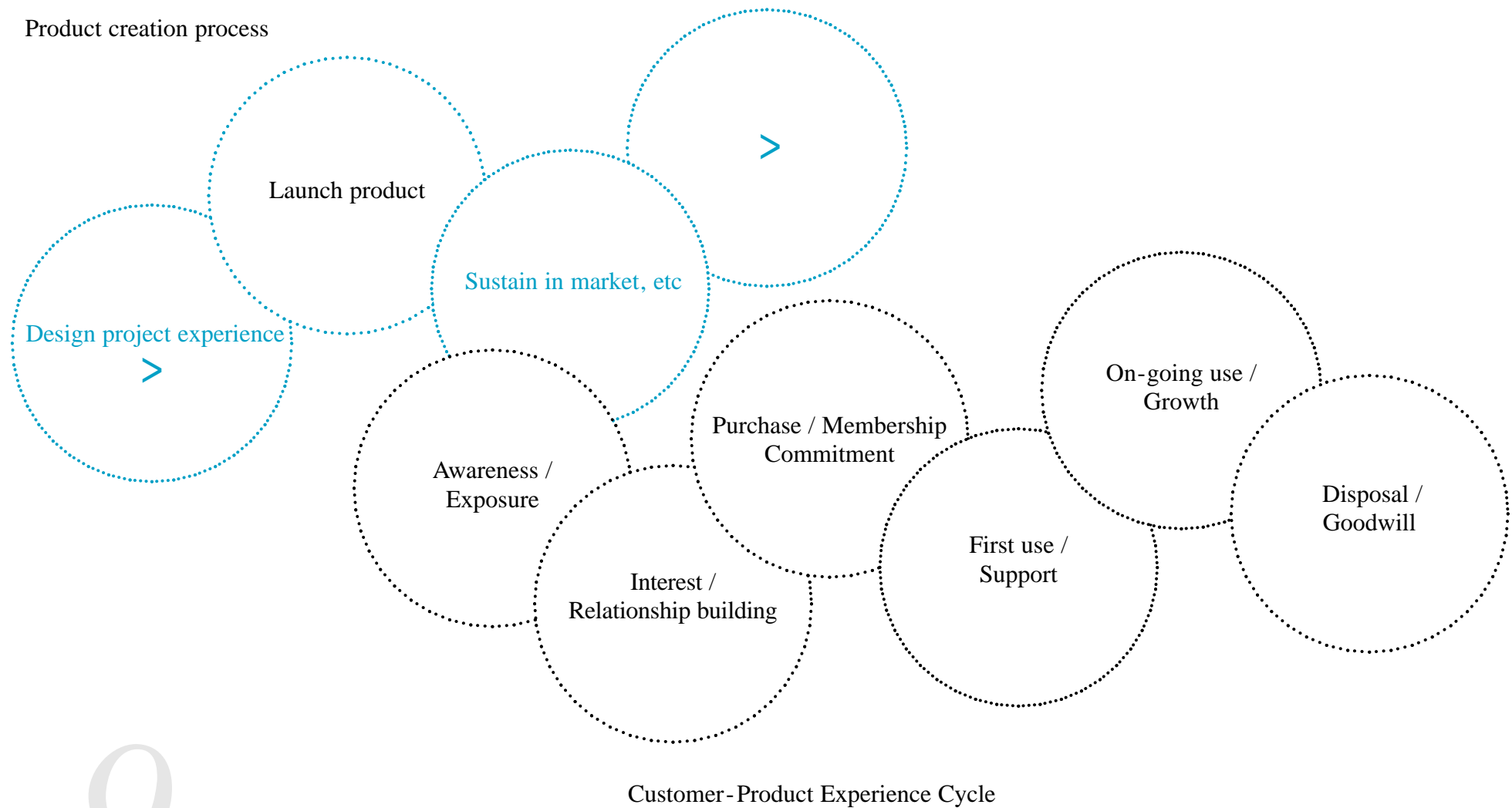
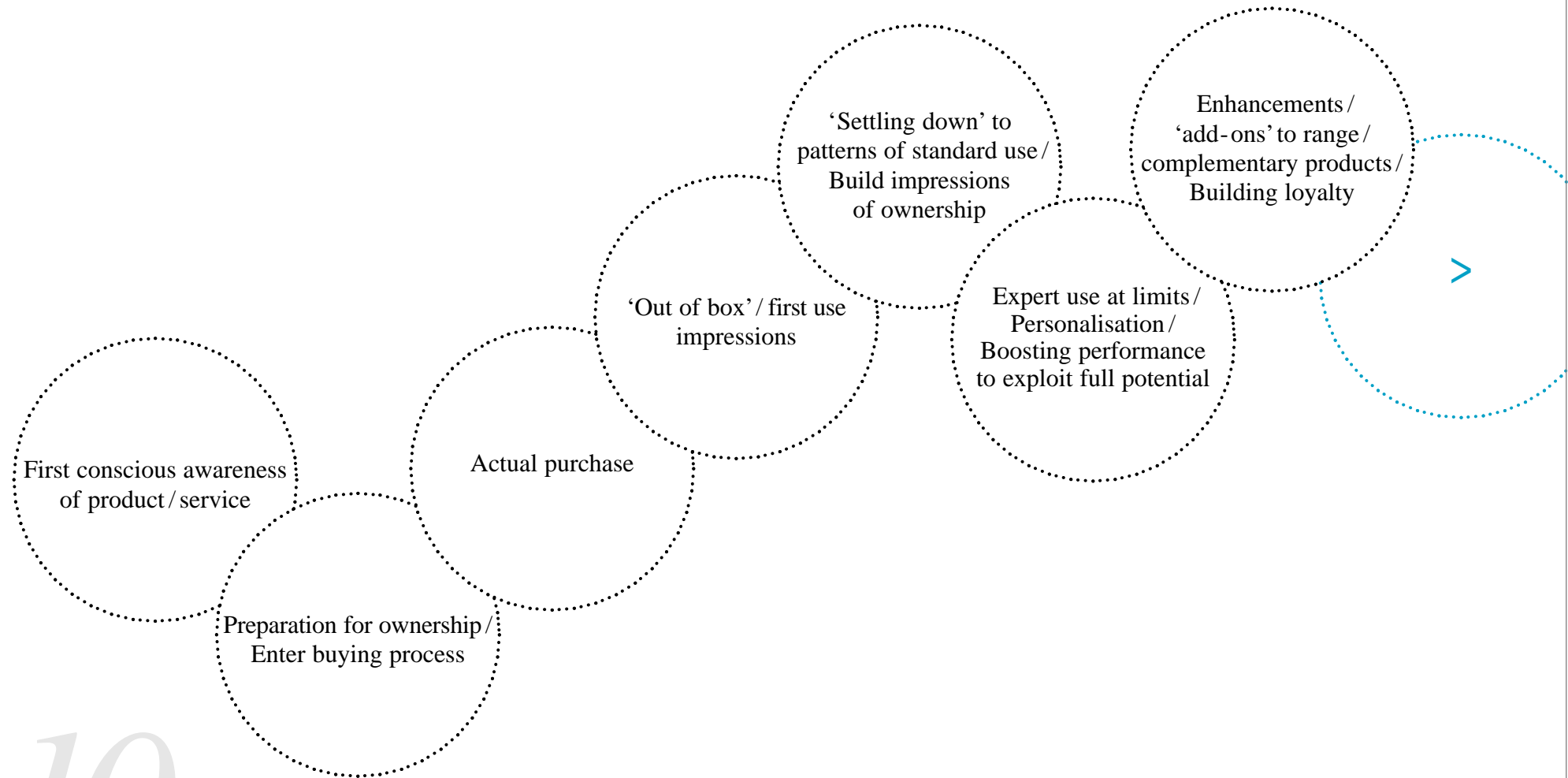


Figure 3: The product creation process ties in with the Customer-Product Experience Cycle[®]



*Figure 4a: The Customer-Product Experience Cycle[®]
(relating to ownership of a computer)*



*Figure 4b: The Customer-Product Experience Cycle[®]
(relating to ownership of a computer)*

