



JIM FISHER

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More than a Moment in Time

In Al Stewart's 1978 song "Time Passages," he uses the lyrics to document an individual's journey in life and the changes that we will experience, whether we want to or not. The second verse of the song is:

*"Well I'm not the kind to live in the past
The years run too short and the days
too fast
The things you lean on are the things
that don't last
Well it's just now and then my line gets
cast into these
Time passages
There's something back here that you
left behind
Oh time passages
Buy me a ticket on the last train home
tonight."*

So, as with many songs from that era, were we having to deal with "really heavy stuff" or simply being reminded of things as they will truly exist as we journey through life?

I recently had the opportunity to share a couple of days with a few college fraternity brothers. We were a close group of guys who were nearly real brothers for those four years we spent together. Yet, as so many of us have experienced, our individual lives took us in totally different directions. The result: Several decades passed, and we never got together. However, 2012 led to our joint decision that we should reunite, not to relive "glory moments" from our past but rather to celebrate life and all that has blessed us individually.

We each have discovered that past experiences, friendships, relationships and

moments do matter and combine to create each new day, to be lived and enjoyed. As the song says, "there's something back here that you left behind," meaning it is not to be dwelled upon or lived again. Those very moments in time give us today and all that it brings with it. Such moments offer us today's challenges, opportunities and experiences.



Experiences Add Up

During a recent store visit to one of this industry's premier retailers, I was provided with a less-than-inspiring takeaway; the entire circumstance came as quite a surprise. As I related the experience to the company's COO (a very astute retailer), he said, "I have come to view such things as being reflective of a single moment in time and not reflective in any way of the actual level of operation or experience made." Being surprised by his comment, I asked myself, "What do you do when single moments in time fill an hourglass? How do you

justify in your mind not performing at the excellent, experience-creating level that is the foundation of a company?"

Moments are a reflective accumulation of hours, days, weeks, months and years. It is the single moment in time that is the essential core of developing every customer experience. It is the inherent quality of the experience that provides each retail facility the opportunity to create customers for whom we become part of their lives, behavior and lifestyle, either as a daily visit or as the customer's convenience destination of choice.

It is the keeper companies (in our customers' eyes) that always do a great job in following closely all the details and making sure an experience is delivered every time a customer comes onto our site or through our doors. We as retailers and business people must address and properly respond to those single moments in time to ensure we form strong customer experiences and cement those bonds. Pleasing is all about basics.

"Time Passages" is about moving forward and not looking back, achieving the very best and delivering excellent, mindful experiences. Our operational successes of yesterday are simply that: ancient success. "The things that you lean on are the things that don't last"; each company's future success is predicated on always being viable and relevant in an ever-changing customer universe with ever-fluctuating needs and wants.

Well, gotta go catch that train. Someone once told me you haven't lived until you've ridden the City of New Orleans (a story for another time). ■