



Dr. Melissa Hughes

Keynote Speaker, Author & Human Potential Alchemist

Science Meets Strategy for Success

Hospitality that WOWs

How Brains, Brands, and Behavior Create Unforgettable Guest Experiences

Before your guest tastes the food, checks in, or hears a greeting—their brain is already making judgments. Do I feel welcome? Safe? Seen? Valued? These snap perceptions shape the emotional arc of the entire experience—and ultimately determine whether they'll rave, return, or regret.

In this high-energy, empowering keynote, Dr. Melissa Hughes focuses on guest psychology and experience design to unpack how the guest brain forms impressions in real time—and how to shape those impressions with intentional design, emotional cues, and storytelling.

Session Summary

Hospitality leaders will go behind the scenes of the guest brain to uncover how subconscious cues, sensory signals, and brand behaviors shape how people feel—and what they remember. Combining neuroscience, behavioral psychology, and practical brand strategy, she delivers the science behind creating emotionally resonant, neurologically sticky guest journeys.

This isn't about good service—it's about designing for delight, engineering trust, and choreographing guest interactions in ways that create loyalty at the level of the nervous system. Attendees will walk away with a new lens on experience design and a toolbox for building moments that move people.

Key Takeaways:

- Decode Guest Perception – Understand how emotion, safety, and sensory input shape guest expectations and satisfaction
- Design for Memory – Use storytelling, visual cues, and narrative design to create lasting emotional impressions
- Bridge the Brand Gap – Ensure that internal culture and external experience are aligned at every touchpoint
- Experience Mapping with the Brain in Mind – Apply neuroscience principles to the guest journey from arrival to departure
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Ideal Audiences:

- Customer experience designers
- Hospitality executives
- Brand leaders
- Marketing & guest journey teams
- Concept developers

Creating an exceptional guest experience isn't rocket science but it is BRAIN SCIENCE!
Help your audience turn ordinary service into extraordinary emotional moments that guests remember, share, and come back for.