Simple for beginners and rich for aficionados: How Starbucks' drink framework and ordering language engage customers at all levels

December 1, 2007; v16 Option Shift Control

**Dubberly Design Office** 



# One of Moses' Lost Commandments "Honor small, medium and large. Tall, grande and venti are for jackasses." Paul Rudd

Designer Controls

User Controls



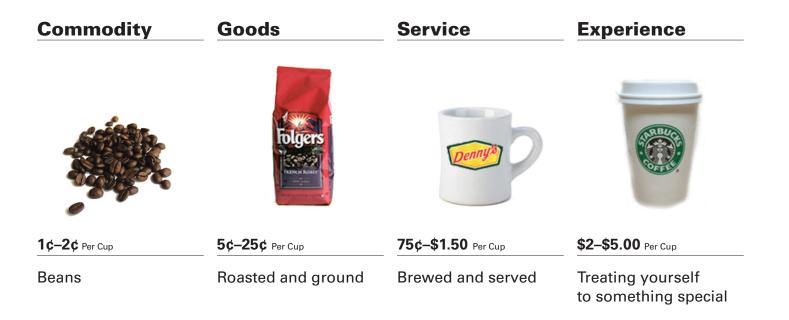
Designer Controls

User Controls





## Pine & Gilmore wrote *The Experience Economy* offering Starbucks as a prime example



An important component of the Starbucks experience is its drink framework and ordering language "I'll have my usual— Iced Half-caf Double Tall Non-fat No-whip Mocha" "I'll have my usual— Iced Half-caf Double Tall Non-fat No-whip Mocha"

"Wait, I'll try a Triple Grande Two-pump Upside-down Caramel Macchiato"

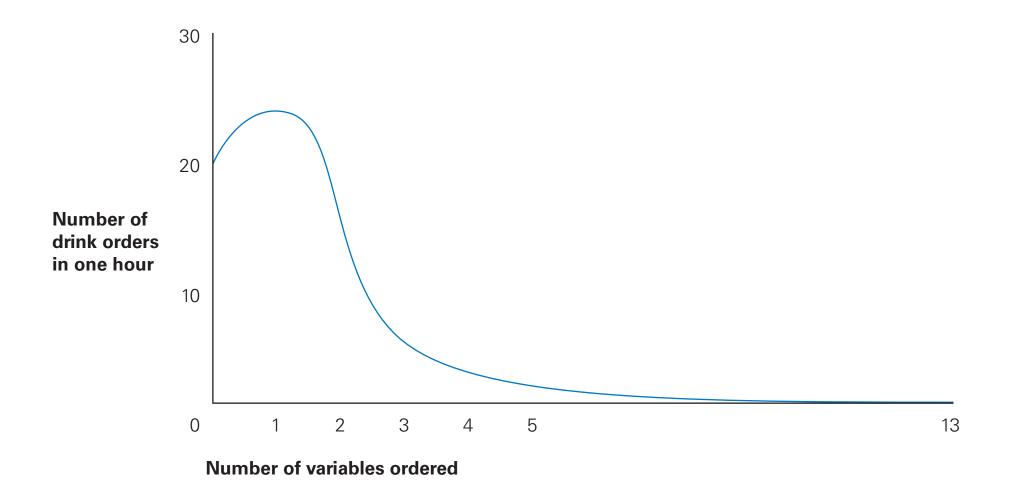
## Barista-speak the language of Starbucks orders may sound alien to outsiders

## But it is richly meaningful to baristas and regular patrons

**Do customers really order this way?** 

An informal study at a Starbucks store in San Francisco revealed that over 60% of customers customize their drinks by changing at least one variable

### **Over 60% of customers change at least one variable**



### **Starbucks groups drinks** in 4 main categories

Category

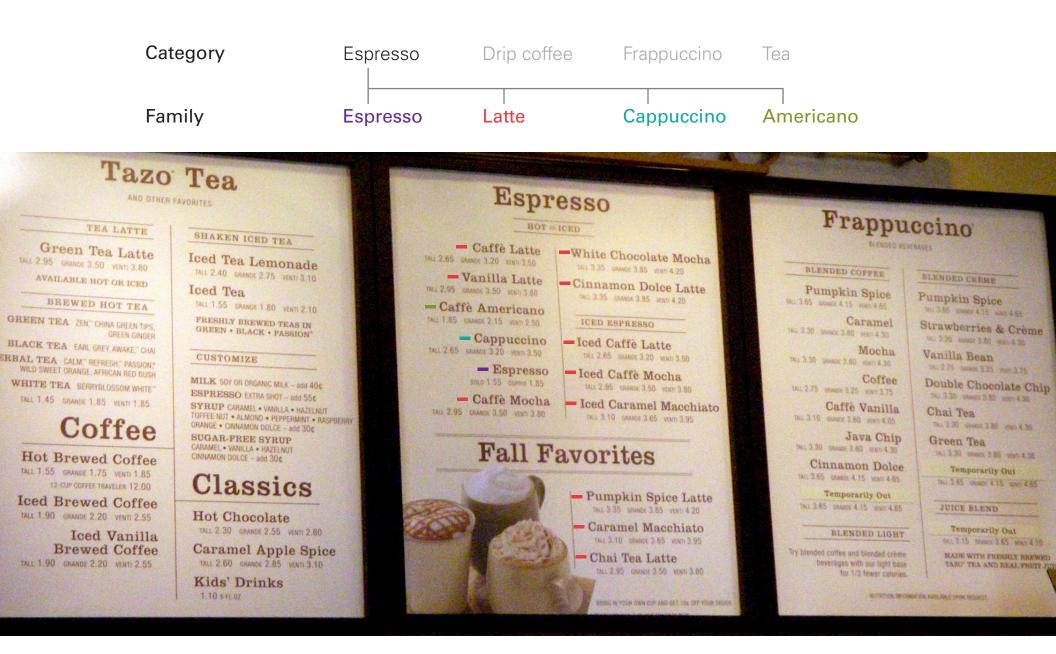
Espresso

Drip coffee

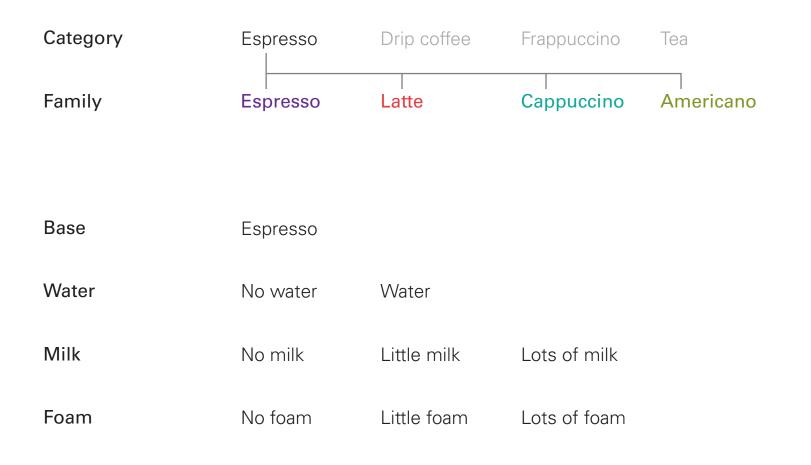
Frappuccino Tea



## The espresso category is comprised of 4 drink families



## These families are made by combining espresso, water, foam, and milk



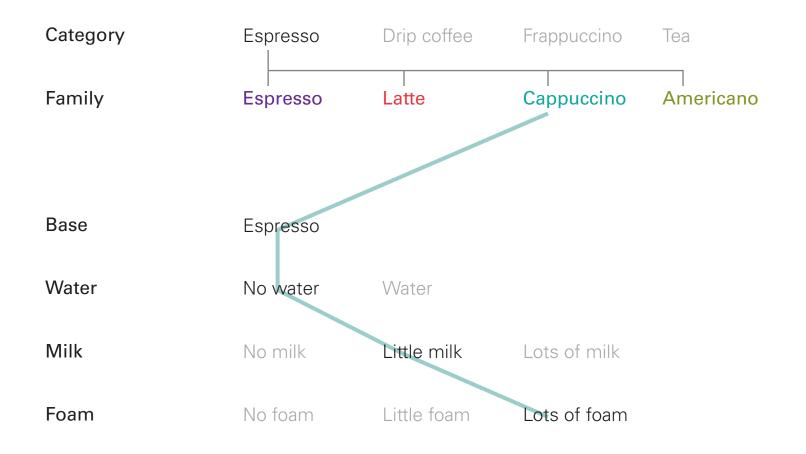
### A shot of espresso can be ordered alone



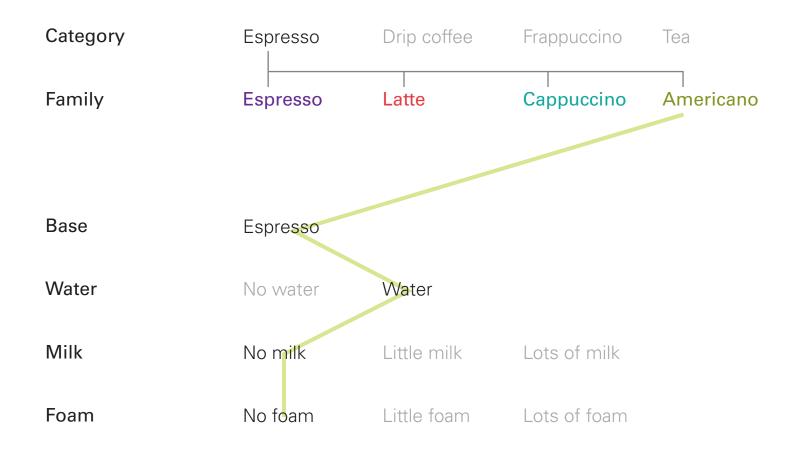
## A Latte is Espresso with a lot of steamed milk and a little foam



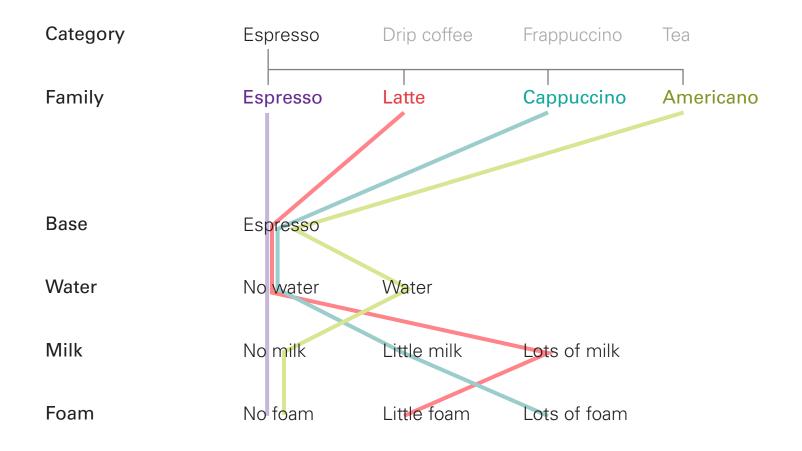
## A Cappuccino is an Espresso with more foam and less milk



## An Americano is Espresso poured into hot water



## Each family is a framework for further customization



#### Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

**Pumpkin Spice Latte** 

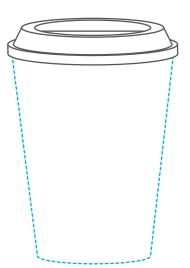
Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte



#### Latte

Vanilla Latte Cinnamon Dolce Latte Pumpkin Spice Latte Mocha White Chocolate Mocha Iced Latte Iced Mocha Chai Tea Latte Caramel Macchiato



#### Latte



#### Latte



Latte

#### Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

Pumpkin Spice Latte

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte

Caramel Macchiato



Vanilla Syrup

Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

Pumpkin Spice Latte

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte

**Caramel Macchiato** 



Cinnamon Docle Syrup

#### Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

#### **Pumpkin Spice Latte**

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte

Caramel Macchiato



Pumpkin Spice Syrup

Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

Pumpkin Spice Latte

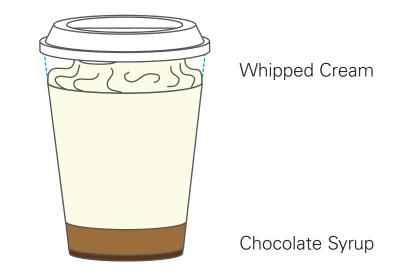
Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte



Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

Pumpkin Spice Latte

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte



#### Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

**Pumpkin Spice Latte** 

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte



#### Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

**Pumpkin Spice Latte** 

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte



Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

Pumpkin Spice Latte

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

**Chai Tea Latte** 



#### Latte

Vanilla Latte

**Cinnamon Dolce Latte** 

Pumpkin Spice Latte

Mocha

White Chocolate Mocha

**Iced Latte** 

Iced Mocha

Chai Tea Latte



## The main difference is the flavor of the syrup



# Iced drinks come in a plastic cup and contain more espresso at larger sizes

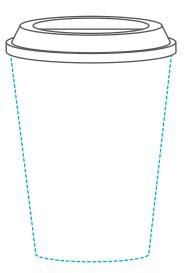


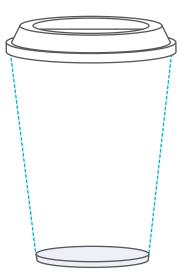
The Caramel Macchiato is more complicated

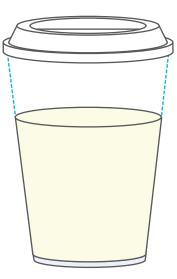
In Italy Macchiato means espresso "marked" with foam

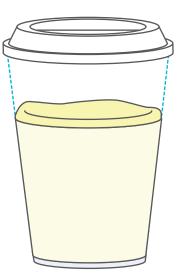
At Starbucks it means the reverse – foam "marked" with Espresso.

The Espresso is poured last – through the foam













#### But we're getting ahead of ourselves

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# Ordering a drink off the menu requires just two choices: a drinks name (i.e. "Mocha") and size (i.e. "tall")

(If you forget the size, the barista will prompt you)

# Short is available to order, but does not appear on the menu.



Short 8oz Tall 12oz Grande 16oz Venti 20oz

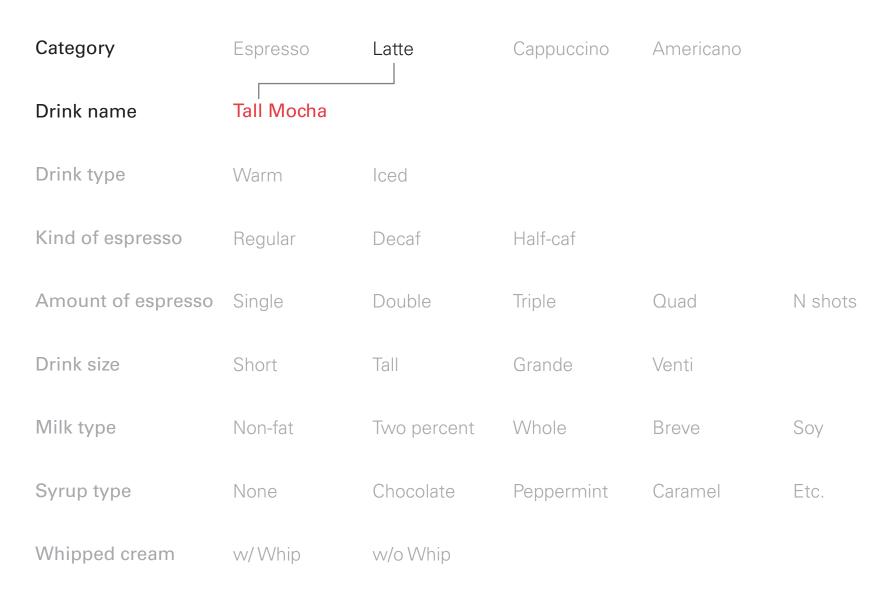
In Italian, venti means 20.

Venti is a trademark

# **Unspecified options are implied**

For example, The espresso will be caffeinated unless you request otherwise

# A "Tall Mocha" really means:



# Warm and with regular (caffeinated) espresso, unless otherwise requested



# A tall comes with one shot of Espresso



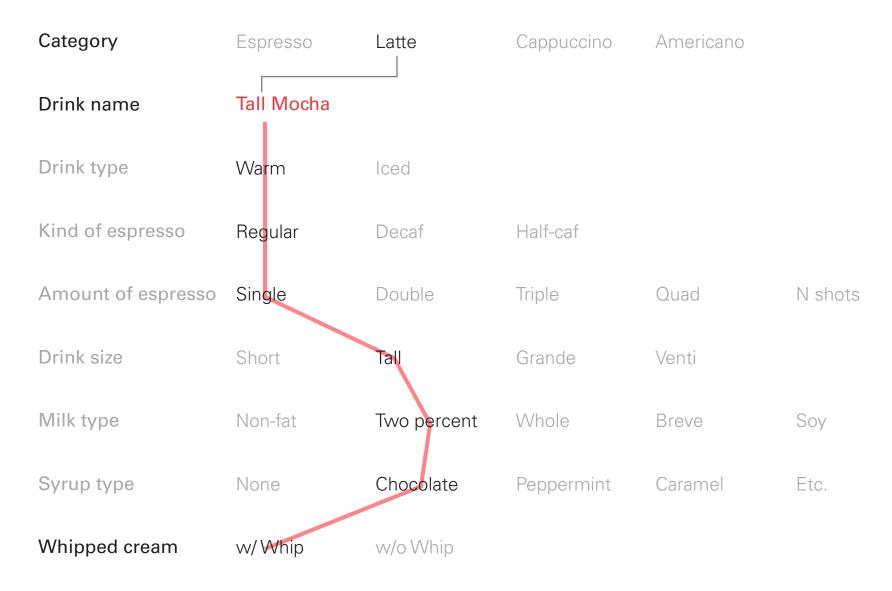
# As of this year, 2% milk is standard



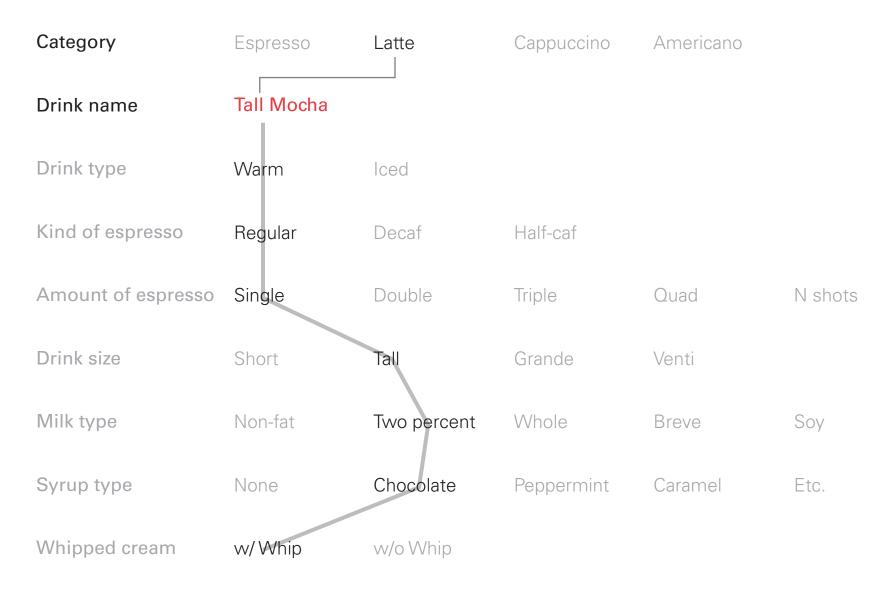
## Chocolate syrup makes a Mocha a Mocha



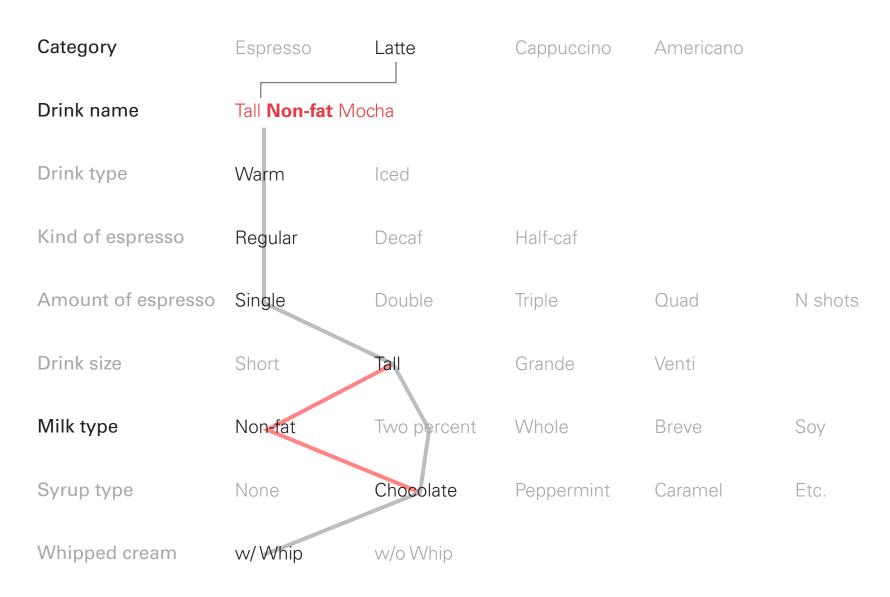
# And like most sweet drinks, a Mocha comes with whipped cream



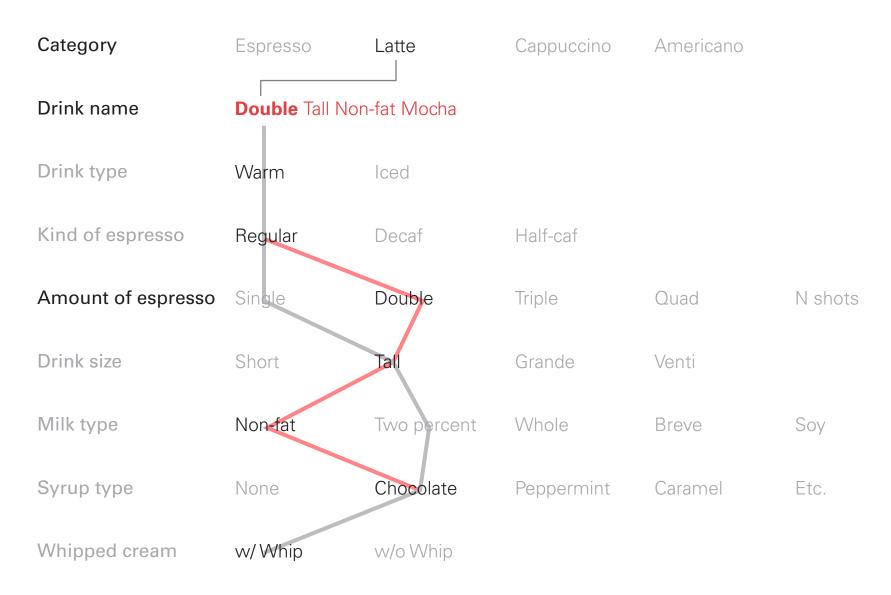
# You can order more complex drinks by choosing options within the framework



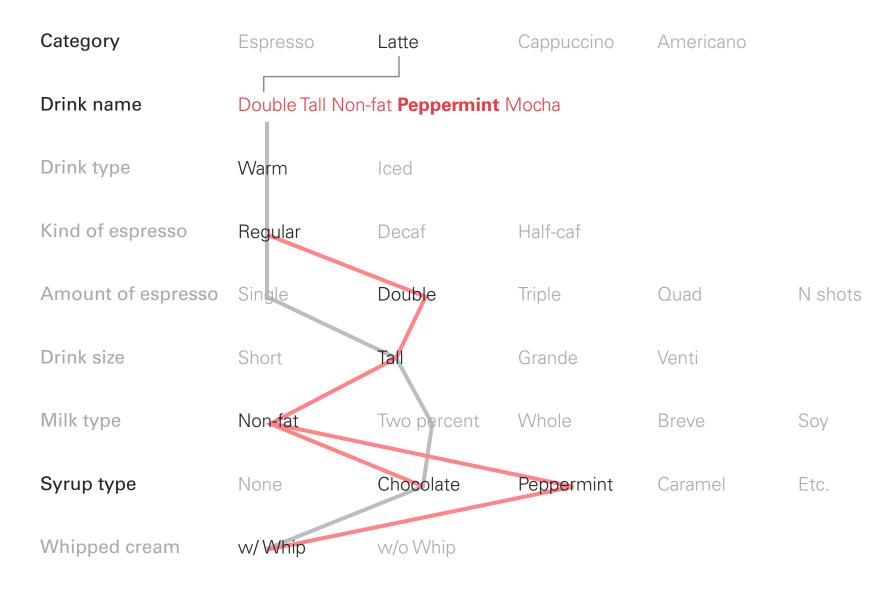
# **Another type of milk**



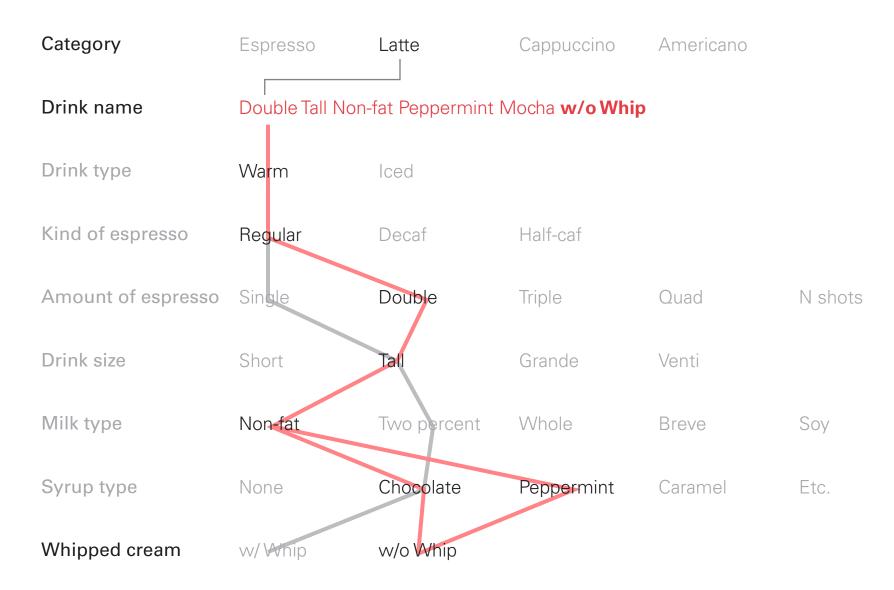
#### **More Espresso for stronger flavor**



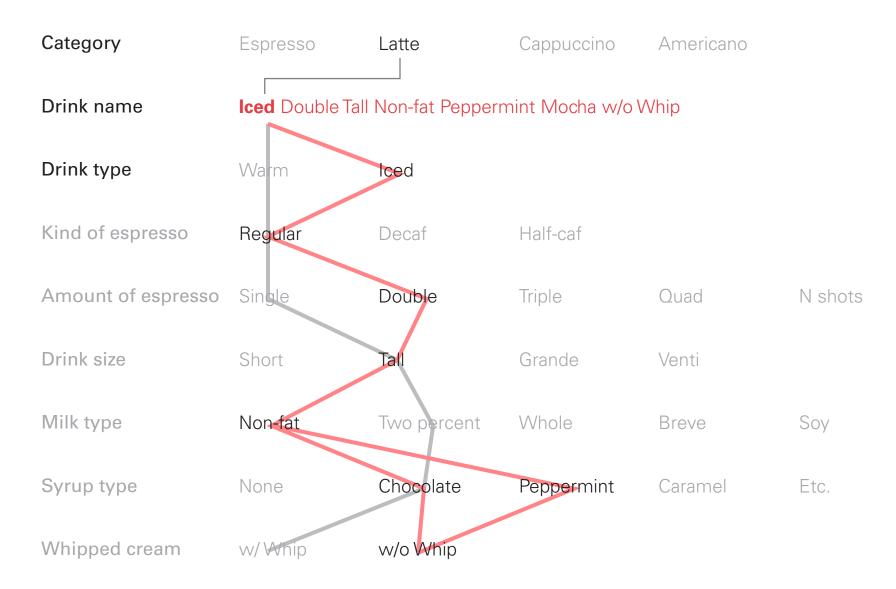
# (Another) flavored syrup for greater variety



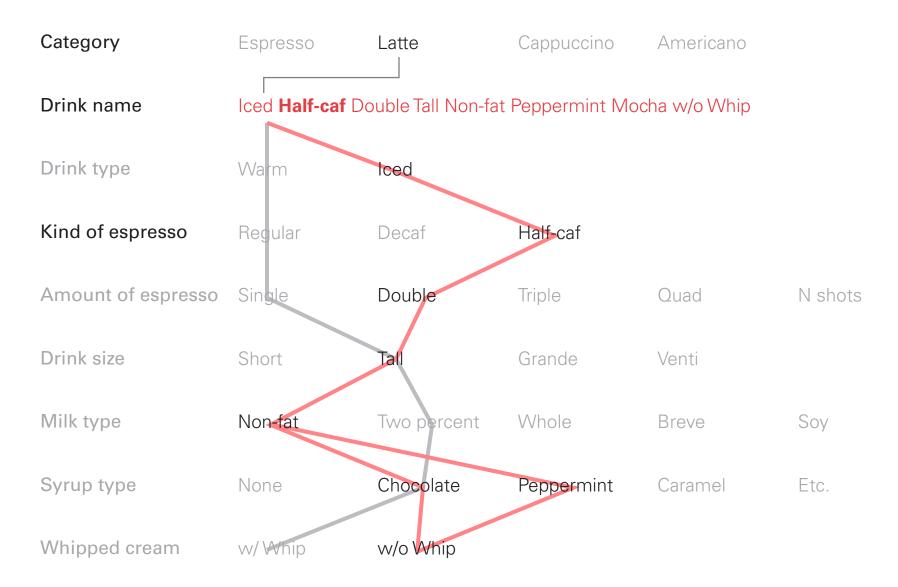
### **Delete whipped cream**



## Add ice on a hot day



#### Cut back on the caffeine



# Very savvy users may request more obscure variations

Order your Mocha for-here

Sip from a ceramic cup or bring your own mug



#### **Tempurature**

# Ask for an extra hot Mocha, or have it cooler, or if you are very fussy have it at 167°F

Drinks are served at 160°F by default. Baristas hesitate to heat a drink above 180°F. any warmer and the milk could scald

#### **Build order**

# Have your Mocha upside down like a Caramel Macchiato

Mocha



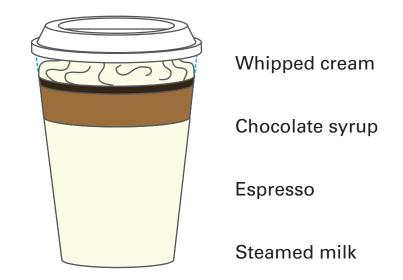
Whipped cream

Steamed milk

Espresso

Chocolate syrup

#### **Upsidedown Mocha**



#### **Build order**

Some people order a Macchiato upside down, which might seem like a Vanilla Caramel Latte

But the the Macchiato uses special caramel butter rather than normal caramel syrup

A connoisseur will tell you that build-order affects flavor.

# Long or short pull

Have a short pull or "ristretto" Mocha

A short pull results in a sweeter, smoother shot. A long pull results in more bitter flavor.

(Newer espresso machines pull espresso automatically. As Starbucks replaces old equipment short and long pulls will no longer be available.)



#### **Espresso alternatives**

Not all drinks in the Latte framework contain espresso

Chai Lattes and Green Tea Lattes are tea in steamed milk

A hot chocolate is steamed milk and chocolate syrup—no espresso or tea

#### **Amount of foam**

Have your Mocha dry

"" means more foam, less milk "wet" means less foam, more milk

## **Amount of syrup**

# Order a 4 pump Mocha when you need it a little sweeter



### **Other syrups**

### Have a peppermint Mocha or choose from about 15 other syrups

#### Regularly available

Chocolate White Chocolate Caramel Vanilla (regular or sugar-free) Hazelnut (regular or sugar-free) Cinnamon Dolce (regular or sugar-free) Orange (formerly called Valencia) Raspberry Peppermint Almond Simple (unflavored sugar)

#### Seasonally available\*

Blackberry (Spring) Melon (Spring) Coconut (Summer) Pumpkin Spice (Fall) Maple (Fall) Gingerbread (Winter)

\*Seasonal syrups change year to year. Some syrups return, others may not. If a seasonal syrup is very popular it may become permanent. (Peppermint syrup was once only available in winter)

# How many Latte variations are possible?

Cup type	To-go	For-here	Personal cup		
Drink type	Warm	lced			
Kind of espresso	Regular	Decaf	Half-caf	Теа	None
Amount of espresso	Single	Double	Triple	Quad	N shots
Drink size	Short	Tall	Grande	Venti	
Milk type	Non-fat	2%	Whole	Soy	(2 more)
Syrup combinations	(Choose from about 15 flavors)				
Whipped cream	w/Whip	No whip	Light whip		
Temperature	Extra hot	Cooler	Specific degree	Standard (160°F	.)
Build order	Upside down	Right-side up	Macchiato	Otherwise	
Long/Short pull	Long	Short	Normal		
Amount of foam	Dry	Wet	Normal	None	
Amount of syrup	1 pump	2 pumps	3 pumps	4 pumps	N pumps

### How many Latte variations are possible?

V	′ar	ia	bl	es
•	u	iu		00

- Cup type3Drink type2
- Kind of espresso 5
- Amount of espresso 5
- Drink size 4
- Milk type 7
- Syrup combinations 120
- Whipped cream 3
- Temperature 4
- Build order 4
- Long/Short pull 3
- Amount of foam 4
- Amount of syrup 5

### With only 1 syrup the Starbucks Latte framework offers almost 200 million variations

### Add a second syrup and there are over 1.3 billion

## Enough for each Chinese citizen to have his or her own personal drink

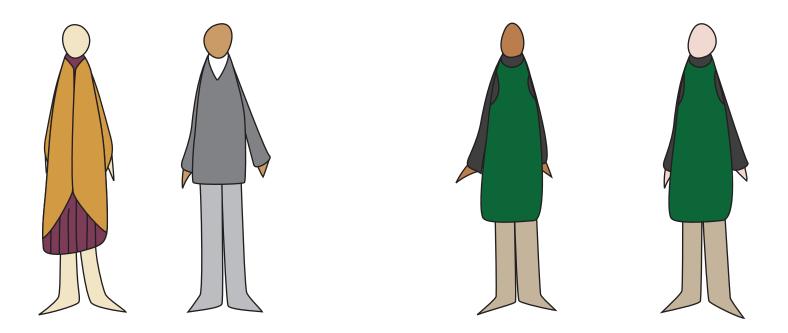
## How do people learn to cope with so many options?

## Starbucks has training dice for new baristas



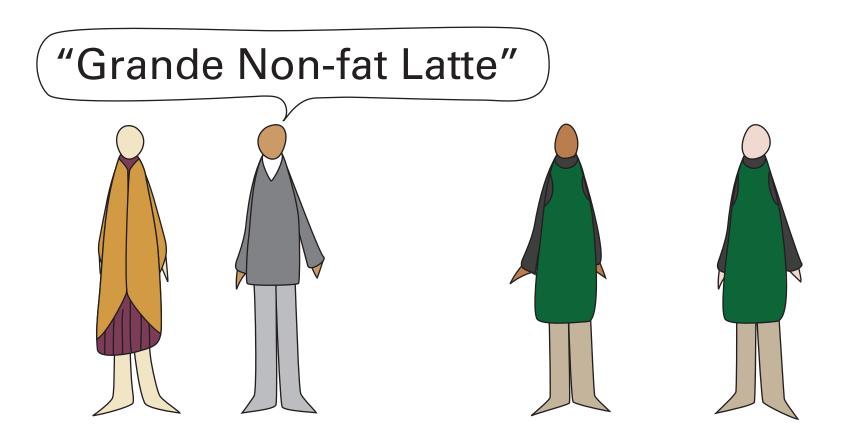
### Starbucks also helps customers learn

### Imagine: A new customer enters

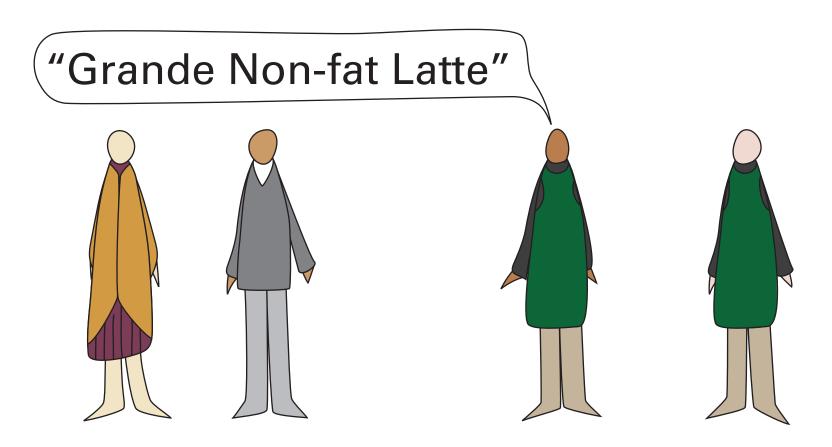


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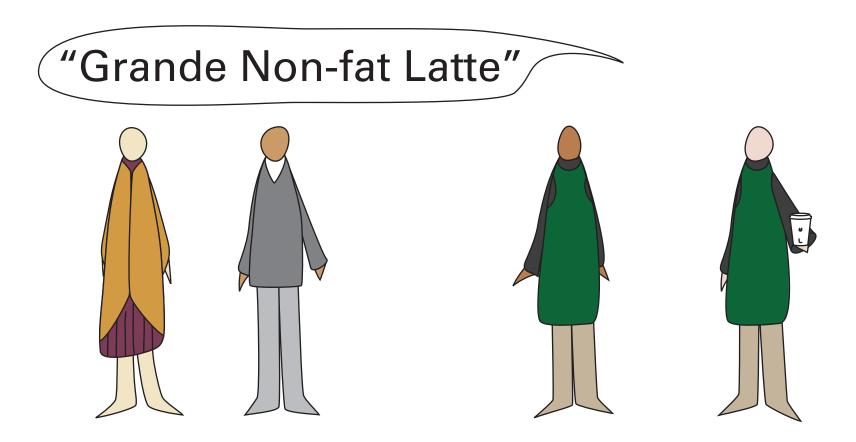
## She hears another customer order as she stands in line



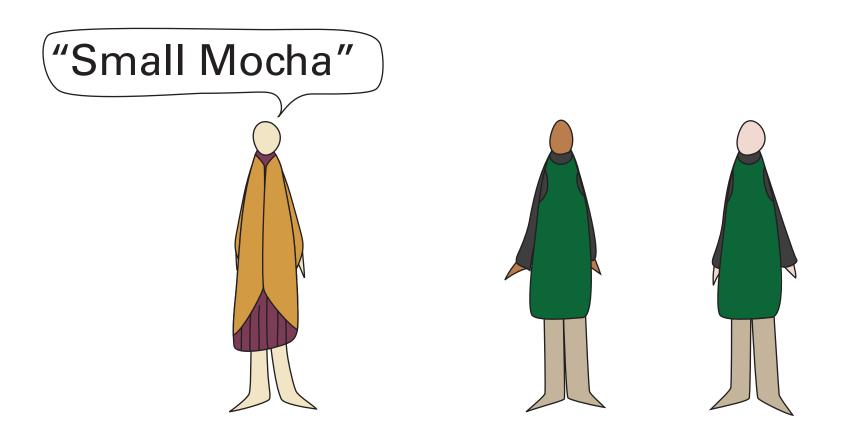
## She hears a barista repeat the order



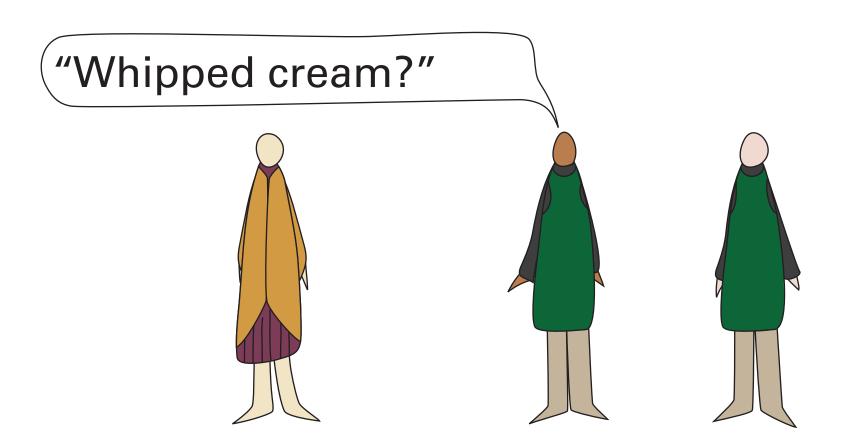
## She hears another barista call out the order when it is ready

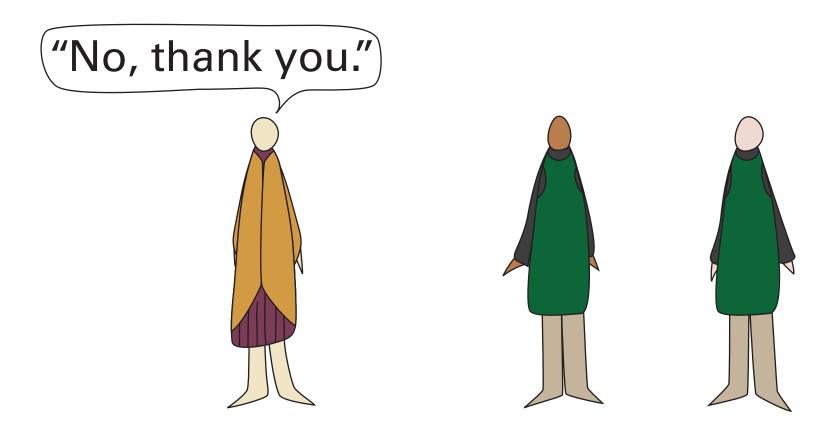


#### She orders from the menu



#### The barista clarifies the order

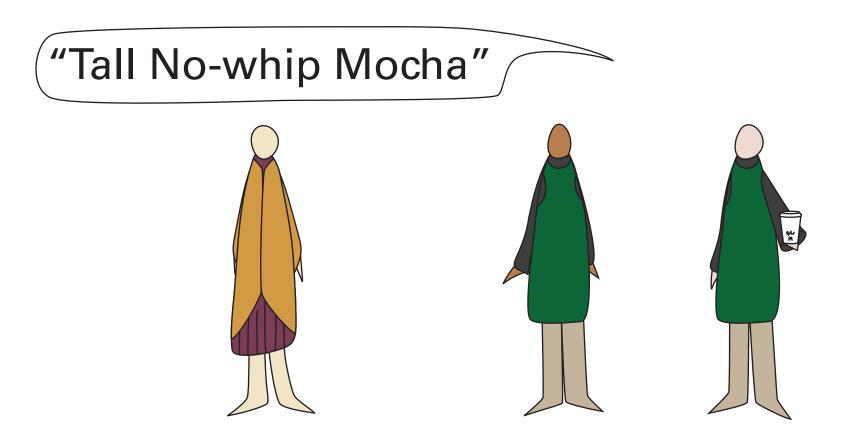




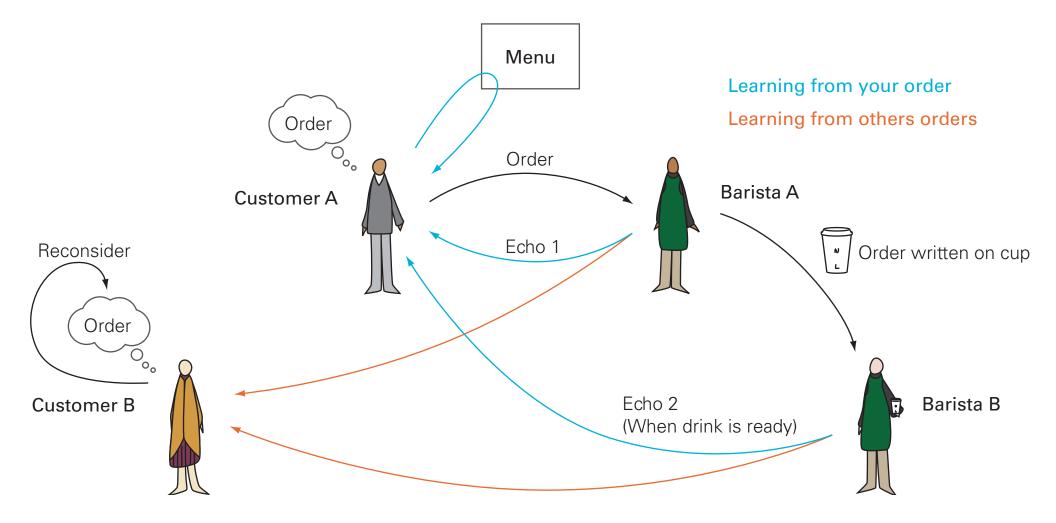
## The barista repeats her order in Barista-speak



## And when it is ready the other barista calls out:



## Each order is repeated 3 times Repetition supports the learning process



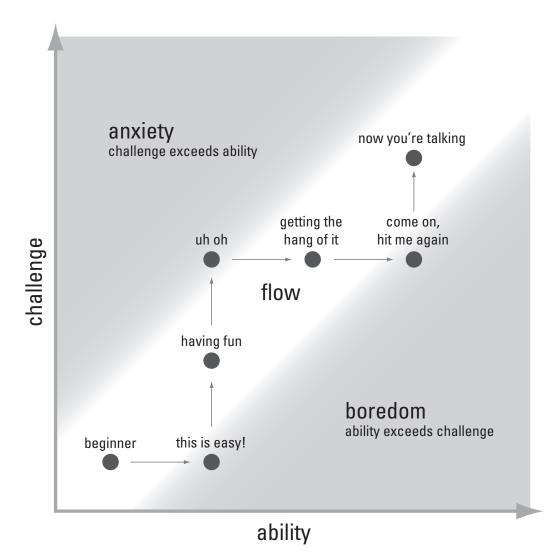
### Over time the new customer learns new options from the baristas other customers her friends

## The customer may learn barista-speak and the underlying framework for designing drinks

#### But not all at once

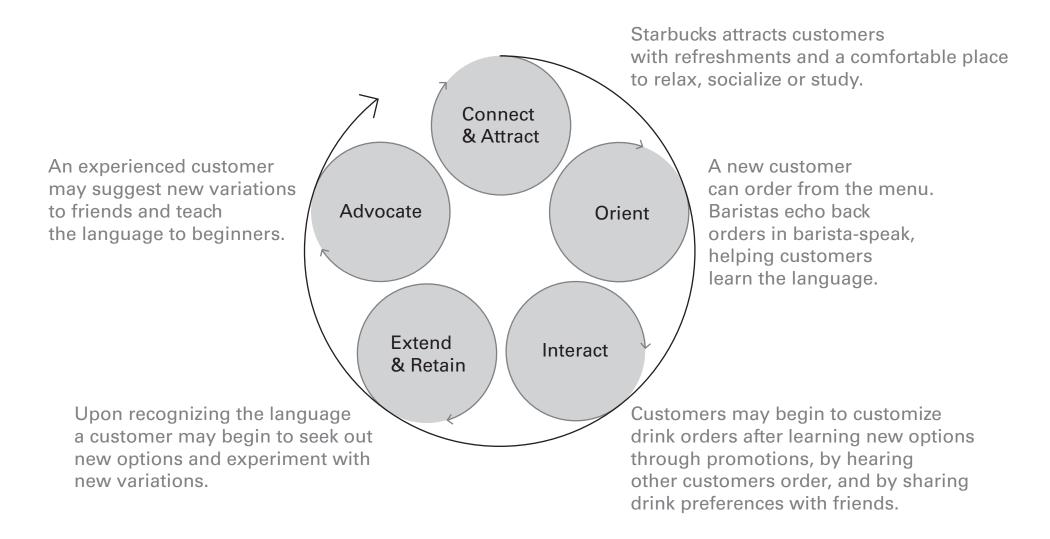
### **Customers learn at the pace they set**

after Mihalyi Casikszentmilhalyi



# The process of learning barista-speak is a carefully designed journey

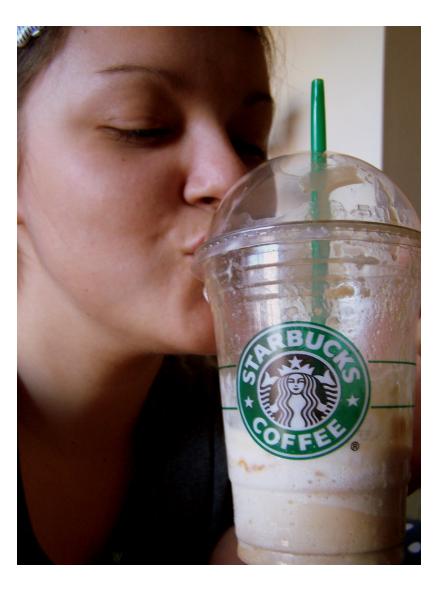
based on a framework by Shelley Evenson and John Rheinfrank



## Learning the language gives the customer more control the power to order a drink precisely to preference

## It also creates a sense of belonging – of having insider knowledge and status

Empowerment and belonging make customers feel they are a part of Starbucks



### **Closing notes**

"Imagine your users are very intelligent, but very busy" –Alan Cooper

Creation, participation and control make people feel good

But they also require more work



#### "Design for the user, not yourself" —Alan Cooper

## Respect that users may not want control all the time—or at all



#### "Do I do X orY?... Do both" —John Maeda

Make systems easy and powerful



Design the learning experience after Shelley Evanson John Rheinfrank

Engage users by matching challenge to skill, and by helping them grow after Mihalyi Casikszentmilhalyi

### Thank you.