

## Carrot vs Stick: It's More About You than Them

*Editor's Note: During our August focus on Guest Experiences, we are honored to have some of the best voices in the world of Customer Experience provide guest posts for the Vision Room. As you read the content below, simply think "Guest" in terms of the "customer" the author is talking about - and you will benefit from the knowledge and expertise of these great minds.*

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In almost every book I've ever written — and there have been quite a few at this point — I quote the best business advice I have ever heard. It's from my friend, Dr. Michael LeBoeuf, from his work that was originally titled, "The Greatest Management Principle in the World." Here it is:

***"Behavior rewarded is behavior repeated."***

The problem — and wisdom — in this phrase is that it's so much more profound than it originally appears. Of course, it means that our customers and employees will repeat the activities that we compensate them for executing.

However, more subtle is that it also challenges us to question: *What actions are we rewarding?*

For example — we want sales professionals to establish relationships with customers rather than pressuring them into a solitary closing. Yet, when we examine their compensation structure, we find there's no additional incentives for future purchases.

In other words, we give lip service to how important that on-going loyalty is from our customers. However, when we examine what we reward, it appears our focus is on closing (through any means available and ethical) a single transaction.

My friend, former Chief Customer Officer at Microsoft and Lands End, Jeanne Bliss, often mentions in her presentations the story of the hospital that posted every physician's evaluation from patients and their families. The result was that malpractice suits dropped by 43%. When receiving high marks from patients and families was rewarded, doctors responded — to the benefit of hospital, physician, and (most importantly) customers that are called "patients."

**That's the challenge that I make to you. Take a bit to re-evaluate what you're rewarding and examine if it's congruent with your goals and aspirations for the future. My guess is that you'll find some disconnection.**

If you resolve it, you'll be rewarding the behavior and activity that your desire. It's an important step to creating distinction!

> [Read more from Scott.](#)

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