

Book Review on
“How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life” by Michael LeBoeuf
(Review by Gary Tomlinson)
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Hiring and keeping the right employees is the theme for this month’s issue of *Business Leader* magazine. Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, stresses the importance of “getting the right people on the bus” and then keeping them there. We all know this. However, defining and reaching consensus on whom the “right people” are is a difficult and critical first step in the hiring and retention process. For that reason, I have chosen Michael LeBoeuf’s *How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life* for this month’s book review. As you read through his book, substitute the word customer with employee. You will find his education not only applies to getting and keeping good customers but also applies to getting and keeping good employees.

LeBoeuf begins by saying, “one of the single greatest keys to long-term business success can be summed up in three simple words: *quality customer service*. Yet as customers, you and I are painfully aware that outstanding service is far too rare. Why is excellent service so rare? Basically, there are three problems involved.”

1. Employees don’t know the basics of quality customer service.
2. The moments of truth – those crucial points of customer contact that can make or break a business – are not being properly identified and managed.
3. The reward system. Quite simply, excellent service is rare because most companies fail to reward workers for giving excellent service.

“*How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life* is not a book about technology. It’s a book about the human side of winning and keeping customers. It isn’t high tech. It’s high touch. It’s a handbook written for everyone from the mail room to the executive suite, in the hope they will work together to win and keep customers. Yet, the material is designed to work in harmony with the new technologies and strategies that are having such an enormous impact on selling and customer service today.”

“The way to winning and keeping customers is to solve the three problems previously mentioned. Hence, this book is divided into three main parts, with each part addressing one of the main problems.

In Part One you’ll learn the fundamentals of creating and keeping customers. It teaches you such things as:

- The simple but often overlooked reason that customers buy and come back.
- A much less stressful approach to creating customers than traditional selling.
- The greatest customer you’ll ever win.

- How to make customers recognize and appreciate the fine service you give them.
- The five best ways to keep customers coming back.

Next, you'll learn how to master the moments of truth – those make-or-break points of crucial customer contact. Whenever a customer:

- Appears, calls, or agrees to see you
- Is angry or defensive
- Raises obstacles or objections
- Complains
- Is going to be disappointed.

Finally, Part Three gives you a step-by-step action plan for creating a customer-driven reward system. If you are an owner or manager, or someday hope to be one, this final section is invaluable. It provides an easy-to-follow blueprint that will get everyone in your organization committed to winning, serving, and keeping customers as their top priority. This action plan is called the triple-win reward system, because when it's done correctly there's something in it for everybody. The customers, the employees, and the company all win. And isn't that what good business is all about?"

"In today's service-oriented economy, excellent service is more than a competitive weapon – it's a survival skill. And those institutions without it run the high risk of going the way of the steam locomotive, the horse and buggy, and the slide rule. Rest assured that if you don't provide it, someone else will."

LeBoeuf's book is an excellent teaching guide on getting and keeping customers. However, when you substitute the word "employees" for the word "customers" it now becomes an outstanding textbook on *how to win employees and keep them for life*. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants to know what it takes to get and keep good people whether it's as a customer or as an employee. Because we should all agree with LeBoeuf that the best business strategy of them all – is customer (employee) retention.

Enjoy this month's selection, *How to Win Customers and Keep Them for Life* and share it with others in your life because as Alvin Toffler says; "*The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.*"