

# What gets measured, gets managed

 By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

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Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* is a science-fiction book published back in 1992. The opening sequence of the book features a high-stakes pizza delivery. High stakes in that in the *Snow Crash* world, the pizza delivery business is monopolised by the Mob, who expect their drivers to go to extraordinary lengths to ensure that no pizza arrives late enough to be free for the customer. Let's just say, the gig worker drivers in this world stand to lose more than just their delivery fee for running the "reputation" of the Cosa Nostra.



## Of pizzas and perverse incentives

The image of a delivery driver ramping over curbs and ramming through fences to beat the ticking clock, arriving seconds before deadline and handing over a crumpled, damaged pizza with the toppings all slid off and greasy, to a nonplussed

customer is in many ways a depiction of all too many customer experiences in our own very real world.

All too many businesses are focused on managing efficiency, at the expense of customer experience.

## Show me the incentive, I'll show you the outcome

As Charlie Munger said, "Show me the incentive, I will show you the outcome."

If you incentivise speed but not consistency, you should expect sloppy work.

If you incentivise sales but not retention, expect returns and don't expect referrals.

If you incentivise short call times, expect impatient customer service agents and unhappy customers.

When you automate (and remember, you can choose automate processes with real live people as well as with bots) bad habits *in*, or worse, *automate out* value and common sense, do not be surprised when your customers decide you are just as interchangeable as you have made them.

When we focus too much on *quantity* as our management metric, it is all too easy to lose sight of the quality of the service we are delivering to our customers.

Being technically "on time" means nothing if the work delivered fails to delight your customer.

Sometimes it's better to just hand over the free pizza.

## ABOUT BRONWYN WILLIAMS

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