

*The Patient Experience Post*

Healthcare's Resource for  
Service Excellence  
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Since the mid-1990s, Baird has helped healthcare organizations nationwide improve the patient experience and enhance organizational culture. Baird's culture assessment and diagnosis include experience mapping, medical mystery shopping, and focus groups to reveal the real customer experiences within your organization. Using your patients' experiences, Baird and her team prescribe critical next steps for improving patient satisfaction and HCAHPS scores.

## Good Read: The Starfish and the Spider

Book by: Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom

Review by Kristin Baird, RN, BSN, MHA

What does culture and patient experience have to do with starfish? More than you might think. In their book, *The Starfish and the Spider*, Brafman and Beckstrom use these two creatures to compare and contrast corporate structure. The spider represents the hierarchical, top down structure with a pyramidal org chart. The starfish represents the flat organizational structure where power and innovation is pushed down to the associates. Their point is that in a spider organization, if you lose the top leadership, the success and momentum die just as a spider would if he was to lose his head. The starfish on the other hand is perfectly decentralized so that it can regenerate even when cut into pieces.

The authors give several examples of starfish-type movements throughout history have led to massive and sustainable change ranging from women's right to vote, to AA, and the creation of Wikipedia and Ebay. Throughout the book, I continually thought about how the principles apply to improving the patient experience. When organizations embed patient experience champions throughout an organization, they create powerful circles and catalysts. As these circles grow they take root and become unshakable. Even if you were to lose your senior leadership team, a starfish organization that has truly embraced a culture of excellence will continue to function.

The book is a fast and easy read loaded with great stories. I highly recommend this book.

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