# 2430 The Menu Item That Sells Another

Product Book · https://kb.jeffreysummers.com/docs/2430-the-menu-item-that-sells-another/

The $68 dry-aged ribeye is not always on the menu to be ordered.

Sometimes it is there to make the $42 strip look like the reasonable choice. The Guest who opens the menu and sees a $68 item recalibrates their sense of what "expensive" means at this restaurant. The $42 strip, which would have felt premium against a $28 chicken, now feels moderate. The anchor moved the reference point. The ribeye did its job whether it sold or not.

This is [Decoy Effect] working in the operator's favor — and it is a legitimate design tool when used honestly. The menu that understands reference dependence prices and sequences items to guide the Guest toward the choices that are best for them and best for the operation simultaneously. The server who recommends the strip because it is genuinely the best value on the menu is running the relational version of the same architecture.

The Product discipline is knowing the difference between guiding and manipulating. The decoy that steers the Guest toward genuine value is hospitality. The decoy that steers the Guest toward margin at the expense of experience is [Transactional Embezzlement] dressed up as menu engineering.

The question before every pricing and sequencing decision: is this option set designed to serve the Guest's decision — or to engineer it away from their actual preference? The answer determines which road the menu is on.