



# Design For Ministry™

Depth Perception

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## An encounter while leaving a Burger King restroom

Sometimes the traveler's bladder can expand no more and the nearest public restroom is sought – in this instance a Burger King. As I departed, an employee mopping the dining room floor complained to another who was taking a break nearby. It did not matter that they were less than four feet apart. She made sure the whole dining room bore witness: *"It's like this every day! They come in here to use the restroom and THEY DON'T BUY ANYTHING!"*

Oh dear sister! Restroom access brings the traveler in! Stretch breaks lead to purchases that add to your receipts. Sure you can enforce a "restrooms are for paying customers" rule, but watch business shrink the moment you do. Full bladders don't buy beverages!

This situation plays itself out thousands of times over in organizations.

- "We should put the coffee cups under lock and key so they won't disappear."
- "We are going to set our office hours from 7:30 am to 4 pm. It doesn't matter that seventy percent of our clients try to access our services from 3-7 pm. The customer needs to conform to us."
- "All guests will please sit in the front row, passing down a quantlet-like center aisle, while we regular attenders have no intention of moving or being hospitable."
- "At our church none of the newcomers sing along. They need to change their cultural appreciation for music!"
- "We observe that the people we reach in evangelism often serve us in restaurants following church services. Now that they are Christians they need to quit their jobs so they can attend church with us."
- "I don't have enough time to remain in control if we follow the ideas that you suggest. Neither do I wish to cede any control to you. Therefore, the answer is no."
- "If you can't find it, we don't have it."
- "Yes, I can see the ketchup dispenser is empty. So what?"

These statements are symptoms of organizational mediocrity. It doesn't matter what type of mediocre organization you might be in. The result is fewer people who feel good about you, more people who hear of your lack of concern and go elsewhere, and ultimately fewer resources for success. To excel, to really excel, requires a love for new participants that rivals biblical codes of hospitality.

Are you uncertain how important this is? Then try this exercise. Answer this question: What off-putting messages have been heard from front-line employees, volunteers, representatives and managers of your church, your favorite volunteer organization or your service-minded business? What ought to be conveyed instead? If you can identify five, then you have five too many. Remember, people who have sour experiences with your organization aren't going to keep it to themselves.

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