

Excellent & Efficient: What the Church Can Learn from Chick-Fil-A

My oldest son and his wife recently gave birth to our fourth grandchild. On our way to the hospital, while his wife was still in labor, our son asked us to pick up some breakfast. The only place by the hospital was a McDonald's.

We went through the drive-thru and couldn't help but notice the trash in the parking lot and the beat-up feel to the entire locale. When we reached the menu/order station, we were greeted with a monotone, bored voice, "Can I take your order."

It wasn't even a question. Just a statement.

When we pulled around to the first window to pay, the woman never made eye contact with us; she just took our card and handed it back with the receipt.

I said, "Thank you."

She never even replied. She just closed the window.

We pulled to the next window, got our order, and at least this time we were met with a brief, "Thank you."

Later that same week, we went to Chick-fil-A. We always like going there because they have good food, it's clean and bathed in a Christian ethos with impeccable customer service.

The difference between Chick-fil-A and our McDonald's experience could not have been starker. The drive-thru line was served by energetic and pleasant young people with mobile devices able to take our order and payment to speed up the process. We were greeted with eye contact, smiles, "How can I serve you?" and, if you know Chick-fil-A well, lots of "My pleasure!" in response to any and all requests. I was told to have a great day. I was asked if there was anything else I needed. I was told how much I was appreciated.

I remember turning to my wife, even though we've been to Chick-fil-A a thousand times, to say: "It just doesn't take that much to have good customer service. Why don't other places do it like Chick-fil-A? It's just not that hard to be nice and courteous and friendly."

Chick-fil-A costs more than McDonald's. The lines are sometimes longer (because it's popular). They only serve chicken.

But I don't care.

One "My pleasure!" is worth a thousand burgers.

What does this have to do with the church?

A member of our staff was serving this past weekend at one of our newer campuses and sent me an email following the experience. She was teaching a class there through the Meck Institute titled "Find Your Fit." She met a woman who, through the class, decided she wanted to join our Guest Services Team.

Why?

Here's the rest of her email:

"She said that's what drew her to Meck because they made her feel so at home. Her kids noticed it too. A friend of hers asked her middle school daughter, I believe it was, why she likes going to Meck so much.

"She said, 'Everyone is so nice and so welcoming. Let me put it this way. It's the difference between the customer service at McDonald's and Chick-Fil-A.' I thought that was such a sweet (and creative) compliment to our Guest Services Team."

I did too.

> [Read more from James Emery White.](#)
