



E² = Evaluation and Excellence

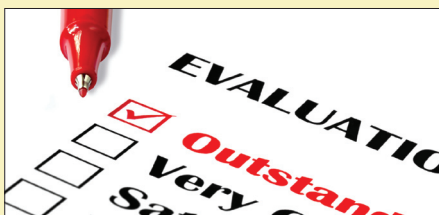
Are evaluation and excellence “out?” Is it no longer “in” to focus on these two important components? I visit many churches annually and am amazed to see how many times we do not pay attention to “the little details.”

Expectations for excellence

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consumers have expectations for that product. When a consumer experiences a product, it either meets the expectation or it doesn't. If their expectations are not met, we may lose an opportunity to reach that person for Christ. If someone came to our church upon a recommendation from a friend, they probably came because they had heard positive things and wanted to come and check it out. We don't want them leaving with a negative experience. That is exactly what they will share with others in the future. They will tell others, who will tell others, who will tell others...



Recently, I visited a restroom in a large church. There was a laminated sign on the wall above the toilet that read, “Do not leave the restroom until the toilet stops running.” The sign had been there for a while! I wondered to myself, “Am I now a plumber? What will I do if it overflows?” This is not excellence. I am sure the church had an excellent excuse for not repairing the toilet. Remarkably, that is what I remember the most regarding my visit to this church.

Attention to detail

We must pay attention to details, because the details add up! Someone on the church staff must be responsible for a weekly evaluation process. At the conclusion of all Sunday events, a leader and team members should sit down and evaluate what happened on Sunday. The Sunday morning experience includes everything from teaching to worship to parking . . . everything! Anything not meeting the originally set standards of excellence should be corrected before next Sunday. We do not want

to repeat bad history! We should learn from experience and move forward. Fix the toilet!

In many cases, the staff and lay people that need to evaluate what takes place on Sundays are busy all morning preaching, teaching, or working in ministry. They are not physically able to get around and evaluate every area. **If someone is not intentionally evaluating the Sunday morning process, chances are it is not being done.**

Invisible problems

The biggest challenge for the people performing the weekly evaluation is to be able to see things as they actually are. You've heard the old cliché (inverted for these purposes), “I can't see the trees because of the forest.” Sometimes, we are too close to the situation to actually see what is going on. The problem is if you allow an area to go uncorrected over three weeks, it becomes invisible and a part of the accepted landscape. Someone new will see the inadequacy right away, just as I noticed the toilet that needed repair.

Our business of church is more important than any other business in the world. We are in the business of reaching people for Christ. Weekly evaluations of our Sunday morning experience will lead to excellence, which should increase the quality of everyone's experience. In a world of constant change, evaluation and doing our ministry with excellence should always remain a primary focus of all we seek to accomplish. ♦