

The Napkin Test

Sometimes we are frozen by the thought of what we should do next. Effective leaders focus their team on the “next action.”

The key word in keeping any team moving toward a goal is to know the next step, the next action. Volumes of books have been written about execution. But, execution is as simple as taking action.

See the obvious. Take the next step. If your entire team is taking the obvious next step, all day, every day, progress is inevitable.

For example, restaurants have cleanliness and customer service goals. Managers teach procedures and refer to operations manuals.

Yet, something as simple as picking up a napkin from the floor can become a difficult and unseen next required action.

The picture above was taken in a franchise branded restaurant. The hostess was rushing to and fro in various states of being busy. I watched her step over the napkin on the floor at least six times. It was so frequent that I was able to snap a picture.

She wasn't alone. The napkin was on the floor for 35 minutes. Over 20 people passed by the napkin on the floor. I believe most passersby saw the unusual blob of white on the floor.

I know a lot about this restaurant based on the response of the team to a little napkin. I also know that I have been to the restaurant many times over the last two years. The floor staff is averaging 200 percent turnover. The same manager seems to be doing what he has always done.

I also know that franchise stores remain open through dinner at a majority of their locations. The napkin store does not.

It's easy to point and fuss at problems other businesses experience. Zits on the face are obvious to all.

But what about the napkin in our own eye?

What are the little things your team walks past every day? Is your lobby pristine? Are your restrooms spotless throughout every service?

Does the condition of your auditorium honor the presence of the Lord?

My questions may be received as literal or figurative. But take a close look at your operation for how well the little things are being handled. What is your "fail rate" on little things? Were those notes to visitors sent last week?

Little things must precede big things. Small steps develop confidence and build trust.

Teach your team to see napkins on the floor.

It's really much bigger than a napkin.

Today's Scripture

"Then He came and found them sleeping and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not keep watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:37,38).

Platform Tip No. 140

It seems like many ministries spend time and money trying to convince people they need help.

Don't organize your marketing around a solution looking for a problem.

Show up every day with your message. People will find you.

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