

Viewing your school from the outside

Literally and figuratively

“Managers have to constantly put themselves in the shoes of their customers, seeing everything from the other side of the counter.”

Joseph Michelli, Author
*The Starbucks Experience:
Five Principles for Turning Ordinary Into Extraordinary*

Get an outsider's view of your school.

Today's quote comes from one of the two books I recommended as summer reading for you and your staff, and is in the chapter titled, "Everything Matters."

This week, I'd like you to step to the "other side of the counter" and see your school through the eyes of someone who isn't already connected to you.

"Hire" someone wholly unconnected to your school or church to view your facility.

This needs to be someone who doesn't know you or the school since you want input from a person with no bias toward or against your school. (Therefore, this is **not** a church member.) You want three characteristics:

1. A **parent**
2. Someone who can be brutally **honest**
3. Someone who can be **insightful**
(It will be more helpful to you if they say, "The paint color makes the school look like a prison." rather than simply, "The school is ugly.")

"Hiring" can be offering a gift card to a local restaurant.

Ask them to drive to your school, get out and look over the facilities and then answer five quick questions.

1. How difficult or easy is it to find the school?
2. What is your first impression?
3. Does it look like a place you would want to spend time?
4. Does it look like a place you would be happy to leave your child?
5. What are the top five things you would change?

Use the information to make what improvements you can.

Yes, I realize none of us have the money to rebuild (or even substantially change) our facilities. But most schools/churches can have work bees in the summer to prep their facilities. And you have staff returning to work before the first day of school. Here are some inexpensive ideas:

- **Pressure wash the exterior**--spider webs and hornets nests are ugly and dangerous-looking
- **Pull weeds and dead (or dying) plants**--you won't look like a place where kids can thrive if you can't keep your plants alive
- **Plant colorful flowers in bright pots** near your front door.
- **Clean the windows**, inside and out.
- **Assess how items displayed on the inside of classroom windows look from the outside.**
- **Get rid of nasty smells.**
- **Get rid of clutter.**
- **Organize, organize, organize.**

Of course, if you have the budget to do more--do. The point is to set a warm, welcoming tone from the minute someone comes to your campus.

Binder tab: June

School size: All