

## Maintain Quality

Written by Steve Marr  
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Quality is subjective to some degree. Quality partly depends on our expectations and the price we pay for them. If I walk into a McDonald's for an Egg McMuffin, my expectations are considerably lower than if I go to a resort serving a wonderful breakfast for \$25. Either option may fall short on quality. The McDonald's breakfast may sit in the warming tray for 45 minutes or the resort breakfast could be disappointing, but our expectations are different in each situation.

The Lord was speaking of his vineyard when He said, "I water it day and night." (Isaiah 27:3, NASB) Maintaining quality is elusive. It requires daily attention just like taking care of a vineyard is a daily task.

I spoke with somebody the other day who has the skills to open a restaurant and would like to launch the endeavor. He understands very clearly the personal time commitment required. He knows that no one owns a restaurant and walks in and out. Managing a restaurant is based on an long day. You must ensure the wait staff and the front of the house are properly managed as well as the kitchen in order to deliver the best possible service. We've all visited a restaurant where the management was clearly absent, and the quality was simply one or two notches below our expectations.

The breakfast place I frequent offers reliably good service and food. I've checked out others and am surprised that they have as many customers because the food simply isn't up to what I consider is a good standard. Overcooked food, potatoes drying out on a warming tray for an hour and other food that just wasn't fresh or appetizing. The owner may get by financially but would do better if they improved their product. I gently raised the topic of food presentation with the owner and received a very quick "everybody loves our food" response so I remained silent. However, I'm not a repeat customer.

Quality is understanding what is appropriate and "good enough" in any circumstance. When I bought an office desk from an office supply company, I accepted a different quality than if spent \$5,000 for a handmade wooden desk. When I bought my last desk from the office equipment company, the first desk that arrived had a major gouge in the center. The replacement desk had drawers improperly installed. Even a cursory inspection should have stopped both shipments.

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Fortunately, the third delivery was fine. However, given my time and trouble dealing with two unsatisfactory deliveries, I was not inclined to go back for more.

“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31, NASB) Every day as we offer a product or service, we need to be confident that what we deliver is *very good* from our customers’ perspective.

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