

# Starbucks is too slow at slowing the pace

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Each time I walk into the local Starbucks I feel like I'm at a glorified McDonald's. The atmosphere is blah, the selection is standard and the service is lightning fast. The baristas at Starbucks multi-task and are working on 3 or 4 drinks at one time. Conversely, each time I visit Mocha Moment the atmosphere is warming and creative, the selection is always fresh and the service is great. It takes a few minutes longer for my latte but the flavor is so much better than Starbucks and I actually get to know my barista.

Starbucks recently announced they are going to be more efficient...by slowing the process down. Amid customer complains that Starbucks has lost the art of coffee making, corporate is telling stores to slow down and stop making multiple drinks at the same time. They are to focus on the task at hand, not multi-task.

Starbucks baristas are up in arms. I suppose if I were on the front lines I would too. Will the Janesville Starbucks crowd wait an extra 30 seconds for their drink? I don't think the normal Janesville customer will mind. Will the Starbucks customers waiting in line in Chicago or New York wait an extra 30 seconds? That's why Starbucks employees are up in arms.

The coffee giant set out to rule the coffee world...and succeeded. Now, they are too big. Honestly, I don't expect a great cup of coffee or specialty drink at Starbucks. I never have. For the price I rarely visit. On the flip side, I don't expect a great cup of coffee or specialty drink at Mocha Moments either. I don't expect it but I'm assured of it each time because they take their time and get to know their customer base. I doubt the family business does time studies on multi-tasking coffee orders. They do what they do best -- service the customer.

Best of all, I know the fair price they charge will stay in our community and they continue to donate a portion of their earnings to local charities. Will I wait 30 seconds for that? Shoot, I'll wait 5 minutes.

Sorry Starbucks. You may be the biggest but you're far from the best. Even with your time studies and your strong stock price the local coffee shops have maintained a nice, quiet niche. A niche that might get a bit larger once impatient Starbucks customers walk out and give another place a shot.

*Steve Knox was born, raised and landed back in Janesville. He encourages you to participate as he writes on Janesville and beyond as this Generation X guy supports his Janesville mission, global vision. Steve is a community blogger and is not a part of Janesville Gazette staff. His opinion is not necessarily that of the Janesville Gazette staff or management.*