

Creating a Dispatcher – The Prototype

An angel walked in and found the Lord walking in a small circle and muttering. "What are you working on now, Lord?" the angel asked.

"Well, I finished creating a peace officer, now I'm working on a dispatcher," God said.

Because the angel could see nothing in the room, he asked God to tell him about it.

God answered, "It's somewhat like the police officer model, but it has five hands: one for answering the phone, two for typing, one for answering the radio and one for grabbing a cup of coffee. The arms had to be placed fairly carefully because all the dispatcher's tasks have to be done simultaneously."

"The digestive system is a little complicated because it runs on coffee and food that can be delivered, but it seldom needs to get up for the restroom. I made the skin out of tempered duralite, covered with Teflon. A dispatcher's hide has to be tough enough to withstand darts from cranky officers, jabs from citizens and the lack of attention by the administration, but not show any signs of wear and tear."

"A dispatcher only needs one pair of eyes. That left extra room for the ears. There are five sets, one for the main radio, two for the other radios it has to monitor, and one to hear everything else going on around it. They fit all right on the head since it had to be extra large for the brain, anyway."

"The brain has to be enormous so it can remember a full set of 10-codes, the phonetic alphabet, at least 200 voices, the entire contents of three different SOP manuals, two teletype manuals and an NCIC code book. Of course, I left enough space for it to learn the individual quirks of each sergeant, lieutenant, shift commander, fire chief and other supervisors and the ability to keep them all straight."

"There has to be room for it to learn which situations a need an officer and which don't and for the ability to determine in less than two minutes what to do with any given event. There is a built-in condenser so it can take an hour-long explanation, put it into 30 seconds worth of radio transmission and still get the whole story across."

"Those switches on the front are for the emotions. It has to be able to talk to a mother whose child has just died but not feel pain, a rape victim with empathy, a suicidal person with calmness and reassurance and abusive drunks without getting angry. When one of the

officers yells for help, it can't panic, and when someone doesn't make it, the dispatcher's heart mustn't break."

"That little soft spot just to the left of the emotions switch is for the abandoned animals, frightened children and little old ladies who are lonely and just want to talk to someone for a few minutes. The dispatcher has to care very much for the officers and firefighters it serves, without getting involved with any of them, so I added another switch for that. Plus, of course, the dispatcher can't have of its own issues to worry about while it is on duty, so that last switch turns those off.

"The patience switch is turned up to high all the time on the CTO model, and I've added an extra fuse to those to handle the overload."

"A dispatcher has to be able to function efficiently under less-than-good physical conditions and be flexible enough to withstand whatever whim the administration comes up with, while still retaining its general shape and form. That warm, fuzzy shoulder is there for officers to use when they gripe, other dispatchers when they hurt and those who are shell-shocked by a horrible call and just need someone to be there."

"The voice gave me a little trouble. It has to be clear and easy to understand, calm and even when everyone else is screaming, but still able to convey empathy and caring, while remaining totally professional."

"It runs a full 12 hours on very little sleep, requires almost no days off and gets paid less than an executive secretary," God concluded.

"The dispatcher sounds wonderful!" the angel said. "Where is this amazing creation?"

"Well, you see," answered God with a sigh and a pause. "Dispatchers are invisible unless they make a mistake. So it's practically impossible to tell when they are run-down, worn-out or in need of repair. Now that I've created them, I can't see the original model to make enough of them to go around."

Note: This was copied from APCO Magazine, January 2001 and originally submitted by Jeremy Miller via e-mail. The author's name was unavailable. This may have an alternate title of "And God Created Dispatcher."