

Engaging the Christian Community

CAPTIVATE



A publication of



Infinity Concepts

A photograph of a yellow arch bridge, likely the Roberto Clement Bridge in Pittsburgh, with a city skyline visible in the background. The bridge's arch frames the city buildings. The sky is a mix of blue and pink, suggesting dawn or dusk. The bridge's structure is made of yellow-painted steel, and the city buildings are in various shades of red, brown, and grey.

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6 Ways Good Church Leadership Leads to Growth

Good church leadership is not just about replicating successful church growth concepts; it involves how you personally treat your staff, volunteers, and members. Everyone consciously looks to the leader for wisdom and vision. But, unconsciously they are equally effected by the example of the leader. Planned steps are important, but a church community will be just as impacted by a leader's day-to-day actions.

Here are 6 ways good church leadership leads to church growth:

1. Always support your people.

A good pastor and a good business manager both understand they need to trust their people in order to enable them to be effective. You need to guard your staff member's back. Complaints, grumbings, and negative comments will come your way at one time or another about your staff. Whether the comments are warranted or not, you need to support your people. Give them the benefit of the doubt whenever possible.

The most dedicated staff members who are willing to change and grow the most are the ones who believe their leaders trust them. That is a picture of good Christian leadership.

2. Learn, do not copy.

No two churches are the same, and no two callings from God are identical. Just because something worked great for someone else does not mean it will work for you. Also not every seemingly successful idea has real merit and will work long term. Learn how others were successful, the details matter but study the spirit beyond what they did as well. Glean wisdom from others and then sift through it to look for the seeds of innovation. God gives great ideas, but He still tells us to seek after knowledge and understanding.

3. Recognize church growth happens in different ways.

Growth is not limited to attendance. And often attendance growth is contingent upon growth in other, less tangible areas. Spiritual, emotional, and social

growth are critical elements for a healthy, effective church. And as current members mature in all of these areas, the church's ability to serve additional members increases as well.

4. Delegate instead of administrate.

Micromanagement will choke a leader's ability to grow and keep others from growing as well. There is a delicate balance that enables a pastor to grow by delegating trust and authority to others. At the same time, staff and volunteers are able to grow as they strive to be good stewards of that trust and authority. Over time, more people are able to carry a heavier load and those people become more mature as well. The leader then has more time to spend leading and pursuing the vision God has given them.

5. Church leadership needs to train new church leaders.

This goes hand in hand with delegation. 2 Timothy 2:2 says the things that you have heard from me...commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others

also. Church leaders are called to train up more leaders. To identify those who are faithful and mentor them to be leaders as well. As your leadership staff grows both in number and maturity, then your ability to serve more people in greater ways grows as well.

6. Make changes off camera first

Sometimes even the most sincere intentions do not develop into reality. And that can be OK if those intentions were not announced in the pulpit or on television. Do not be inconsistent; it will open doors to unnecessary criticism. If you go to announce something, make sure you count the cost. If it has to do with the intent to change something in your own life then take all the steps you can beforehand. If it has to do with the whole church, then make sure it is thought out, prayed out, and for certain. If everything that is announced actually happens, you will be able to build trust, momentum, and success. **i**



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Building **Effective Teams**

At the recent conference where I have been speaking, I noticed that a lot of the conversation has revolved around building effective teams. Since team building is a significant part of what we help our clients achieve, I felt it would be appropriate to share three team-building keys I have discovered over the years.

1. Provide clear expectations for each member of the team.

Several years ago, one of my clients commented about the difficulty they were having recruiting volunteers for their non-profit organization. The volunteers came and went at their discretion, showed up only if nothing else came up, and in general did not understand the critical role they played. Our suggestion was to formalize the team — give it structure. The client was afraid they would lose volunteers if they began to give firm requirements. However, they gave it a try ...

First, they established clear job descriptions. They clearly defined what they wanted each volunteer to do. Second, they determined work hours. In their case, it was weekdays 9 a.m. to noon, or noon to 3 p.m. ... a three-hour weekly commitment. Third, they determined how many people they needed. Then, they presented the plan to the existing volunteers.

There were a few that did not feel they could meet the new requirements and decided not to continue. However, most of the volunteers became excited about the new plan and made a firm commitment. Over time, the ministry was able to fill ALL the needed positions. Eventually, they were able to expand their service hours with a fully staffed volunteer team. They continued to have periodic training meetings to teach new skills, air concerns, and keep the momentum rolling.

2. Understand team dynamics.

Every person has a unique personality. When it comes to teams, it is important to understand the differences that personality plays in the role of each team member. There are basically four dynamic roles in the function of a team. They are Creator, Advancer, Refiner, and Executor (CARE for short).

one of the other roles, it is usually uncomfortable for them, and they often just quietly walk away.

There is a fifth role that needs to be mentioned ... the **FLEXER**. These folks can move into different roles — as needed. They are valuable members of the team who are willing and able to do just about anything that needs to be done.

3. Provide the right balance between freedom and protocol.

When pursuing our mission, it is important to be sure we have adequate resources to accomplish the plan. This includes the human resources needed to get the job done. However, the proper balance between freedom and protocol need to be maintained.

Building effective teams is critical to a successful organization.

CREATORS are idea people. They always have a new idea or a new way of doing things. Creators are important to any team as the source of innovation and design. However, Creators also have a weakness. They typically are not effective at bringing their idea into reality.

ADVANCERS recognize a good idea when they hear it ... and love to move the idea forward. Advancers build the framework for new ideas to come to life. They make the connection from the concept to reality. However, in their enthusiasm, Advancers can overlook critical components to make the idea truly successful.

REFINERS look for the flaws in every plan. These misunderstood team members really want to see a new idea succeed, but they are concerned about the possibility of error and failure. Refiners can be seen as negative people because of their unique perspective, but they are really not. Once they are satisfied that the idea has been adequately developed and thoroughly researched, they are usually on board.

EXECUTORS put the plan into action. Executors don't want to create; they don't want to develop; they don't want to troubleshoot. They simply want to be told what to do and how to do it, and they will embrace the plan with enthusiasm. If Executors are asked to perform in

Some organizations recognize the giftedness in the members of the team and give them virtually unlimited freedom to express those gifts. The result is often chaos. Other organizations limit the expression of any creativity or giftedness through overly restrictive rules and guidelines. The result is lack of creativity and individual achievement.

The key is to discover the balance between clearly established guidelines that are consistent with the organization's mission, and a culture of openness and creativity that maximizes the giftedness of the exceptional people on the team.

In conclusion ...

Building effective teams is critical to a successful organization ... helping team members mature and develop can be exciting and personally satisfying ... learning to value and support the differences between team members can be both life-changing and rewarding.

Give it a try! **i**

4 Tips

TO IMPROVE CHURCH

Health & Growth



Our articles typically focus on marketing, management, social media, and fundraising — but we decided to take some time and talk specifically about church leadership, life, and church growth. If you are a Pastor or a church leader ... this is for you.

Health Checkup

If you are a leader of a church, it is always a good idea to evaluate the health of your ministry. You may want to assess your weekly attendance, giving, and growth. Attendance and giving are actually both good indicators (when kept in perspective) because attendance reflects the number of people you are reaching and giving reflects confidence in church leadership and effectiveness in ministry. While it's important to not become too "numbers-focused" in ministry, they do provide perspective regarding the overall snapshot of your church.

As you look at the big picture, did you see an increase or decrease in the number of people who filled your seats? How have the overall giving trends changed? These issues are important to assess.

Outside of changing locations, people tend to leave a church for three fundamental reasons:

- Lack of meaningful relationships
- No significant place of service
- Disagreement with management/leadership decisions

As you review the previous year, consider those families who have left. Which of these categories apply to their decision? Leaving a church is usually a painful process for the person leaving. What could have been done to reduce the pain or address the concerns? Does your church have a way for visitors to build new relationships? Is it easy to find a place of service? Have decision-making processes been clearly communicated so people understand how each potentially controversial decision is in the best interest of the church? Every church will experience people leaving — but the first steps to closing the "back door" can sometimes be as simple as listening and understanding.

Shelter from the Storm

Challenging times can try the faith of even the strongest of saints. The church needs to be sensitive to the needs of its own people. Good people will make bad decisions; good people will experience tragedy and loss; bad people will have life-changing experiences with Christ. The church needs to provide spiritual and practical support in each of these situations. It is imperative for the church to be seen as a "shelter from the storm" and a safe haven. It should be seen as a place of acceptance, not rejection. It should be a place of healing, restoration, and forgiveness.

If your church would like to experience growth, we would like to offer some encouraging leadership tips:

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1. Implement a strong guest services program.

Studies show that within the first few minutes of entering a church, a newcomer will determine if they will return for another service or event. Make it a goal this year to ensure that you have volunteers staffed at key positions within your church to warmly welcome guests, make them feel comfortable, and direct them to various locations. If you don't have one already, establish a

feel like they belong and are important for spiritual growth, healing, and support.

4. Focus on the one.

Ministry is unsuccessful when churches and leaders lose sight of the central reason behind why they have church in the first place: Jesus Christ. Be cautious to not allow the details and production aspects of putting a service

“ The first steps to closing the ‘back door’ can sometimes be as simple as listening and understanding. ”

“Welcome Center” where new people can easily obtain literature about your church and ministries. Develop a welcome packet or brochure. It will be important to give visitors a caring, hospitable first impression upon entering your church.

2. Develop an assimilation strategy.

Assimilation is the process of individuals becoming part of the life-stream of the church. As people visit your church, implement a process that keeps track of each person who walks in the door. You will want to obtain their name and contact information for your records. This can be done through a connection card in the bulletin, for example. Then, members of your team should be responsible for regular follow-up with visitors through phone calls or emails during the week. Encourage your team to build meaningful relationships with guests and to help them plug in to specific ministries or events where they will fit in and feel comfortable.

3. Build your small group structure.

The mega-church trend has become very popular over the last decade. Studies have shown the pros and cons of mega-churches, but either way, you need to be aware that some people can get “lost in the crowd” when you have a larger congregation. People may feel unnoticed or may feel like they don't know anyone when they go to church. To counteract this, be certain that your church has a strong Small Groups ministry this year. Encourage people to become involved through actively promoting your small groups and by providing them with the resources they need to get involved. Small groups help people

together distract you from the real reason you are there in the first place. Along with this, try to gain a mentality of continually focusing on the one — that one person who needs a touch from God. That one person who sneaks in the back of the church on Sunday mornings. That one person who is deeply hurting and just needs someone to talk to.

These simple and practical tips will help you make this year the best year yet for your church and its ministry. And if you would like a little help to grow a little faster, let us know. We're here to help! 





7 Steps *on the Road to* Ministry Success

Wouldn't it be great if overnight we could have all the money we need, all the exposure we desire, and worldwide ministry impact? While all of these objectives are certainly possible, it takes time. The road to success is a process that involves the following seven steps:

1. **Discovery** — understanding God's assignment for your ministry
2. **Knowledge** — learning the critical steps of action necessary for success
3. **Readiness** — becoming prepared to fulfill that assignment
4. **Implementation** — beginning to walk the road of God's calling
5. **Measurement** — reviewing each step to maximize effectiveness
6. **Adjustment** — making necessary changes for improvement
7. **Adaptation** — responding to changes along the pathway to success

Most ministries want to jump in at Step 4 without the proper discovery, knowledge, and readiness. As a result, they often struggle to find their way to fulfill God's calling in their lives. Secondly, many ministries

neglect measurement, adjustment, and adaptation — only to discover they become less and less effective. Each ministry must examine and adjust their steps to avoid pitfalls along the way.

With each ministry calling comes great responsibility. We must recognize that we are stewards of the resources God has given us. We must commit ourselves to prayerfully overcome ministry challenges and become all that God has called us to be.

Every ministry, of course, comes with its own set of unique challenges. For a media ministry, it could be production, distribution, or response. For churches, it might be local marketing, volunteer development, or even audiovisual issues. For nonprofits and parachurch ministries, perhaps it is fundraising, leadership/staff training, or organizational development. The list for each could really go on and on — but every challenge must be met with wisdom and strategically overcome. Jesus called His disciples and trained them for three years before releasing them on their own. Do not be afraid to take the time to prepare. Your ministry will be all the more fruitful if you prepare and plan ahead. **1**

Parking Lot

– to –

Parking Lot



Recently over lunch, a pastor of a church of about 250 attendees gingerly shared with me that he desired to see his church grow significantly. He quickly added a disclaimer that he did not want to have a big church in order to build a platform for himself. He was thankful for his small church and loved the people that God had entrusted into his care, but he had a yearning in his heart to reach more people and see their lives transformed by the Word of God.

I sensed his humility and genuineness of heart, then suddenly a scripture quickly came to my mind – Proverbs 14:28 which says, “In a *multitude of people* is a king’s honor...” I shared this verse with the pastor because I sensed a hesitancy from him questioning his desire to see the church grow exponentially. With this

people because we often miss details due to being familiar with things. Arrange for church secret shoppers to visit and give you honest and frank feedback about your church service. Call your visitors from the last 6 months and ask them for their feedback. You may be surprised by what you hear. Of course, there is no perfect church and you can’t make everyone happy, but always develop an attitude of listening and commitment to improve.

2. Evaluate your entire service experience.

Today many churches focus primarily on the worship experience. They add cool lighting systems, creative stage backdrops, a fog machine, bring the lights down, and the singers are young and hip. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this as long as it fits the culture

“**Most pastors hope their church will grow, but only a few take steps to intentionally grow it.**”

scripture I encouraged him there is nothing wrong with wanting to have a big church because a multitude of people brings honor to the King of Kings, Jesus! This scripture brought freedom and sparked an excitement in the pastor to put his hand to the plow and not look back in regard to growing his church.

Most pastors hope their church will grow, but only a few take steps to intentionally grow it. It won’t just automatically happen! It takes intentional vision, planning, and effort to experience the growth you desire.

Similar to a bicycle wheel, there are many spokes to church growth, but in this article, I want to focus on what I call FROM PARKING LOT TO PARKING LOT. Let’s begin with this saying that I heard several years ago:

*People will not always remember what you say...
but they will remember how you made them **FEEL**.*

This is why you must intentionally (there’s that word again) create a positive, uplifting, life-building service experience that touches people both spiritually and emotionally from parking lot (arriving) to parking lot (leaving).

1. See things from the eyes of a visitor.

It is important to get a fresh perspective from new

and style of your church community. Every church has its own identity so don’t try to be like the church across town, just be the church God has called you to be. The point that I want to make is that you have to make ALL aspects of your service experience great, not just worship.

I have heard some pastors say that all that matters for the church to grow is the preaching. While I agree that the teaching of the Word of God is important, a person’s heart may be closed to receive the Word by the time the pastor gets up to teach because the person was offended by how the parking lot attendant motioned them to a parking space, there was no fresh coffee available, or the usher was rude and unfriendly.

Look at how you make people feel as soon as they drive into your parking lot (and as they leave the parking lot). Is it easy to get in and out of the parking lot? Are the parking lot attendants friendly and smiling? Are the grounds clean and beautiful? Perhaps consider outdoor speakers with upbeat worship music to help build an expectancy for the service as people are walking into the church.

Look at the check-in process for the children’s ministry. Do your volunteers and check-in process reassure the parents that their kids will be safe and cared for? How

will the parent be notified if their child needs them? All of this makes an impact on how a person feels about the church. If a parent doesn't feel comfortable with leaving their child in children's ministry, then they will most likely find another church.

Probably one of the most sensitive areas to evaluate is the actual church service. Again, hearing from visitors will give you good insights. Is the music too loud? Is the service too long? Does the teaching help people grow and make them feel like they can face the new week?

Let me share an experience with a church that had over 1,000 people on Sunday mornings. The pastor retired and over a few years the church gradually declined to around 300 people. They had a beautiful building with wonderful amenities, but they struggled to grow. Our team was called in to help them. One of the many tasks we did was to listen to a few sermon messages from the pastor who had retired 10 years earlier and some of the recent sermon messages from the current teaching pastors. The doctrine was consistent with the former pastor so there was no change there. What had changed was the current teaching pastors came across more intellectual and doctrinal, focused on endurance, suffering, and perseverance while the former pastor's messages were more hopeful, aspirational, and

emphasized the joys of the Christian life. Now we had the delicate task of communicating this feedback to the church leaders. Fortunately, when we gave our assessment to the church leadership, they embraced the feedback and executed changes.

Before I move to the next step, let me share with you that the most important ten minutes of the service, especially to a church visitor, is the time AFTER the service. This is when visitors determine if the church is friendly, so be sure you are intentionally making connections after the service. You want to be sure that the last impression people have as they leave the church is positive and encouraging.

As you can see, this step of evaluating your entire service experience takes a significant amount of time and energy, but it must be done thoroughly. Don't take any shortcuts with this step!

3. Be open and committed to change.


Sometimes leaders just want to hear the new ideas to add to what they are currently doing. They don't want to hear how they need to change. There is a biblical principle of pruning shown in John 15:1-3. As leaders, we need to embrace this principle of inspecting our services and ministries to see what areas need to be pruned (changed) for the purpose of bearing more fruit (growth).

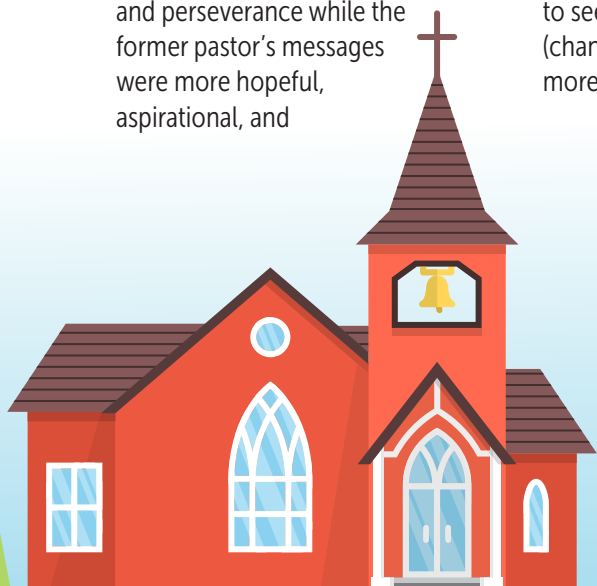
If you really want to see significant growth in your church, then you have to be open to fresh ideas and critique and be committed to make the necessary changes.

4. Stay the course.

It's easier to start the process than crossing the finish line, but you can do it if you keep the vision of ministering to a multitude of people before you and remind yourself why you are going through this change process. For instance, many people start weight loss programs, but quit when they start focusing on the discomfort and dietary changes, instead of focusing on the benefits of feeling better and being healthier when they lose the weight.

You will have to make some uncomfortable changes if you really want to experience the growth you desire. *Stay the course and don't quit.* Don't be moved if you don't see immediate growth. *Stay the course and don't quit.* If you receive some pushback from others about the changes, *stay the course and don't quit.*

What I shared earlier is worth repeating — most pastors hope their church will grow, but only a few do something to intentionally grow it. Church growth requires intentional vision, careful planning, and consistent effort to experience the growth you desire. Let INFINITY CONCEPTS help you get started today! 



An illustration in shades of blue and white. On the left, a large fishing ship is shown from the side, with its mast and rigging visible. A large net extends from the ship across the water, catching a large number of fish. The net is represented by a grid of lines, and several white floats are attached to its top edge. The background shows stylized waves and more fish swimming in the water.

The Net Principle

How to Release Its Power for Church Growth

Before I came to work with Infinity Concepts, I was an executive pastor at a large multi-campus church. One of my main responsibilities was to develop strategies and initiatives to grow the church. Over the years I realized it wasn't just one thing that caused growth to occur, but several components working together. It's what I call the Net Principle.

The Net Principle is derived from Luke chapter 5 when Jesus instructed Simon to let down his nets for a catch. As a result of Simon's obedience, he experienced a boat-sinking, net-breaking catch of fish! That's increase!

A net is made of multiple fibers woven in a grid-like structure, therefore, I realized I needed to employ multiple initiatives, programs, and efforts to help grow the church. Often, I speak with church leaders who

are looking for one marketing campaign to open the floodgates of visitors, but it takes casting a net of multiple initiatives to cause sustainable and lasting growth. Below are 7 net elements to examine for church growth.

1. Marketing

For any church to grow, a steady flow of visitors needs to be coming in. Special events, guest speakers, radio and TV ads, social media marketing, mailings, broadcast phone calls, touch cards, etc. are ways to get the word out about your church. Many of these don't require a large budget to do! The key here is consistency. Frequency of impressions is vital for an effective marketing effort. 5% of a growing church's total weekend attendance should be from 1st, 2nd, or 3rd time visitors. Remember the Net Principle – use multiple marketing channels. I am a big proponent of social media marketing, but not everyone is

on social media, so this is why you use other marketing channels in tandem with social media to reach as many people as possible.

2. The Church Service Experience

Evaluate your church service experience often. Arrange for church secret shoppers to visit and give you honest and frank feedback. Or call your visitors from the last 6 months and ask them for their feedback. You may be surprised by what you hear. Of course, there is no perfect church and you can't make everyone happy, but always develop an attitude of listening and commitment to improve. Are the parking lot attendants out in the

5. Leadership Development

If your leadership base is not growing, not just numerically, but developing their leadership skills, then the church will only grow to the capacity of its leader base. Implement a leadership development program that helps discover leaders, then develop, train, and release them to function as leaders in the church.

6. Growth Ministries

Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Men's and Women's Ministries are ministries that can be entry points for new visitors and help with retention and engagement of the church family — ultimately contributing to the growth

“It takes casting a net of multiple initiatives to cause sustainable and lasting growth.”

parking lot just chit-chatting? Is the music too loud? Did the visitors feel you were a friendly church? Are all your branding points (every point you interact with the public) all communicating the same message?

3. Follow-Up

Do you have programs in place to follow-up with visitors? Are you reaching out to regular attendees who haven't been at church for the last 2 or 3 weeks? When a church reaches over 200, it becomes increasingly difficult to remember who hasn't been at church, so make sure to have systems in place to follow-up with people. Follow-up takes a lot of effort. Proverbs 27:23 says be diligent to know the condition of your flock. Follow-up helps close the backdoor.

4. Assimilation

What percentage of your church is participating in small groups or actively volunteering? A healthy church does a good job in moving visitors to becoming regular attendees, from regular attendees to active volunteers, from active volunteers to leaders. Without an awareness of assimilation, you will struggle to accurately determine the retention rate of your church and its ministries.

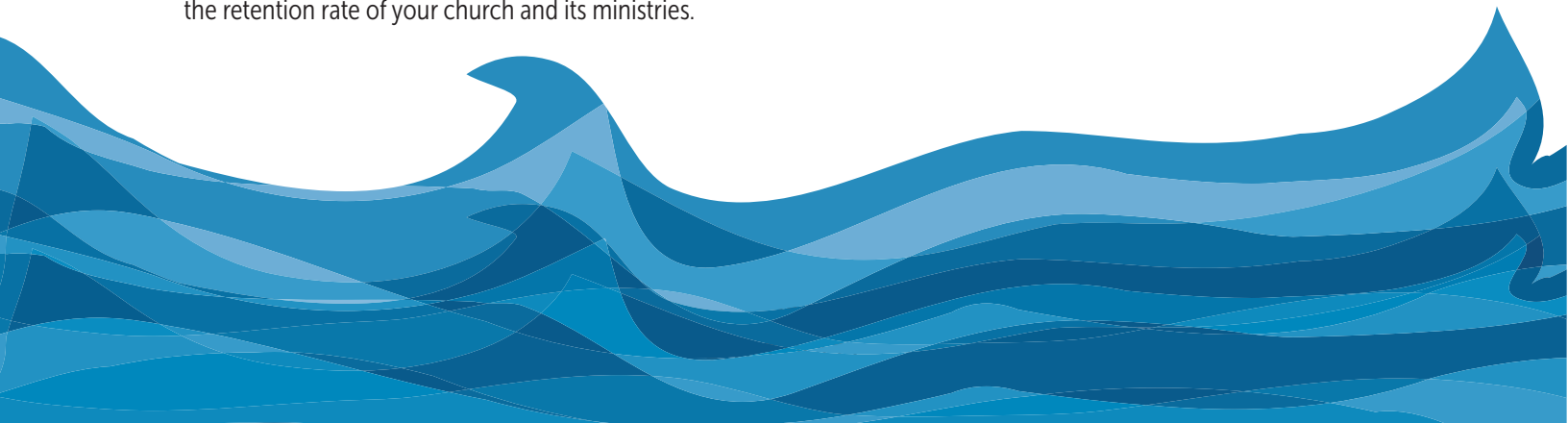
of the church. Therefore, it is critical to examine each of these ministries to ensure they are vibrant and effective.

7. Communication

For a growing church, communicating all the great activities, programs, and events becomes vitally important. Cool video announcements during the service is one way, but remember the Net Principle — use multiple communication channels. A bulletin, regularly updating the website, a weekly e-bulletin, broadcast phone call, social media, etc. are helpful channels to keep the church family informed and aware.

In my experience, it took time, a lot of hard work, and a focused staff to mend our net and repair the holes that we discovered existed. Over the years, more elements were added to the net that helped grow the church into a multi-campus church with thousands of people in attendance.

But start with the above 7 essential elements and prepare to cast your net to bring in a harvest of growth for your church or ministry! **1**





Take The Journey... **Communicate!**

Communication is a journey. It is the process of taking someone from where they are to where they need to be. It is a means of changing perception – direction – understanding – or focus. It is a continuum of shifting framework that must be carefully managed for the appropriate information progression to take place.

Good communication must assume that there is a gap of understanding between two people and then progressively fill in that gap with layers of information and experience to reduce the distance between them.

Sunday morning worship is often a great example of poor communication.

The worship team comes to the church early to warm-up and pray-up for the service. They press into the presence of God and quickly travel past the distractions around them to find the place of true worship in their hearts. Then they take the stage. They continue in their personal experience, modeling worship in front of the congregation.

In the meantime, the congregation has gathered. They may have come dragging unhappy children, discussing family challenges, or even being angry at one another. They may have been chatting about a TV program or sports event – or trying to decide where to go to eat after service. Their minds are not focused – and while they came to worship, they are definitely not ready to worship.

When the two groups of people meet, an immediate disconnect exists. You can find the congregation looking around, still chatting about the ball game, or staring blindly at the platform. They are not engaged ... They are in another place ... They have not yet started the journey.

The worship leaders must recognize this gap and meet the people where they are if communication (or real worship) is going to happen. They must find the place where the people engage and move them step by step from where they are ... to where they need to be. That's communication.

The Bible tells us in Psalm 100 that we are to *enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise*. But so often, many people are left camping outside the gates—hearing the joyous sounds of worship but never truly experiencing them. They have not taken the journey into the presence of God. If we want everyone to “enter in” we must lead them through the gates with effective communication.

When trying to grow our churches, the same principles can be applied. We must recognize that people have presuppositions about who we are, how we act, and what we are like. We must discover what the people perceive and systematically create a communication journey that brings them to a new point of understanding.

Several years ago, I managed a Christian television station in Illinois. I became aware of the fact that the majority of our audience was Christian and that we were not reaching our community for the Kingdom. We consequently made

1. Understand your audience.

Speak to them where they were. Engage them at a point of commonality. Without finding the correct starting point communication will never take place and change will never happen.

2. Respect their position but encourage change.

Once you find the point of commonality begin to reveal the information you want to communicate. Present your perspective in a positive non-threatening manner.

3. Lead them positively along the pathway.

Remember effective communication is a journey. You are the guide. Stay positive, kind, and supportive every step of the way.

4. Provide clear steps of action for people to respond.

Determine in advance what you want to occur and how you want people to respond. Provide clear and specific steps for the action you want people to take.

“ Good communication must assume that there is a gap of understanding between two people. ”

a format change to incorporate more family programming into our schedule to attract a larger audience. However, the goal was not just to draw an audience, but to present them with the Gospel and win them for the Kingdom.

We also recognized that the viewing audience was at various places in their spiritual journey. Some were atheists or agnostics; some believed in God in a general sort of way; some went to church but didn't have a vital relationship with Christ. We identified specific points on this continuum that could be stops along the pathway and created TV spots specifically designed to speak to people at each point of understanding and move them to the next place along the journey of communication. The point of our communication effort was to ultimately move them from where they were to where they needed to be—one step at a time.

The impact was significant. These thought-provoking television spots started dialogues, encouraged church attendance, and engaged dormant people of faith in action. Let me share a few keys to effective communication for you to keep in mind no matter how large or small your church may be:

5. Celebrate understanding.

As communication takes place and the journey is made, find ways to honor this progress. Let people know they have achieved something important and have arrived at a place of greater awareness and understanding.

When you think of communication, realize it is more than a series of facts, more than information, more than methods or technology. It is a journey of understanding ... a trip filled with distractions, challenges, and competing messages. Good communicators understand this and build their communication stream to support the process and ensure that people arrive at the destination relaxed and refreshed, with a whole new perspective.

Don't just share information ... communicate! It takes more work, but the rewards are definitely worth it. **1**

5 Qualities

To Look For When Hiring The Right People



Often, I talk with ministry leaders and senior pastors who have a burning passion inside them to accomplish an extraordinary vision, but express frustration with the progress they have made. I believe one of the significant factors to having a successful ministry and fulfilling a great vision is having a GREAT TEAM. This is the group of people who you will labor with to fulfill God's purpose for your church or ministry, so it's important to have the right team. It starts by picking great individuals.

If there are current members on your team who don't possess these qualities, immediately address it because they are impacting your ministry's success. Here are **five key qualities** that you should look for:

1. Passion for Your Church or Ministry

You want to find people who believe in what you are doing and want to be a part of it. Often ministry staff may come from people within the church who serve as volunteers with no pay or incentives. They generously invest in the vision of the ministry with their time, talents, and treasure. Their passion is clearly seen and proven, therefore, perfect potential candidates to add to your team.

However, if you are interviewing someone outside of your church or ministry, do your due diligence through the interview process. You may want to ask potential candidates, *"Why do you want to work here?"* Usually the candidate is well-qualified and could work almost anywhere. However, this question gives the candidate an opportunity to convince me why they want to work specifically with us. This question also helps determine how well the candidate knows your organization and assesses if the person is just looking for a job or if they really want to be a part of your team.

2. Good People Skills

Ministry is all about people! Regardless of the type of job a person does, they will have to interact with other people at some point in time. A person who understands and applies good people skills will always be a better employee than an equally qualified person who lacks people skills.

Don't look at a new hire as just filling a position, but how well this person will interact with others on your team as well. You must always remember that every person you add, no matter what position, is part of an integrated, interdependent team that relies on each other. The team must collaborate and communicate well in order to get the job done effectively.

3. Commitment to Self-improvement and Self-development

A great employee doesn't rely on the organization to provide them with the necessary education. They are already committed to educating and improving themselves. They are constantly assessing their own results and looking for ways to better those results in the future. What books are they reading? What conferences or online webinars are they attending?

Technology and our culture changes rapidly these days. As an agency, our team must stay informed with trends and how to break through the noise of our busy world in order to inspire response. The same applies to those working in the ministry. You must know the best methods to reach and engage people.

You shouldn't have to hire a millennial to bring in the newest technologies and processes into your organization. Your current team should be committed

to learning, adapting, and adopting creative ways to engage and influence today's culture.

4. Invites and Embraces Accountability

What is accountability? Often it has a negative connotation in people's minds. You hear it when something has gone wrong, "Who will be held accountable for this?"

Webster's Dictionary defines accountability as "the quality or state of being accountable; an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions."

I like how Henry J. Evans defines accountability in his book, *Winning with Accountability: The Secret Language of High-Performing Organizations*. He says accountability is "clear commitments that — in the eyes of others — have been kept."

Henry J. Evans continues to explain that **"people deal with us based on what they think about us, not what we think they should think about us."** So, when we make a commitment, we have to fulfill that commitment in the eyes of others. It is not good enough to fulfill

shows a lack of respect. Would you want your boss to complain to your co-workers about you? Absolutely not!

The right thing to do is to go directly to your boss and privately share the concerns you have. I am a firm believer in direct communication in all relationships — with your spouse, your boss, your friends, etc. Direct communication does not have to be harsh or mean, but it should be conveyed respectfully, honestly, and with an attitude of humility. This style of communication demonstrates respect to another person. This is why murmuring, complaining to others, and gossip are so destructive because it is so disrespectful to others.

An employee who does not have respect for the boss should become an ex-employee as soon as possible. It is the boss's responsibility to develop and apply the characteristics of a good leader and it is the employee's responsibility to be a loyal follower of that leader.

Most people would say Apple is one of the most successful companies of our day and has radically transformed the cell phone industry and how people communicate. Steve Jobs didn't give credit to their innovation in technology, instead

“...find people who believe in what you are doing and want to be a part of it.”

the commitment in our eyes — we have to fulfill the commitment in the eyes of others. That is the tricky part.

When we're accountable, it is necessary for us to go to our customers, our suppliers, the people we work for — and yes, the people who work with us — and ask them, "How am I doing?" We allow them to hold us accountable — in their eyes — for our commitments.

It is crucial that every member of your team embraces and practices accountability. Performance shoots up, job satisfaction increases, and results improve!

5. Respect for Leadership

If you watch the news for just a few minutes or scan through your social media feed, you probably have noticed the increase of disrespect in today's culture. Respecting your boss doesn't mean you always agree with him/her, but how you express your disagreement is what matters. Complaining to others in the organization

he said *"The secret of my success is that we have gone to exceptional lengths to **hire the best people** in the world."*

Adding the right people to your team matters, so don't rush the process and take any shortcuts to quickly fill the position. Be sure to do your due diligence in the interview process and check references. Additional valuable tools to incorporate into your process are personality assessments like DiSC, leadership and management style profiles, as well as skills testing.

Infinity Concepts has successfully helped multiple churches and ministries in their executive and leadership searches. We'd love the opportunity to help you find the perfect member for your team! **1**



Does Your Church Need Public Relations?

There are times where we come across a shocking quote in a story, find out about an event after it has happened, or realize that the author of your favorite book actually pastors a local church—and we think “why didn’t we know this?” Churches get so busy in daily ministry that the leadership misses key opportunities, overlooks important details, and often, just blurts out the wrong thing to the press.

When churches assess their priorities, public relations is typically not at the top of the “needs” list. Components such as active attendance, tithing, or programs to enrich the lives of congregants come more quickly to mind. Most people believe that public relations is no more than sending press releases and spinning information. There is not a clear understanding about why a church should engage a PR professional. Hopefully, this article will help to change that...

Public relations is so much more than sending information to media outlets and wordsmithing. It can change the way your church communicates its heart to the world outside of your walls. Public relations can open doors to new opportunities; it can help navigate troubled waters; it can reach people who otherwise would never hear your message or be aware of your existence.

Below are a few of the ways a church could benefit from a robust public relations program:

Media Training

There are times during the life of any church when leadership may be in the public spotlight. Though pastors and executives within a church or ministry are probably quite comfortable speaking to a crowd, it is important to understand that the public audience you are reaching is dramatically different from your congregation. The

Kingdom of God is often poorly represented in the media because passionate and well-meaning leaders do not understand their audience. Many people hearing your words will be listening with a skeptical ear, so you need to choose your words carefully. Media training offers thoughtful tips and insight into how to appropriately address the public and what can be expected when facing friendly and unfriendly press.

Discussing Divisive Topics

There are many divisive topics today, even within the church walls. Many Christians have varying opinions on issues such as how to care for immigrants or safety during a church service. Public relations can help your church understand how these sensitive areas speak to your congregation so that they can fully understand your stance and your heart in these areas. Communicating your position and articulating appropriately can halt

unnecessary anger or confusion within the congregation.

Event Promotion

Putting on events can be daunting and overwhelming when you have a church or ministry to run. Day-to-day tasks do not go away simply because there is an event or

Thought Leadership

To increase exposure, credibility, and trust every pastor should consider a thought leadership strategy. Through blogs, editorials, social media interaction, speaking events, and many more opportunities, your leader's expertise is on stage for all to discover. Inserting them into a

outlets you can utilize to connect the more you will improve your chances of earning their trust and their ear.

Messaging

As a church, messaging is imperative to educating the public on who you are and what you believe. A misstep in today's world could become

Public relations can change the way your church communicates its heart to the world.

conference upcoming. Yet, there are many components to event planning and promotion that can fall by the wayside because of a lack of preparation time and planning. Bringing in a public relations professional to help plan and promote your event will alleviate stress and the fear of forgetting important components.

Crisis Communications

Every church will face a crisis sooner or later. No one wants to go through a crisis. And, many times we do not see it coming. In recent years, some of the largest churches and most renowned pastors in America have almost overnight found themselves in the midst of a significant crisis. For a church, specifically, a member of the leadership or pastoral team may do something inappropriate, a child or youth could be injured during a church activity or event, or perhaps a stance your church takes on a controversial topic could stir unrest within your community. How and when you convey your message on the matter is vitally important. It could be the difference between surviving the attack or succumbing to external pressures.

conversation is a powerful influencer tool that can be strategized and crafted and reach those you have never reached before!

Book Promotion

If a member of your team writes a book and leans on the promotion the publisher offers—simply stated it will not be enough. Publishers often add a marketing component to their packages. However, the impact is minimal. Seek out a PR professional who will work to secure book reviews, media interviews, and articles on the book. Additionally, building a platform, or microsite, on which to send people offers more in-depth information on the book and the author. Conveying the true intent of the book to the public and building momentum around its topic is essential to its success.


Content Creation

Connecting effectively with your congregation and communicating effectively with those outside of your church takes commitment—repetition over time. Creating content including blogs, podcasts, and social media posts for distribution can help you create a bond with those you may not have reached on a Sunday. The more

a messy battle of theology or insensitivity in the way the church is viewed. Because content is so widely distributed through social media, websites, through branding, etc., a consistent message is imperative.

Not every public relations strategy can be utilized by every church. You may not be facing a crisis, but you should still have a crisis communication plan. But there is untapped potential and opportunity within even the smallest of churches. Thought leadership, event planning, messaging, and the strategy that comes in each of those pieces can change the life of your church and most importantly, change lives.

Public relations is a valuable tool for all organizations. The danger is not realizing the importance and the impact it could have for your church. Your responsibility as the church is of vital importance and it is necessary for the message to reach outside your walls. And that, makes the need for public relations a fundamental necessity. Consider how a strong public relations program could make a difference with your congregation—in your community. **1**

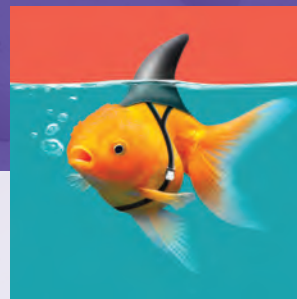


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