

EQUIP 2017

Southwest Indiana District November 4th at Valley Mission Church

Navigating Ministry Change by Building Trust

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Introduction

Brief background of presenter.

Disclaimer: This presentation is about a process for implementing change. It is not to suggest that the changes made in this case study should be implemented elsewhere, though any ideas it may spark feel free to use! As with most remedies advertised: “RESULTS MAY VARY!”

Some General Wisdom on the nature of Change in Churches:

- *Change...no one likes it! Except a baby.*
- *Subtle and incremental changes are easier than big and fast changes.*
- *It is easier to add than to subtract!*
- *Windows of opportunity are better than forced change.*
- *People are more important than plans, procedures and programs.*
- *Spiritual change is more valuable than administrative change, but administrative changes can lead to spiritual ones.*
- *(After assessment of situation) If this is success, then by all means don't change it, but if it isn't, it would be malfeasance of duty not to change.*

Some Guiding Quotations:

“The church is constantly looking for better methods...but God is looking for better men.”

E.M. Bounds

“Methods are many, principles are few. Methods are always changing, principles never do.”

I heard it from Bob Huffaker, Grove City COTN

“Pastoring would be easy if it were not for the people!” (I don't think I was the first to think of it)

“I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” --Jesus

A. Creation of a working plan.

I. Define Reality

- Take some time: “Never tear down a fence until you know why it was put there in the first place.”
- What is working (strengths)? What is not working (challenges)?
- Is there a structure that coordinates our efforts, or are we stepping over and on each other, every leader for him/her self?
- Test your assessment by probing leaders for their own views on how things are going.

II. Ask the Lord for wisdom: “What are we going to do about this?”

- Prayer
- Share concern with core leaders. Invite them in to reflection and prayer concerns.

III. Dream about solutions to problems and ideas for Effective Ministry.

- If I could do this differently how would I like it to be?
- Options?
- What are the strengths, resources and opportunities?

IV. Vet your dreams and ideas with trusted leaders outside the local setting and gain useful critique, feedback and value-added ideas.

B. Build Support from Church leadership

I. Bring along the board members one at a time!

- **Never bring your proposal in to the entire board. Surprise is not an effective means of getting a big change through.**
- **Start with your strongest, most positive leader(s) first.**
- **Let them in on the struggle: Define Reality. Share your burden, and your prayer: “Lord, what are we going to do about this?”**
- **Don’t do all the talking. Listen for their connection with your thoughts. Find the common grounds of concern.**
- **Ask them to hear you out without burying you! Encourage prayer, reflection, and temporary confidentiality.**
- **Share ideas: “This is what I have been praying about, and thinking about.... What if we did this.....?”**
- **Make sure every board member has the opportunity to hear it from you.**

II. Bring it into the board meeting

- **Repeat the entire cycle as if you were presenting to the board for the first time, let them all hear it again together.**
- **Do not ask for a decision. Ask for their feedback and to commit it to prayer and keep it confidential temporarily.**
- **Bring in any other key stake holders in leadership outside the board into the loop, making presentation. Sharing the board is working on a big change. Invite feedback, prayer and temporary confidentiality.**
- **Begin dropping hints in public service that the board is praying about some big things and invite the people to begin praying about how God would help us go forward as a church.**
- **In a second meeting, make an abbreviated presentation reminding them of the key concerns and proposed ideas. Invite discussion. Ask if they are ready to act? Remind them of stakes and urgency.**
- **Work on a time-line to roll out changes to congregation and day of implementation.**

- After board approval, begin to make it known that something is going to change. We are going to “shake things up.” Or “God is going to shake us up!”

C. Carry it to the Congregation

I. Public Roll out

- Announce that a change is coming {Shake -UP}.
- Talk about it in terms of prayer and missional purpose.
- Begin including it in announcements and sermons.
- Call the people to prayer.
- Make a printed plan for the congregation to see.
- Take time in a Sunday Morning service to make the full presentation including the decision of the board.
- Invite board members to public comment.
- Point out that there is room for adjustment as issues arise from the changes being made.
- Announce the start date countdown and schedule.
- Print materials, advertise, promote over a period of time.
- Call for a special time of prayer in the days immediately before the first day.
- Make it as exciting and positive as possible. Celebrate the beginning of something new!