

# Create action plans for startup

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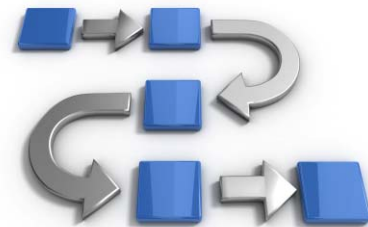
Main goal: Write a comprehensive ministry proposal that describes your vision and strategy for starting and multiplying churches.

## 1. Establish goals consistent with vision

It's easy to get sidetracked from the vision when you're growing. Stay on the path of your vision by looking ahead with goals. Translate vision into action. Turn your dreams into reality by creating milestones for progress.

Questions for consideration:

- What goals do you have to meet the vision?
- How are these goals being implemented?
- What are the milestones you meet your goals?



## 2. Articulate your philosophy of ministry

Each church is unique, and so every church needs to define its own philosophy of ministry. An effective philosophy of ministry has both theory and practice. Theory gives it its shape and direction. Practice makes the philosophy work. Philosophies of ministry that have great power are often "stumbled" upon.

Consider the following characteristics of a philosophy of ministry, from C. Peter Wagner's book, Leading Your Church to Growth, pages 180-181:

**It is explicit.** It must be written down, not just taken for granted. Writing disciplines thinking, and as you go through several drafts, God can reveal new and creative things.

**It is mutual.** The philosophy of ministry is the same for both the core leaders, and the crowd.

**It is a conviction.** If you don't believe your philosophy of ministry is the best and most biblical, you need to work on it some more.

**It is stable.** Churches that change their philosophy of ministry frequently lose growth potential.

**It is open to modification.** Nothing should be set entirely in concrete. If flaws are evident, they shouldn't be subject to change. Keep your philosophy of ministry open to change, but don't change it easily."

The philosophy of ministry is "a church's filter for decision making," and it, "shapes and defines the church's culture," according to Church Planting Solutions.

Design an alignment model. Church Planting Solutions writes that, "An alignment model provides a simple picture of the elements of the philosophy of ministry and how the individual parts relate to one another.... Alignment of activities, behaviors and resources are a powerful tool in helping us cooperate with God. Alignment connects people and parts of the organization together."

Beliefs and values lead to a leadership approach. Strategies and priorities are created. Resources are established, and the purpose is reached.

Questions for consideration:

- What three words you would like to describe your church?
- What will make your church unique?
- What is it about your church that appeals to people in your community?
- What principles govern how you carry out your ministry?

### **3. Address organizational issues**

With all of the beautiful growth, there's bound to be something not quite as pleasant: organizational issues. It is safe to say that not too many church planters enjoy forms, committees, and other institutional factors that are sometimes necessary to help the church grow:

#### **Bylaws**

Bylaws are the guiding principles that govern how your church operates. For congregation-based churches, here are key issues to address:

- Receiving and dismissing members, including disciplinary process
- Hiring and firing staff
- Selecting and removing governing board
- Approving goals and budget
- Buying and selling property
- Amending the bylaws
- Dissolving the organization

#### **Incorporation**

This is the process of making your church a legal corporation. In the United States, this process is inescapable for a legitimate non-profit organization. The first step is to get a good lawyer. His or her expertise is needed to help you wade through all of the papers and processes. The lawyer can also help you secure an employer ID number and IRS approval for legal tax-exempt status. Government forms also need to be filed on a regular basis. Some are filed quarterly, others annually. A lawyer's help is invaluable.

#### **Affiliation**

Unless your church is independent, you'll need to formally affiliate with a chosen denomination. Normally it is best to do this at the time of incorporation, unless your denomination has other procedures to follow. Affiliation is helpful for support, and for functional structures.

## Statistical records

Record what is important to you. It should reflect your philosophy of ministry, and your vision. It provides guidance to leaders to warn you if mid-course corrections need to be made.

From the first time your church begins meeting, keep records on attendance, baptisms, contacts with the unchurched, members received, offering, etc. The purpose of keeping such records is to help you monitor the health of your church. A healthy church grows in numbers of people reached, in maturity level and in organizational strength. Develop a good record-keeping strategy.

Questions for consideration:

- What organizational issues need to be addressed? Who can help you do this?
- What legal issues need to be addressed? Who can help you do this?
- What affiliation(s) will your church have?

## 4. Formulate ways to promote your church

Word of mouth is appropriate in any context, no matter where your ministry is located in the world. Appropriate promotion and publicity are important in the adolescent stage of your church, when it goes public and celebration events are focused. Include people in the promotion and publicity. Church Marketing Solutions offers resources for publicizing your church: <http://www.church-marketing.com>.

Questions for consideration:

- What style of promotion would your target audience respond to?
- What are the ways you can reach other target audiences?
- What is your specific strategy for promotion?



## 5. Develop financial systems and resources

### Setting financial policies

- Think through what could go wrong; establish reasonable safeguards
- Have two signatures on checks
- Two people collect and count money
- Bookkeeper doesn't sign the checks
- Donor receipting personnel different from bookkeeper
- Have a written procedure
- Cross train so no one person is indispensable
- Utilize denominational and/or mother church resources. Adapt their system and procedures
- Conduct an annual audit - external is best

### Budgeting

Establish your budget by prioritizing your goals and vision. Money isn't your major issue. Resources are found in the harvest. You need a strategy to determine how you're going to reach

the harvest. Then, you can figure out how to raise the money, keeping in mind that some of the resources will come out of the harvest itself.

### **Raising support**

Possible support methods include:

- Denomination or church
- Donor
- Bivocational
- Independent wealth

How to raise support:

- Identify potential donors
- Make personal contact
- Share the vision
- Ask for financial support
- Communicate monthly with investors

Questions for consideration:

- List your specific financial needs and bring them before God.
- What financial policies will you establish?
- What priorities do you have for a budget?
- What are your resources of income, and how can you increase these resources?

## **6. Design your launch strategy**

Not all churches plan for a celebrative, ribbon-cutting launch. Some churches grow organically, and never set a date to formalize the planting of a church.

If you're planning a more centralized congregation, then a public launch is often an effective way to go. Just make sure that you've done all of the infrastructure and pre-natal work so that your birth is a healthy one.

A launch date, or month, allows the church planter and supporters to understand the timeline of the church plant. A launch month allows more opportunities for visitors to make relational connections.

Questions for consideration:

- How does your philosophy of church influence your launch strategy?
- What steps need to happen before you launch?