



Practical Steps for Leading Your Church Ministry

Summary

Church leaders are expected to do more today than they ever have before. It requires skills in volunteer management and leadership while balancing family, work, and life.

Within this book you will find the way up to the next level of leadership, allowing you to better handle your role as a staff or ministry leader. It will also provide insights that will give you more time to be the leader that God is calling you to be.

You'll learn how to:

- ◆ Understand the true purpose of ministry leadership
- ◆ Put people first while accomplishing your goals
- ◆ Identify and share your purpose and vision
- ◆ Add a structured approach to your team
- ◆ Train new team members
- ◆ Balance the dynamics of church ministry
- ◆ Recruit volunteers effectively

By James Higginbotham
www.AgileMinistry.com



Introduction

This book is a result of years of ministry leadership, both mine and others. I am passionate about helping ministry leaders maximize their team while maintaining healthy volunteers, as you will realize after reading the book.

While there are some excellent sources for leadership and ministry, few touch on practical steps that will enable new or existing ministry leaders to be more effective in their service to the Lord. My prayer is that the contents of this book will help you, as a staff member, lay leader, or volunteer to positively impact your local church.

You may use this book on your own for leadership growth, choose to use it as a group study, or as discipleship material for training future generations of leaders. Therefore, I encourage you to make as many copies as you like and share with others, as long as the content is not modified, repackaged, or sold.

In Him,
James Higginbotham

About Agile Ministry

Agile Ministry is a website focused on helping ministry leaders maximize their team and making church ministry more effective.

Visit us at <http://www.agileministry.com> to subscribe to future articles and become even more effective as a church staff or ministry leader.

About James Higginbotham

James is the training coordinator at Calvary Chapel in Austin, TX. He is a software architect, consultant, and President of Blue Jazz, L.L.C. James may be contacted at javajames@gmail.com

Chapter 1: True Ministry

Overview

It is easy to get caught up doing ministry week after week and forget how to minister to those around you. Let's start off by understanding what true ministry means.

In This Chapter:

- ◆ The Purpose of Ministry
- ◆ It Starts With You
- ◆ People-Centered Leadership
- ◆ Meeting People Where They Are





Chapter 1: True Ministry

The Purpose of Ministry

Paul wrote about the purpose of ministry in Ephesians 4. Take some time to read and visualize it. Let it paint a picture:

“He handed out gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor-teacher to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ's body, the church, until we're all moving rhythmically and easily with each other, efficient and graceful in response to God's Son, fully mature adults, fully developed within and without, fully alive like Christ. No prolonged infancies among us, please. We'll not tolerate babes in the woods, small children who are an easy mark for impostors. God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love - like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love. The Old Way Has to Go” - Ephesians 4:11-16 (The Message)

What is Paul saying? Everyone has been given gifts. Leaders are to train others in skills to effectively serve the church and to help them to grow into spiritual adults. The result of this training is to create a rhythm: everyone working in step, depending upon Christ for breath and life, depending upon one another, telling others of the gospel truth in love. This is what Paul means when he says “fully alive.”

HANDLE WITH CARE

Chapter 1: True Ministry

It Starts With You

A healthy ministry starts and stops with you. It is easy to accept responsibility for the tasks we must accomplish each week. From greeting Sunday morning attendees to making sure that the sound levels are right, volunteers and lay leaders have a lot to do on a weekly basis. Unfortunately, what gets lost is the responsibility we have as leaders to be stewards of the volunteers we are given.

As leaders, it is our responsibility to challenge our focus *each week*. Even if you lead a ministry that is considered essential to weekly church service, you must balance meeting the needs of people with the tasks ahead. The volunteers you lead look to your guidance to set the tone for the team.



Chapter 1: True Ministry

People-Centered Leadership

Have you stopped to consider what may be happening in the life of your team members:

- ◆ Someone may be a few steps from losing their job
- ◆ Someone may be dealing with a divorce
- ◆ Someone may be struggling with an addiction
- ◆ Someone may be one step closer to cheating on their spouse

A people-centered leader takes the time to stop and pray for someone on their team, even if it means delaying completion of a task. This doesn't mean they aren't concerned with making progress. It just means that they are not focused on checking off the tasks on their to-do list rather than making the time to pray with someone who is struggling with an issue.

What if I'm Not Leader Material?

If you are reading this book then you have a love for what you do and a passion to see it even better than it is today. This is the first step toward being a leader (remember: leaders see a need and find a way to fix it). God has a plan for you in your new role. Continue to seek His guidance and be willing to slow down and give yourself the time needed to develop as a leader. You may wish to find a mature leader in your church to help you gain the skills necessary to lead effectively.



Chapter 1: True Ministry

Meeting People Where They Are

A leader must be willing to accept team members that are at different levels of maturity. From the new believer to the mature Christian, we must be able to meet people where they are and help them become an effective part of the team.

Ephesians 4 says that we must help them move “rhythmically and easily with each other” by helping them become “fully mature adults” in Christ. This means we cannot turn down those that aren’t fully qualified for ministry. Instead, we must make opportunities available for those at different maturity levels, allowing those more mature to bring those younger in Christ with them.

The rest of this book is focused on how to structure and manage your team so that you can become a people-centered leader. It also will help you to create an environment where team members can grow in their spiritual walk, rather than remaining as “babes in the woods” (Eph 4).

What a Leader Is Not

The common misconception is that a leader is someone within a ministry that knows a little more or serves more than everyone else. Leadership isn’t about what you know or how much time you give during the week. It is about setting direction and serving the needs of your team.

Chapter 2: People First

Overview

Managing people takes more time and energy than anything else a ministry leader must do. To manage your team, you must understand how to meet their needs and the needs of others around you.

In This Chapter:

- ◆ What Volunteers Need
- ◆ Ministering to Team Members
- ◆ The Skill Gap
- ◆ Bridging the Gap
- ◆ Investing in Others





Chapter 2: People First

What Volunteers Need

Ministry leaders are in the business of people, so you must equip your team for service by understanding their needs. Since you are a ministry leader, it has probably been a while since you were a fresh volunteer.

Fresh volunteers:

- ◆ want to have fun and create new relationships with other church members
- ◆ want to be considered part of a team
- ◆ have little time to give after their work and family life
- ◆ don't want to be stuck in the details - life is usually complicated enough during the week
- ◆ when given the chance, would prefer to do what they would like, not what *you* want them to do



Chapter 2: People First

Ministering to Team Members

As a leader, your first priority is to develop relationships with your team members and minister to their needs. There are a number of ways to invest time in your team. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Meet with each team member one-on-one. Meeting for coffee or dinner in your home for a time of uninterrupted fellowship will help to develop a deeper relationship and generate openness with team members.
2. Regular team meetings. Team meetings allow for fellowship outside of serving. This is especially important for ministries that don't serve together all of the time.
3. Pray with one another. Prayer is a powerful way to invest in others. Make the time for both one-on-one and group prayer with your team

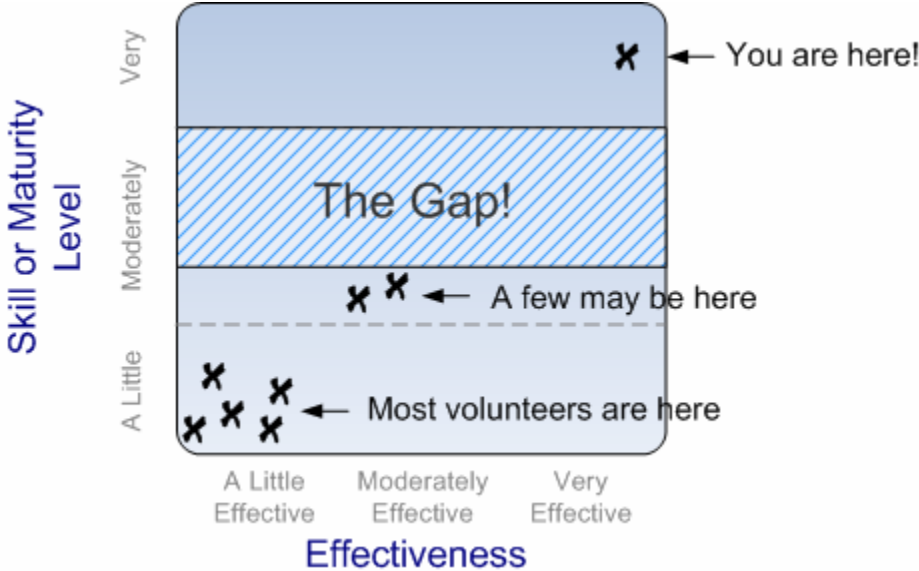
A word of caution—always speak to someone on your staff to obtain counseling guidelines prior to ministering to those on your team to prevent a bad situation (i.e. counseling the opposite sex, etc.).

Chapter 2: People First

The Skill Gap

“It is better to put ten men to work than to do the work of ten men.”
D. L. Moody

Managing volunteers can be difficult. Some have found that it is easier to ignore volunteers and depend on staff and a select few skilled volunteers to get things done. The problem isn't that the volunteers are unable to fulfill the needs of your local church; rather, there exists a volunteer gap that must first be overcome. Examine the diagram below:



As you can see, the diagram shows a few moderately skilled volunteers that may show up from time-to-time. Most often, however, volunteers need help improving their skills, maturity, and/or effectiveness. It is your job as an leader to bridge the volunteer gap and make this happen, as we read in Ephesians 4.

HANDLE WITH CARE

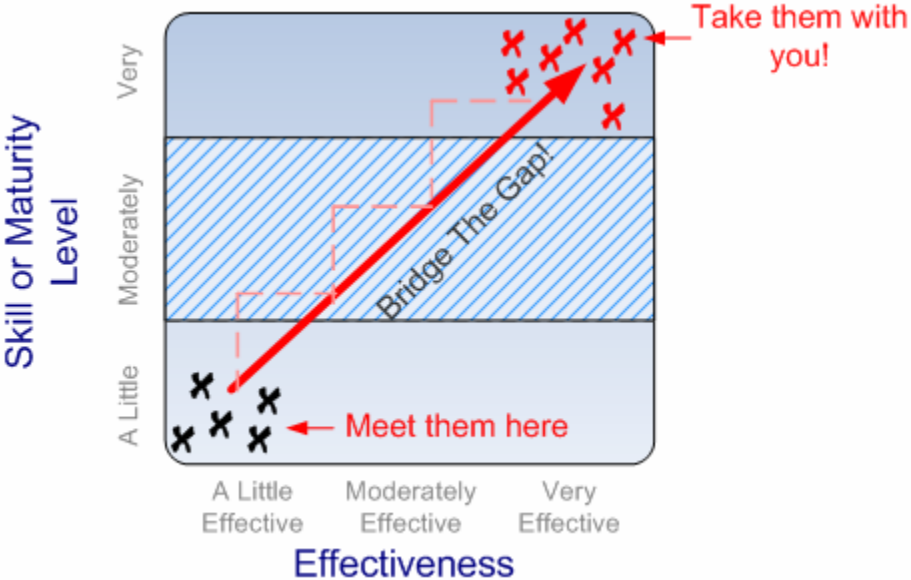
Chapter 2: People First

Bridging the Gap

Leaders are called to train our volunteers in serving the Lord.

"...train Christians in skilled servant work..." - Ephesians 4:12 (The Message)

When we opt out of training volunteers because it takes too much time, we are cheating ourselves and those that would serve with us. Instead, we need to help them bridge the gap between ineffective to very effective volunteers:

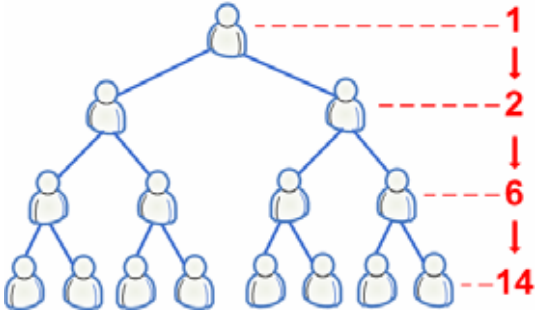


As you invest in them, you bridge the gap that exists between you and your volunteers. You are training them in the skills and maturity they need, but more importantly, you are increasing their effectiveness. When this happens, real ministry begins to occur and your volunteers begin to have a real impact for your local church.

Chapter 2: People First

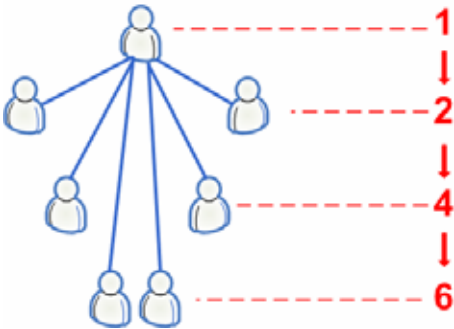
Investing in Others

Ben Franklin called it the “miracle of compound interest”, while others call it the principle of exponential growth [1]. Jesus knew that if He spent time teaching the twelve, that they in turn would teach the next generation of the church. Here is an illustration:



What would happen if you performed the training for each generation instead?

The leader would only train two new people each generation (2 + 2 + 2...) rather than seeing exponential growth (2 + 4 + 8...).



Rather than doing the work yourself, consider investing time teaching others. Although it may take more of your time to get the work done, the investment will start to bear fruit. As you equip each team member, encourage them to begin teaching other team members as well.

Chapter 3: Have Purpose

Overview

How do you define success for your ministry? Your definition of purpose will guide your team to success daily.

In This Chapter:

- ◆ Finding Team Direction
- ◆ Giving Your Team Purpose
- ◆ Define Your Dream





Chapter 3: Have Purpose

Finding Team Direction

Do you know where you are headed? Not just a general direction, but a specific, focused direction? What about your vision? Is it a vivid, passionate view of what will happen as you get there, or are you just thankful to make it through another week?

Your purpose is why you and your team exist to support your local church. Think of your purpose as the lens in which your team should view everything that they do. Your vision is a picture of the result. Purpose helps decision; vision ignites passion.

Counting the Cost

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'" - Luke 14:28-30 (NIV)



Chapter 3: Have Purpose

Giving Your Team Purpose

Being a leader means that you have to say 'no' so that you are able to say 'yes.' Your team's purpose impacts everything you do. Spend some time to define your purpose:

1. Identify exactly what your team will accomplish
2. Use it to paint a picture
3. If appropriate, specify your focus (by age, region, etc)
4. Avoid sentences full of inflated words - focus on the big picture
5. Make sure it is simple - have someone outside your team who can explain it back to you

Your purpose should be a short phrase around 4-6 words and should be easy to memorize and repeat by your team. Write it down, commit it to memory, and make it a reality!

Examples of Purpose

"Painless technology" for an IT or technology support team

"Feeding the east-side with love" for the team who provides food to a local shelter on the east side of town

"Local resources for global impact" for a missionary support team

"24/7 prayer support" for a prayer chain team

"Sunday's message applied daily" for small groups learning how to apply weekly messages



Chapter 3: Have Purpose

Define Your Dream

Once you have a purpose defined, create a vision about where you are going. This is the big dream you want to paint to others about the impact you will make. Ask:

1. What your church and/or community will look like as you make your purpose a reality
2. How will your team make things better
3. What would things look like if you didn't deliver on your purpose?

Once you write down your vision, it is time to cast it on your team and to your church.

Filter all decisions, new volunteer candidates, and processes through your purpose and vision. Ask if what you are about to say 'yes' to will make your vision one step closer to reality. Finally, repeat your vision often to your team. Explain it to ensure they understand it.

Avoid the Common Mistakes

1. Don't include the Great Commission ("... to reach the community of <town> by preaching...") - we all have this purpose
2. Don't copy your church purpose or mission statement ("...to support our church in its mission to...")
3. Avoid using churchy words ("save", "lost", "sinner", "glorify", "plugged-in")
4. Don't be vague ("...in our community" in a city of 4 million)
5. Avoid skipping this step to create a purpose and vision ("I'll do it later when I have more time").

Chapter 4: Create Structure

Overview

Without structure, your ministry will not effectively meet the needs of others. Selecting the wrong structure will not only impact how you execute as a ministry, it often leads to dysfunction across the church.

In This Chapter:

- ◆ Team Structure
- ◆ Selecting the Right Structure
- ◆ Define Job Roles
- ◆ Create an Organizational Chart
- ◆ Identifying Future Leaders
- ◆ Selecting Managers

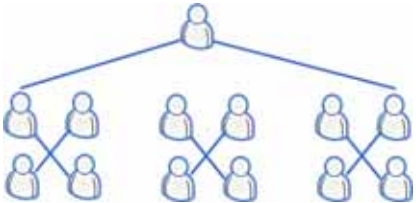


Chapter 4: Create Structure

Team Structure

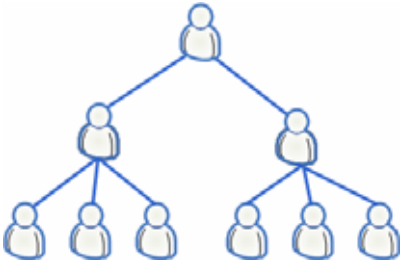
Your team has a structure, even if you haven't considered what it may be. Your structure defines the division and grouping of work and how your ministry will operate. There are three common structures found within church ministries:

A flat structure is found most often within church ministries. It is often thought of as "one-for-all and all-for-one", making everyone an equal. There may exist a single team member designated as a leader, but often they do nothing more than act as a liaison to the staff.



A team-based structure is typically organized by skill or affinity (e.g. age) and tackle needs together. Teams are often independent in nature, grouped together only for structural simplicity or due to a common, focused goal.

A depth-based structure is the most common in larger organizations. Levels are created, with at least one leader responsible for all levels below. This structure is most often associated with Jethro, who recommended that Moses appoint leaders in this fashion to reduce his burden.





Chapter 4: Create Structure

Selecting the Right Structure

After reviewing the three options, it may be tempting to begin immediately with a tree structure. Often, leaders anticipate huge growth and want to position their ministry to be prepared. The unfortunate side-effect of this is that ministries can topple and fall as they don't have enough time to grow into their process and responsibilities. Leaders may be appointed too early to fill roles that are unnecessary, creating undeveloped leaders that can cause unhealthy situations for volunteers.

Whatever structure you choose, it has an impact on how your team performs. Choose wisely, and review often.

Recommendations for New Ministries:

1. Start small by using a peer-based approach with a clear leader
2. Communicate quickly (and often) in order to overcome starting inertia and allow for standardizing your procedures
3. Identify job roles and openings as your team requires more help
4. Reassess your team structure monthly or quarterly, but don't change too often (allow time for volunteers to be effective and leaders to gain/earn trust)
5. Change to a team or tree-based structure when growing, or shrink down to a peer-based model if necessary

Know “when to go Jethro” and when to stay simple—going to a depth-based ministry too quick will only make communication more difficult.



Chapter 4: Create Structure

Define Job Roles

Defining job roles for your team is essential to growth. They define what each member of your team is expected to accomplish. Job descriptions can be used to convey the task and time requirements for a job role.

Job descriptions should be simple, no more than a page in length, and should define:

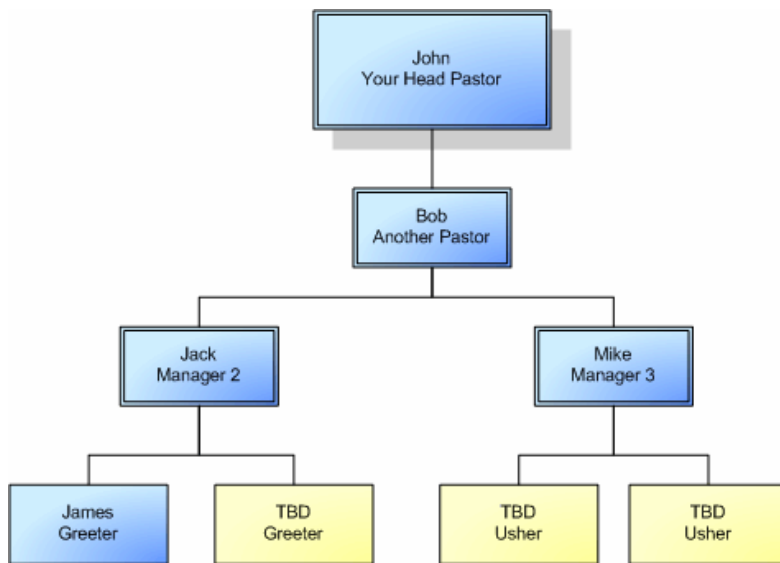
- ◆ Job title
- ◆ Description or summary of the job
- ◆ Skill or physical requirements
- ◆ The number of weeks per month they are required to serve
- ◆ How many hours are required per week/month
- ◆ The duration of their service (no more than 3-6 months)

This description helps ensure that a volunteer understands what expectations you have for them. It also is useful for matching candidates to job openings within your ministry.

Chapter 4: Create Structure

Create an Organizational Chart

Once you have selected your structure and job roles, you should create a diagram that represents your ministry structure. Microsoft has a great tutorial on [using Word to create org charts](#) [2]:



Using an Org Chart Effectively

An organizational chart can be useful for explaining your current ministry structure. It can also be used to identify job openings, which you will use as you recruit volunteers (see Chapter 7).

Org charts can also provide insight when you are developing a team that is too deep too soon. The org chart sample, above, is most often seen in larger, established ministries rather than small or new ministries.



Chapter 4: Create Structure

Identifying Future Leaders

"...keep a sharp eye out for competent men - men who fear God, men of integrity, men who are incorruptible - and appoint them as leaders..."

Exodus 18:21 (The Message)

As your team grows, you should start to identify an emerging leader from your team. Prepare your future leader to take on some of your responsibilities and fill-in for you during vacation. Investing in next-generation leadership creates a deep pool of leadership to allow your church to grow as you invest in a new building or expand to new satellite locations.

How to spot a potential leader:

1. Leaders see a need and execute it to completion
2. Leaders exhibit wisdom of focus. They know when to say "yes" and when to say "no", often declining 75% or more of the opportunities available to them
3. Leaders are often knowledge seekers, either through reading or questioning others
4. Leaders are passionate about what they believe and pour all they have into that passion
5. Leaders are able to convert their passion into vision that stirs others to their cause.



Chapter 4: Create Structure

Selecting Managers

While *leaders* are focused on doing the right thing, *managers* are focused on doing things right. Managers ensure that the team succeeds according to the direction the leader has established. Managers are critical in that they remove obstacles and maximize the capability of the team.

Managers often serve side-by-side with the team, although their duties may vary. They spend some of their time overseeing operations, some time instructing other team members, and a little time filling in when no one is available. They tend to be detail-oriented and like problem solving.

A Tip for Adding Leaders and Managers

When starting to create a new team, it is often the desire of the leader to locate several managers for the expected growth. Before you take this approach, consider finding a manager that can shadow you and allow you to help develop your team's identity and process first. Then, slowly begin to transition responsibility to this new manager, along with the backing they need to accomplish their goals.

Over time, seek not only volunteers that can meet the tasks at hand, but also exhibit some of the traits of a leader or manager. Just don't spend time growing too fast (we'll discuss this further in Chapter 6).

Chapter 5: Implement Process

Overview

Every ministry that intends on sustaining healthy growth and effectiveness needs a process. Your team's process defines how your ministry functions day-to-day and whether it works well with other ministries.

In This Chapter:

- ◆ Creating a Process
- ◆ Document Your Procedures
- ◆ When Things Go Wrong
- ◆ Assembling a Guidebook
- ◆ Training Your Team
- ◆ Avoiding Hero Worship





Chapter 5: Implement Process

Creating a Process

Your team process should be simple. The more difficult or complex a process becomes, the harder it is to be effective and train new team members. It also reduces the likelihood that people will follow the process, deviating from a consistent result.

The process should include typical procedures for conducting tasks, scheduling volunteers for service, and how your team serves other ministries in your church. It should be documented, taught to future team members, and flexible enough to allow for updates when needed.

You should review your process with church staff. Make sure they agree with your procedures, as they may have a different point of view. It may be that you place high value on a task that they may not - spending the time to verify this up front can prevent you from undoing hours of training in the future. It also allows the staff to learn about how they can support you, perhaps putting you in contact with someone that would greatly help your ministry.



Chapter 5: Implement Process

Document Your Procedures

“If it isn’t in writing, it doesn’t exist” - unknown

While “on the job” training can be effective, ministries that have repeatable processes benefit from maintaining written procedures. Documenting how your ministry works, along with procedures for each job role is a great way to ensure that everyone is trained consistently. It is also a great checkpoint to ensure that how you do things is simple: if you can’t write it down, it may be too complicated to train others.

When writing your procedures, create a guide for each job that your team performs. Include any diagrams that demonstrate workflow or the order of your procedures. You may also wish to create a diagram that demonstrates how your procedures or tasks fit with other ministries. This helps put everything into perspective for you and your staff.

Tips for Writing Procedures

1. Use numbered lists, step-by-step procedures, diagrams, and pictures to convey meaning.
2. Most people skim documentation, but will often take the time to read concise steps or lists rather than long paragraphs. Don't spend time writing lots of formal sentences that don't add value.
3. Keep it small - anymore than 2 pages of text per procedure is too much. If you cannot convey meaning in this limited space, then the steps may need to be simplified.



Chapter 5: Implement Process

When Things Go Wrong

Some days, things just go wrong. Computers crash. People don't show up. The weather is bad. Often, it is not the things we expect to fail, but the things that we don't take the time to think about. Preparing for unexpected circumstances is often called risk management. Wikipedia [defines risk management](#) as "...the process of measuring, or assessing risk and then developing strategies to manage the risk." [3]

Here is how to get started in documenting backup plans for when things go wrong:

1. Walk through each documented procedure and identify what could be a problem: it may be related to people, places, or things
2. Document and train your team on how to deal with the situation
3. Create a kit that contains everything you need in the case that the problem occurs. This may be paper-based forms that substitute for electronic ones, safety equipment, backup batteries, and other materials you may need.



Chapter 5: Implement Process

Assembling the Guidebook

As you begin to document your procedures, assemble a ministry guidebook using a three-ring binder and tabbed dividers. Create a “master binder” as a template to construct new guidebooks whenever a new volunteer joins your team. Update the binder with revised procedures, diagrams, and contact sheets monthly or quarterly to ensure the binder remains relevant.

Hand out a copy of the guidebook to each team member and to new team members when they join. Keep a copy near the area in which your volunteers serve, in case a question arises or something fails and a backup plan must be started.

Here is an example of the contents of a guidebook:

1. An introduction letter
2. Ministry purpose and vision
3. Procedures guide
4. Team contact information
5. Important books, website links, and passwords



Chapter 5: Implement Process

Training Your Team

Too often, we as ministry leaders and workers get too close to our work. We know how we do what we do, and even why we do it. The new volunteer doesn't, and if they don't have a smooth transition into your ministry, they will leave.

Using your guidebook, pair your new volunteer with an existing team member and use the "I Do, You Follow" method:

1. "I Do, You Follow" - have the team member show the new volunteer how the job is performed
2. "You Do, I Follow" - supervise the new volunteer while they perform the job
3. "You Do" - let the new team member perform the tasks unsupervised, lending support and answering questions only as needed
4. "You Do, Another Follows" - have them train someone new

Follow this pattern to reproduce yourself as a leader, as well.



Chapter 5: Implement Process

Avoiding Hero Worship

It is easy to get caught up focusing on the handful of volunteers in the church that do the most - those I call the "heroes". These are the ones that always say 'yes' when you ask for help, and spend lots of time at the church serving. They may serve in just your ministry, or they may assist several teams. Often, they are new believers that are on fire for Christ so they are easy targets and won't say "no".

The problem with depending upon heroes is that they will eventually burnout. They may even adopt an unhealthy attitude, which can also impact their family. Hero worship is not a healthy thing for the church, but we seem to depend upon them to get things done.

For this reason, leaders should express to their team the need to evaluate how much time their role takes—and, for most volunteers, not to commit to more than one main area of service. This also requires leaders to monitor their team to ensure volunteers are not taking on too much work.

The next time you need something done, ask yourself if the task is really important. If so, consider finding someone else that could help you out instead of the hero. It may mean you need to spend a little more time training someone new. However, the time will be well spent when you start to realize that others in the church body can assist you, not just your hero. And your church will be healthier!

Chapter 6: Be Balanced

Overview

Ministry leaders must deal with a variety of things at once. They must ensure all volunteers are kept up-to-date, the tasks they perform are of high quality, their team is trained, and they are moving together in one direction. Balancing each of these things can be a challenge.

In This Chapter:

- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Quality
- ◆ The Art of Subtraction
- ◆ Delegation
- ◆ Creating a Roadmap
- ◆ Reality Check



Chapter 6: Be Balanced

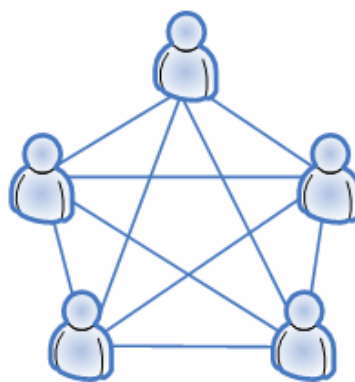
Communication

Communication within a ministry is of great importance. The larger a team, the more communication paths have to successfully occur to ensure all volunteers prepare. This is a corollary to [Metcalf's Law](#) [4]: the more people on the team, the more time you spend keeping everyone informed.

Communication Paths: 1



Communication Paths: 10



Poor communication can be a ministry-killer, most often during the early days. As discussed in Chapter 4, selecting the proper structure for your ministry helps determine success. Much of this success depends upon effective communication, and this is why it is recommended to begin with a simple, peer-based structure whenever possible. This enables quick communication and removes the levels of managers and leaders within a team that can cause communication issues.



Chapter 6: Be Balanced

Quality

How do you define quality for your team? It may be related to how your team serves visitors, how clean the building is, or if you were able to make everyone smile on their way into Sunday service. The way you define quality for your team helps to measure their success. Quality is a choice made each day by each member of your team, including yourself.

Leaders often associate quality with the size of their team - the larger their ministry, the more quality service they can provide to the church. However, whether you are a team of two or twenty, quality is still a choice and still possible.

Leaders should never fall into the mindset of reducing quality for "the sake of the need". There will always be needs, so it depends on how you respond to the need that matters.

God never tells us to take short-cuts or sacrifice quality:

He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. -- Luke 6:48 (NIV)

Jesus explained that time spent planning and constructing a house properly would lead to an unshakeable house. Is your team focused on quality as to be unshakable in what you do and what you deliver?



Chapter 6: Be Balanced

The Art of Subtraction

"The less we do, the better we'll be" - [Craig Groeschel](#), Senior Pastor, LifeChurch.tv [5]

Any ministry can make more work for itself - because there is always more work to do. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to take away work that you are already doing. This is especially true for ministries that have been around for some time.

The problem is that many times, we believe that Christians are defined by what we do, not by what we don't do. The result of this belief is that you and your team get overwhelmed with too much to do every week. Volunteers can get burned out or choose to ignore other priorities, such as family, to get everything accomplished.

Don't let this happen! Always compare what you are doing with what is appropriate for your ministry, subtracting things as appropriate. As a leader, it is your responsibility to ensure that what you are doing today and plan to do tomorrow is the appropriate amount.

"The Pot Roast" - A Lesson in Tradition

He watched Ellen cut two inches off the end of the pot roast and placed the remainder into the pan. "Why do you mangle that cut of meat?" Stu asked. She laid the knife down and threw the small portion of meat into their dog's dish. "Because my mom did it."

"Why did your mom cut it off?" Stu asked.

"I don't know, but when I see her again, I'll ask," She answered as she swung the pan into the oven. Several days later, Ellen's mom stopped by, and she remembered her husband's inquisitiveness. "Mom, why did you always cut the end off your pot roast?" Ellen asked as soon as her feet touched the carpet. A smile covered her mom's face and she jumped upon the barstool. "Because my mom did it," she replied. Realizing the mystery was not solved and Stu would keep wondering why two grown women engaged in severing nice cuts of meat; she knew she had to cover the groundwork for this thirty-year plus puzzle. "Mom, let's call Granny and ask," Ellen urged with excitement in her voice. "I have to know, Stu thinks this is expensive dog food."

"Hello," stretched across the phone lines and filled the silence in the kitchen. "Hi, Granny, this is Ellen. I need to know why you cut the end off your pot roast." She dropped the phone into her mother's hand and waited in silence. They looked at each other and yelled, "Because her pan was too small!" - author unknown



Chapter 6: Be Balanced

Delegation

Delegation is a great tool for leaders. It enables leaders to get more done by allowing others to take ownership of specific goals or tasks.

As you begin to apply the lessons found in this book, you will see opportunities to delegate work to your team. As you do so, you must empower your team, otherwise, they will have responsibility without authority.

Jesus demonstrated this approach with the apostles:

“He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”

Matthew 10:1 (NIV)

What would have happened if Jesus had withheld authority? They would not have had the power to drive out the evil spirits and to heal the sick.

As the leader, you must be careful not to create a trap of responsibility without authority.



Chapter 6: Be Balanced

Creating a Roadmap

Jesus used big ideas to guide His followers: “Follow Me”, “Love the Lord”, “Love your neighbor”, “I am the way and the truth and the life.” Once Jesus declared the big idea, He spent the time afterward defining and demonstrating it.

Following His example is the best way to guide your team through goals and change in order to give them big ideas and then help them make it happen. As you are planning on where the ministry is headed, divide your plan into high-level goals. Then, assign those goals to a particular timeframe, usually grouped in months. Here is an example:

Task	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
Volunteer Dept Guidebook	█			
Call Team Training		█		
Ministry Training			█	
Recruiting – Phase 1			█	█

As you roll out your plan, explain what the big idea is and why. Then, begin to roll out the steps to get there over time. Frame task assignments or changes in context to the big ideas, and constantly revisit the big ideas as you would your purpose and vision. This will help your team stay focused on the “why” while tackling tasks that may not seem so interesting.



Chapter 6: Be Balanced

Reality Check

Leaders have big targets on their back when it comes to spiritual warfare. And nothing gets to a leader more than pride. Here is how we rationalize our behavior:

- ◆ “If I don’t spend an extra hour on this task, who will? I’m sure my kids will understand”
- ◆ “I’m the only one that can get this work done.”
- ◆ “I might as well spend ten more minutes now, rather than making Bob spend an hour later”

Here is a reality check: **YOU ARE NOT NEEDED!** You might think that the church won’t survive without your leadership and ministry, but it isn’t true. Deal with your pride now and accept that you can be replaced.

Leaders need to realize that for their ministry and church to grow, they must be willing to give away the glory. You must build up those around you and be willing to let go of the control and allow others to make decisions or perform tasks without you.

Managing Your Time

Managing your time is one of the most powerful things you can do to prevent your ministry from controlling your life. Too many times I have personally witnessed families torn down by one or more family members spending too much time at work or church (I was almost one of them).

Decide what your work hours will be and stick to it— no matter what! If you do this, you will soon realize that not everything you are doing today is as important as you once thought. Everything seems the highest priority until you get close to your deadline. Then you start to realize what is truly important and what is just busy work.

Make the decision today: “I will not sacrifice my family on the altar of ministry”

Chapter 7: Recruit Volunteers

Overview

Recruiting volunteers is often at the top of the list for any leader. In fact, you may have decided to skip the other chapters to read this one. There is a reason why recruiting was left to the end of the book - recruiting can only be as successful as the health of the team you have built.

In This Chapter:

- ◆ Recruiting Myths
- ◆ Identify Job Openings
- ◆ When to Start Recruiting
- ◆ Finding Volunteers
- ◆ Conducting Interviews
- ◆ Integrating New Volunteers





Chapter 7: Recruit Volunteers

Recruiting Myths

Before we get started, let's dispel some common recruiting myths and folklore:

1. Church bulletins and pulpit announcements are **not** a complete recruiting strategy
2. Handing out flyers in a doorway only makes you seem desperate
3. Asking the same people to do more **isn't** recruiting
4. Using guilt as a motivator is not recruiting
5. Your recruiting, like evangelism, will be most fruitful through relationships and networking

Why do we brainwash ourselves into thinking that these kinds of tactics will help us to find willing volunteers? Often, it is because we are trying to do too much with too little, too fast.



Chapter 7: Recruit Volunteers

Identify Job Openings

Before you start recruiting volunteers, you need to know what openings you need to fill. Using the job descriptions you created (Chapter 4), determine which positions you need to staff and how many openings you need to fill. This will give you a starting point for what kinds of skills you need.

You may wish to share your list of job descriptions and openings with your staff and other leaders. This will help them be more aware of your needs as they talk with others.



Chapter 7: Recruit Volunteers

When to Start Recruiting

While most leaders would never turn down a new volunteer, often that is the wrong attitude to have. Sometimes it can be the wrong time to recruit, and as a leader, you need to be able to discern the right and wrong time to add more volunteers to your team. Here are some guidelines:

1. Do add more volunteers when you have a defined need and a job description that describes the specific need you are trying to fill
2. Do add more volunteers when your church is going to move to a new building, as there will be a spike when those from the community come to visit
3. Don't add more volunteers if you are not prepared to train them
4. Don't add more volunteers if you won't be able to honor their time requirements
5. Don't add more volunteers "just because"



Chapter 7: Recruit Volunteers

Finding Volunteers

The number one method of finding volunteers is through relationships. When my pastor asks how those in our congregation came to Christ, an average of 80% will say that they did so by others that they knew. God wired us for relationships, and as this is the case for those seeking Christ, so it is the case for those seeking volunteers. This means that you, as the ministry leader, must begin to develop authentic relationships with others in the church. As a result:

1. You will find that you can convey your ministry's vision and find those that are willing to contribute
2. Create a longer-lasting link between you and those within your team
3. You may find the connectors within the church that have a large number of relationships to those you don't know, expanding your opportunity

By investing time in relationships, you allow them the freedom to say "no" to jobs and gain more insight into their Christian walk before you add them to your team.

Tips For Finding Volunteers

1. Involve your entire ministry, not just yourself and your leadership team - the volunteers in the trenches can be your best marketing devices (or your worst)
2. Sit in different areas of the church each week to meet new people - we are creatures of habit, so if you alternate areas, you'll find new people
3. Stay in the high-traffic areas before and after service(s), in your coffee bar, or other hangouts - you may meet someone you don't know, and you'll become more recognizable in the future
4. Strike up a conversation with someone you have never met - learn how long they have been attending, if they already serve somewhere, and what they do for a living/hobbies
5. If they aren't interested in your ministry, introduce them to another ministry leader that may be a better match
6. Coordinate this strategy with other key ministries - small group leaders are especially good scouts



Chapter 7: Recruit Volunteers

Conducting Interviews

Once you find a new candidate, you should spend some time to make sure they fit your ministry. Leaders all-too-often take the first warm body they find and put them to work. While you would never do this for a job position at your company, you'll happily do the same thing for church. It is no different from placing someone at a company - you need to interview them to find out if they are a fit. At the same time, you are giving them the opportunity to learn more about your team's vision and day-to-day operations.

By the end of the interview, you and the candidate should be given an opportunity to accept or decline. Even if they decline, always try to put them in contact with another ministry that may be a better fit, rather than letting them drop from your radar. This makes each leader a recruiter for every other ministry and creates a healthy cross-church approach. Whatever you do, be sure to close the deal within a few days after the interview with a follow-up call or email.

Interview Topics

During the interview, be sure to cover the following topics:

- ◆ Your ministry's purpose and vision (you already created one from Chapter 3, right?)
- ◆ The job descriptions available (Chapter 4). This includes the expectations for skills, hours per week, and telecommuting vs. onsite requirements
- ◆ The duration for the need (typically no more than 3-6 months) - people want to know they aren't committing the rest of their life



Chapter 7: Recruit Volunteers

Integrating New Volunteers

Recruiting volunteers isn't an exact science, but it also isn't a mystery. Grow your ministry slowly by starting small (Chapter 6), and add new volunteers when appropriate. Once you have your new volunteer onboard, get them integrated into the team quickly using the following suggestions:

1. Introduce them to the team at the next meeting
2. Send an introduction email to the team's mailing list and include staff
3. Pair them up with someone for training
4. Get them engaged early - new volunteers will bail if they are left without things to do to make them feel wanted
5. Meet them every 2-4 weeks for the first few months to ensure that they remain connected and are engaged
6. Respect the hours they signed up for when you interviewed them
7. Resist the temptation to assign more work to them, even if they are eager as it will place undue stress on them and cause burnout

Take Action, Then Tests

From the Agile Ministry Website, originally posted on Oct 30, 2006 [6]

When someone says that they want to serve at your church, do you help them take action, or take a test? We've all seen the tests, and many of us have taken them: spiritual gifts tests, personality tests, and skills tests that are supposed to help you find out where you should be serving. But, how many tests have you ever taken that tell you what you should be doing, rather than how you've done? In school, we take action first by learning, then studying, and then finally taking a test. Compare those tests to the ones that tell us what our profession should be but are often never right. So, why is it that the church believes that a test will tell us what gifts God has given us, rather than taking action and letting Him show us by what He does through us?

As ministry leaders, let's help our next generation of volunteers to make an impact, not a test score!



Conclusion

Get Ready!

I hope you've learned something new from this book. If you apply the principles within this book, you will begin to see your vision and purpose executed by your team in a way you never imagined. Expect to see individual growth in your volunteers as you begin to take your ministry to the next steps.

Now, go build a healthy, growing, and effective ministry!

Recommended Reading

[Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders](#) - Aubrey Malphurs

[The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork: Embrace Them and Empower Your Team](#) - John C. Maxwell

[Developing The Leaders Around You: How to Help Others Reach Their Full Potential](#) - John C. Maxwell

[This Beautiful Mess: Practicing the Presence of the Kingdom of God](#) - Rick McKinley

[Spiritual Leadership \(Commitment To Spiritual Growth\)](#) - J. Oswald Sanders

[Love Is the Killer App: How to Win Business and Influence Friends](#) - Tim Sanders

[Choosing to Cheat: Who Wins When Family and Work Collide?](#) - Andy Stanley

[Seven Practices of Effective Ministry](#) - Andy Stanley

HANDLE WITH CARE

Maximize Your Ministry!

Subscribe today at:

<http://www.agileministry.com>

References

- [1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exponential_growth
- [2] <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/help/HA011327501033.aspx>
- [3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk_management
- [4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metcalfe's_law
- [5] <http://www.catalystspace.com/src/18-CraigGroeschelPodcast.mp3>
- [6] <http://www.agileministry.com/2006/10/30/take-action-then-tests/>