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Resiliency in Church Planting: Leadership and Management Perspective

4/4/2020



Phil VanValkenburg

MY LIFETIME
PERSPECTIVE:
Blend of ministry
and business
leadership
and management



Presentation by
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- Ministry executive for 20 years
 - Consultant to church planters - legal & operational startup: Now
 - Chief Operating Officer of EPC national office: 2013-2019
 - Executive Administrator at The Kirk, large PCA church and school in STL: 2004-2012
 - Personnel and Training Manager at Cru headquarters: 1972-1977
- Ruling elder in church plant plus small and large Presbyterian churches
 - Officer in EPC churches for 10 years, in PCA church for 20 years
 - Member (4 years) and chairman (2 years) of national PCA Administrative Committee
- Business executive (MBA) for 25 years
 - Major and startup company experience: Monsanto, Ernst & Young, Oracle, e-Markets
 - Marketing and operations manager
 - Systems and business consultant
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OBJECTIVES FOR THE SESSION



- Better grasp the “leadership poetry” and “leadership plumbing” * of being a resilient church planter.
 - **Leadership** = Where are we going together;
 - Management** = How will we get there together
 - **Leadership** = Doing the right things; **Management** = Doing things the right way
- Anticipate changes after startup (years 0-2) and how to thrive in the increasingly complex 3rd year and beyond.
- Gain overview of the organizational environment and skills needed, especially after startup years:
 - Planning
 - Organizational
 - Operational

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*Resilient Ministry

Resilient ministry requires adapting to the job and the increasing complexity of a growing church plant “organism”

- Personal development: Adapting to the job
 - Year 1: All is new, trial & error → blindsides & mistakes → real-life, on-the-job learning
 - Year 2: Fix mistakes, anticipate events, fewer surprises → deepen alliances, build systems
 - Year 3+: Leverage alliances & systems → Ready for shocks & opportunities = **Resilience**
- Organization environment: Adapting to the unfolding church plant “organism”
 - Year 1: Alone or with a very small team and “recruits”
 - Year 2: Still finding, building, and gathering diverse people
 - Year 3: Shaping the people into a sustainable congregation
 - Years 4+: Adjusting to your increasingly complex environment
- Resilience requires convergence: simultaneously adjusting to and growing in both job and “organic” changes.

The planter will have a resilient ministry during later years by developing and using key leadership and management skills

- Organizational environment becomes increasingly complex
- Essential leadership and management skills are:
 - Planning = Guiding where the church is going and what it's becoming
 - Organizational = Utilizing the people God provides to get there
 - Operational = Stewarding resources for the organization to achieve the plan

Resilient ministry requires discerning God's direction by leading a joint planning process with staff and lay leaders

Planning elements	Startup	Later
Mission = Why we exist. What is our primary purpose? Define success.	<u>Based on standard purposes.</u> E.g. Meeting, connecting, evangelism, gathering, leadership prospects	<u>Refined with lay leaders.</u> E.g. Worship, discipleship, leadership development, multiplication, community engagement
Vision = What God wants to do here with us. What direction are we headed?	<u>Based on research,</u> input from sponsor/mentor. Self-determined.	<u>Based on reality</u> of local community, leaders, congregation, experience, and imagination. Jointly discerning intended future.
Strategy = How we will achieve our vision and mission. How we will succeed.	<u>Decided by planter,</u> peer/mentor guided, based on training and experience, entrepreneurial.	<u>Decided by leader-group.</u> Collaborative; top down <u>and</u> bottoms up; consensus-building / buy-in. "What's important now?" (WIN) → key initiatives and SMART goals. Planning cycle.
Values = Who we are. What enduring traits make us unique; our DNA.	<u>Based on planter;</u> personality, style, preferences, and past. Aspirational, evolving.	<u>Based on group.</u> Shaped by leaders, displayed by members → emerging culture. "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." (Peter Drucker)

Resilient ministry requires building organizational health to plan, promote, and protect the vision/mission-driven strategy.

Organization elements	Startup	Later
Staffing = Who carries out the strategic plan? How they are arrayed for harmony and synergy.	<u>Planter</u> , perhaps plus a peer/teammate; autonomous, self-directed	<u>Delegating</u> : Hiring & managing others, outsource, p/t roles, diversity → Accountability system, team building & alignment, “supervising conflict,” productive meetings. Project management. <u>Goal</u> : “Organic / systemic” health.
Governance = Who decides vital matters and is called to lead by word and example?	<u>Temporary governing body</u> , determined by others.	<u>Recruited/elected elders</u> . Diverse backgrounds & styles. Committed to mission & vision. Multiplication & modeling. <u>Goal</u> : “Cohesive leadership team” with healthy meetings, decision-making, and accountability. Formal bylaws.
Communications = How we know and interact with our audiences.	<u>Personal/simple</u> . 1-1 and one-to-several. Self-created tools.	<u>More complexity</u> : I.e. audience size, types, needs, groups, senders, messages, and channels. Mass and targeted media. Cut through clutter. “Over-communicate clarity.”
Risk management = How we anticipate known possibilities and manage unexpected events.	<u>Personal</u> , not much group exposure. <u>Simple issues</u> .	<u>More people, programs, & visibility</u> → <u>less control & more risk</u> . Policies & procedures; insurance. Systems thinking and managing expectations are essential for: <u>Change</u> /transition management and <u>Crisis</u> response/management.

Resilient ministry requires proven operational management capabilities to implement the vision/mission-driven strategy

Operational elements	Startup	Later
Financial = Adequate funding and controls to accomplish the strategy.	<u>External donors</u> ; front-loaded sum of dollars with “burn rate.”	<u>Internally-funded</u> . Generosity/stewardship strategy. E-giving tools. Budget aligned with strategy. Manage many conflicting priorities. Accountability & control.
Human Resources = Legally & ethically recruit, manage, pay, develop, and retain needed staff.	<u>Other-entity as employer</u> . Often use approaches from parent or past church or presbytery.	<u>Legal entity / employer</u> . Many laws & accountabilities. Multi-staff → Equitable compensation and benefits. Benchmarks. Foster organizational health and “clarity” with human systems. Formal policies and procedures.
Information Technology = Systems to manage flow and use of information to & from internal & external sources and audiences.	<u>Simple tools, personally managed</u> : E.g. Website, standard social media, mobile phone, laptop, spreadsheets, email.	<u>Shared information and systems</u> . Staff and officers. Church mgt. system = integrated data (member, guest, donor, group, volunteer tracking & messages.) Shared, secure, accessible data storage. Accounting system. Website & social media content management.
Property = Physical place for worship, discipleship, meetings, and employees.	<u>Short-term rented spaces</u> when/where needed.	<u>Long-term owned space</u> . Aligned with strategic plan. Benefit/cost assessment. Member support. Raise and/or borrow capital. Effective budgeting process.

Summary: Enjoy resilient ministry during the later years by developing and using key leadership and management skills

- “Leadership poetry” and “leadership plumbing” are both essential
 - **Leadership** = Where are we going together; **Management** = how will we get there together
 - **Leadership** = Doing the right things; **Management** = Doing things the right way
- During the later years...
 - Organizational environment becomes increasing complex
 - Essential leadership and management skills are:
 1. **Planning** = Guiding where the church is going and what it’s becoming
 2. **Organizational**= Utilizing the people God provides to get there
 3. **Operational** = Stewarding resources for the organization to achieve the plan

A logo for 'Discussion Questions' featuring the text inside a white speech bubble with a black outline, set against a blue background.

Discussion Questions

1. Who in your view has been an exemplary leader? How has that person shown both inspirational and executive skills? Was he/she also a good manager?
2. Who in your life is a superb manager. Why?
3. In a church plant, what would be challenges to the planning process? How could you overcome them?
4. During crises or big organizational changes, how are the elements of organizational health tested?
5. Most church planters must be very relational and operational skills may not be their core strength. How could/should planters address this?
6. In our C19 crisis, why is resilience essential for all church leaders? How it displayed in your church?
7. What can you do in this and your next life stage to build your leadership & management skills?

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