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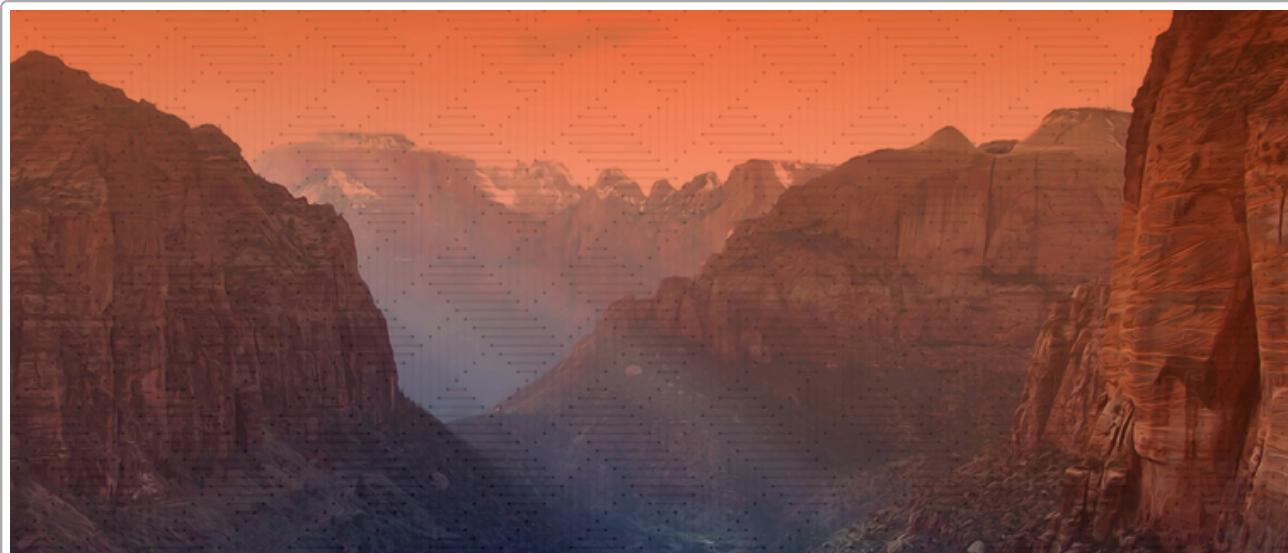
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Achieving Ministry Goals with Effectual Management – 10 Principles to Help Your Church Govern Itself

August 11, 2014 Guest Contributor Christian Ministry Articles, Church & Worship Related, Top 10 Articles



Managing a church is very similar to managing any other organization. It requires structured business systems and processes to ensure that the resources (people, time and money) that God supplies are used responsibly and for its intended purpose. Effectual church management does not happen by accident. It is the consequence of a series of intentional decisions, followed by deliberate actions that lead to a desired end result. There are principles that every church should embrace to govern itself. These principles can help a church achieve its mission and set the course for growth and longevity.

1. Unwavering Board Governance

Church boards have a lot of responsibility and are charged with ensuring that the organization is governed legally, ethically and with good financial oversight. Often church members are asked to participate on the church board and this can create a conflict between what is in the best interest of the organization (strategy, legal compliance, accountability, etc.) and the personal interests of board members.

Board members should be chosen based on their skillset, professional experience and relationship with the organization. But more importantly, they should be chosen because of their driving passion to see the church fulfill its mission. This passion is what should dictate decision making that supports one goal – and that is to keep the church fiscally, legally and ethically sound.

2. Compelling Mission and Vision

Churches take the time to develop a mission and vision statement because it is the target for everything they are

Achieving anything requires having a specific strategy, planning and implementation

trying to do. The mission statement communicates why the organization exists and the vision statement describes what the church is trying to achieve. These two statements are the foundation for decision making at every level of the organization.

Many organizations get bombarded with good ideas and suggestions. Often these suggestions come from well-meaning members and donors which can result in difficult and challenging conversations. Having a mission and vision statement, that everyone is familiar with, can help draw the line of prioritization when these types of difficult decisions need to be made.

or the plan.



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3. Intentional Strategy and Planning

There is an old saying, “if you faith to plan, you plan to faith”. Achieving anything requires having a specific strategy, planning and implementation of the plan. Churches should spend the time to identify strategic objectives and a process to develop a plan to achieve them. However, plans are merely words on paper without implementation. Implementing a plan requires focus and discipline to see it through to completion.

4. Responsible Financial Oversight

Churches would not exist without the generous donations of its members and church leadership is responsible for ensuring that those donations are used for its intended purpose – which is to fulfill the mission. Responsible financial oversight means good stewardship which includes budgeting, monitoring of spending and protecting the organization against embezzlement of funds. Yes even churches are targets for internal theft.

5. Purposeful Employee Management

Church employees facilitate the process of making church happen. Employees work for a church because of a calling and passion to help it fulfill its mission. There are many challenges that come with being an employee of a ministry and proper management can help to create a work environment that serves to develop, reward and hold employees accountable for job responsibilities.

Employees need to have a good understanding of what is expected of them (job description), given the training and tools to perform job tasks and rewarded for doing a good job. These basic steps can help to create an environment that motivates and engages employees.

6. Organized Volunteer Management

Church volunteers are the labor engine of a church and appreciate organized systems and processes to help them do their jobs. Like employees, volunteers need to understand what is expected of them (job descriptions), given the tools and training to perform job tasks and recognized and rewarded for doing a good job.

Volunteers give of their time freely and the church should help to ensure they have a good experience while in their volunteer role. This means ongoing and consistent communication and allowing volunteers to participate in identifying ways to improve internal systems and processes.

7. Targeted Process Improvement

Successful organizations understand the importance of continuously looking for opportunities to improve internal systems and processes. They create a system to identify processes or internal problems that need to be improved. This includes soliciting feedback from all customer groups (yes churches have customers) which are members, volunteers and employees.

Some of the best innovative ideas have come from those closest to the

work process making it important to simply ask the question – where is an area we can improve? Volunteers come from all different walks of life and bring valuable life experiences to the role. This experience can shed light on areas that could be improved and perspectives for doing things better and more efficiently. Take the time to solicit feedback from your volunteers and employees and discover the rich ideas that can birth innovation and progress.

8. Culture of Accountability

One of the more difficult responsibilities of church leaders is holding people accountable. For some reason Christians struggle with this for a whole host of reasons. Sometimes it is merely a lack of training on the “how” to hold people accountable. Sometimes it is for fear of being perceived as unchristlike. Sometimes it is simply sensitivity to the reality that employees and volunteers are working with limited resources.

Regardless, creating a culture of accountability is important to fulfilling the mission and implementing a strategic plan. Cultures of accountability are created by leaders who demonstrate their own responsibility for follow through and set the example for others. Once employees and volunteers understand that the culture has an expectation for accountability, they will either step up to the plate or self-select out of the role.

9. Focused Priorities

Every organization struggles with prioritizing its efforts and resources, however successful churches understand the importance of doing only those things that support achieving the mission. This is why having a written mission and vision statement is so important, because it helps leadership prioritize resource allocation.

10. Pursuit of Excellence

Churches represent God and the Christian belief system, making it vital to pursue a culture of excellence. The society we live in has become accustomed to excellence and who more than the church should be doing things excellently. Managing a church operation requires many skill sets, but learning to manage with these basic business principles with help to create an environment that allows for church growth, while creating a great experience for those people who invest their time and money to support the mission.

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Patricia Lotich is the founder of [Smart Church Management](#), a site devoted to providing free articles, tools and resources for those managing a church operation. Patricia has ten years of Business Administration and Church Operations experience and has a driving passion to help churches fulfill their call by managing the resources God has given them – people, time and money. Follow Patricia on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)



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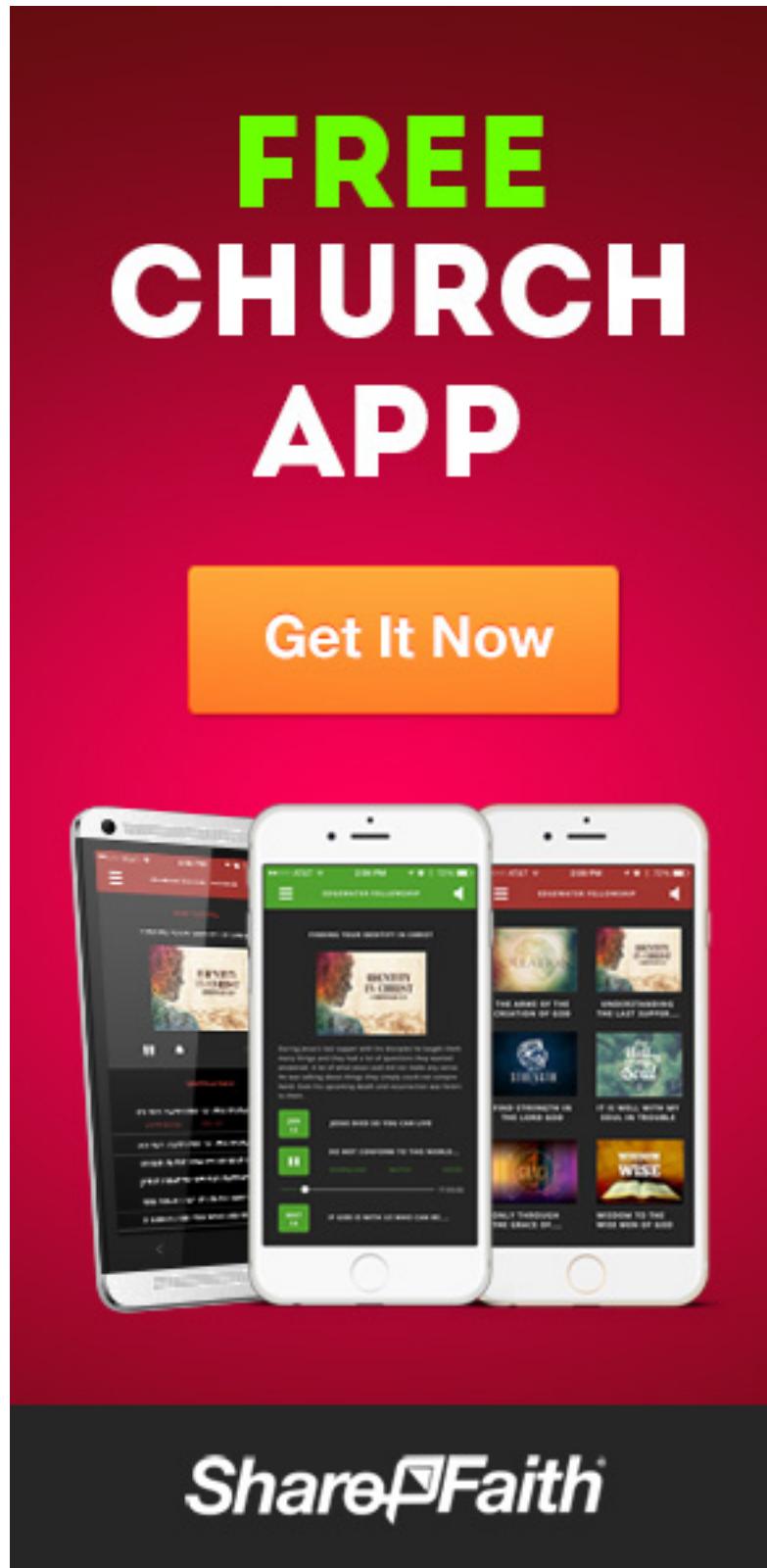
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