

**“MAN IS SO MADE THAT WHENEVER ANYTHING
FIRES HIS SOUL, IMPOSSIBILITIES VANISH.”**

—LAFONTAINE

1 POWER UP YOUR ORGANIZATION

**“A man of understanding and knowledge
maintains order” (Prov. 28:2).**

There are at least two major components in a successful men’s ministry. The first is men who are interested in enriching their lives and ministering to others through an association with other men. The second is effective organization. Of course there is a difference between mere organization and *effective* organization. One has to do with simply handing out job titles. The second, and most crucial, is gathering and equipping a core leadership group to guide an organization.

Just like a construction project, successful men’s ministries must be built on a strong foundation. Concrete is produced by mixing cement, stone, sand, and water. The right mix determines its character. Too much water and the concrete will be weakened. Less water—and more cement paste—and the result is strengthening. It’s the same in organizing your men’s ministry. There must be a right mix of leadership (cement) and “followship” (stone, sand, water). That organizational foundation should include at least four important qualities: motivation, administration, direction, and implementation.

MOTIVATION

One of the most important questions to ask in organizing a men’s ministry in your church is this: Why? What is your motivation? Is it a felt need or a real need? Adding another event to your church calendar should be done prayerfully and with great caution. Following a Promise Keepers convention in a nearby stadium, Pastor J. and a man from his church were discussing the need for something like that in their church. “We really need a men’s ministry,” the man said. “Let’s start one!” Not wanting to throw a wet blanket on the man’s enthusiasm, Pastor J. agreed.

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Over a couple of early morning coffees at a local Starbucks, the plan was organized—and soon launched. It wasn't long, however, until the launch turned into a shipwreck.

The few who gathered at first became fewer, until it was back to Pastor J. and the idea man meeting at Starbucks again—as the only surviving members. Both learned that simply doing something because it sounds like a good idea isn't the right mix of water and cement. As they reflected on the failed endeavor, they realized that their enthusiasm didn't have a concrete beginning.

Cast the Vision

Certainly, they were on the right track. Men's ministries can be vital to churches of any size and can be one of its strongest ministries. A strong group of Christ-focused men can have a huge spiritual impact on every ministry of your church—and on every age-group.

Casting a vision for what a men's ministry can do for your church can make a difference in its effectiveness. But where to begin? Jesus taught us about the genesis of organizing a ministry. It begins with careful study. Luke 14:28-30, "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.'"

None of us would think of calling a roofing contractor to our house and giving the OK for a new roof without first getting an estimate. No, the estimate determines whether the resources are there to complete the job. The pride of just adding another ministry must be put aside. After times of seeking God's direction in prayer, and after the available resources are surveyed, it might be the right time to climb to the next level.

Pastoral Support

The Starbucks gathering was right about one thing. Both men needed the other in forming a men's ministry. The pastor is as vital as the laymen—and conversely, the laymen are as vital as the pastoral team. Community Church had a core group of men who were interested in personal spiritual growth and the growth of the Kingdom. In fact, they already had an informal men's ministry—several of the men met weekly for prayer and Bible study and often helped shut-in members of their congregation. They were only lacking one thing in their quest to organize their efforts into a men's ministry: the pastor. Because the pastor didn't have any extra time to push another ministry train, there was little or no interest in sharing in the organization of a men's ministry.

Sadly, the men's group at Community became discouraged and soon split up. And sadly, the pastor missed seeing the launch of one of the most influential ministries. A major investment could have been made by simply buying into the vision and giving cooperative guidance to a core of leaders. Every men's ministry needs to have a combination of pastoral support—men who are passionate about reaching other men—and a core leadership team.

Organizing a church ministry without the knowledge and cooperation of the pastor is never advised.

- First, it undermines the pastor's responsibility.
- Second, it bypasses the available resources that the pastor can funnel toward the ministry.
- Third, it ignores the in-house publicity machine.
- Fourth, it doesn't give the pastor a much-needed fellowship tie to the men in the church. Of course, in those cases when the senior pastor is a woman, her involvement is more of an advisory one.

Vital Questions

Some important questions must be asked at the outset:

- What are the demographics of the congregation? Is there a group of men who would support a ministry just for them?
- Is there a ministry in place that is already meeting the spiritual growth, fellowship, outreach, and service opportunities of the men in your church?
- When and where will the men's ministry meet? Will their meetings or activities conflict with other church activities—and will a possible meeting place have the amenities for fellowship activities?
- Will the leadership team of the church support a men's ministry?
- Are there potential leaders for the proposed ministry?
- Will the work schedules of the potential men's ministry members conflict with meeting times?

ADMINISTRATION

Once it has been determined that the need is present, and that resources are available, the next step is to develop a leadership team. That team may include the following:

- **Director** (will be responsible for working with the pastor in organizing and developing the ministry)
- **Program coordinator** (responsible for carrying out the events and activities of the ministry)
- **Secretary/treasurer** (responsible for the recordkeeping and finances of the ministry)
- **Publicity coordinator** (responsible for promoting the ministry)
- **Project coordinator** (responsible for outreach and service activities)

The coordinators may form the leadership team of the ministry—along with the pastor or a representative from the pastoral team. Like the workers chosen in the Early Church, they must be men of spiritual character, vision, and enthusiasm. They must also have a shared passion to reach other men for Christ. The leadership team will be given assignments, training, and the authority to carry out their responsibilities within the ministry.

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The leadership team must know specifically what is expected of them. Their responsibilities should be given to them in written form and may include:

- The qualifications necessary for the position
- Their time commitment (estimate of how much time will be involved)
- Their term of service (shorter terms are usually better)
- To whom they are to report
- What the leadership team and the church will do to support them (e.g., the training that will be provided)
- The details about expected recordkeeping, including membership, attendance, and financial records

Organization is a key to effectiveness. Paul the apostle said everything should be done “in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Cor. 14:40). Prayerfully and carefully putting the ducks in a row can give wings to your ministry.

DIRECTION

“Where do we go from here?”

An effective organization needs not only a firm motivation but also good direction. Thanks to author Rick Warren’s best-seller, the church has bought into the idea that Christian ministries should be purpose-driven. Purpose is like the banks of a river. It keeps the strength and flow of the river moving in the right direction. Organizational purpose has the same effect. It channels the energies of those involved.

So “Where do we go from here?” is a good question. What’s the plan? Ask any member of a deer camp whether the hunt needs some directions. The answer will be in the positive. Without some consideration to location or communication, the trek through field or forest would be dangerous at best—no matter how many orange vests there are in the hunting party.

Once the leadership is in place, you will want to survey the men of your church by identifying important issues that need to be addressed, an area of service in which they would be willing to participate, and how the men can be contacted (see Appendixes A3-A4). Knowledge of such variables as the number of single or married men, families involved, and basic interests is invaluable to the purpose and plan for launching a men’s ministry. That survey could be done through a bulletin insert or through an announced information meeting.

After the survey results have indicated a direction for the ministry, your leadership team may then want to consider a statement of purpose (see Appendixes A1-A2). Ask some leading questions:

- What do we want to accomplish as an organization?
- How do we want to accomplish it?
- How will we be involved in that accomplishment?
- What result do we want to see?

Power Up Your Organization

Your statement of purpose is like a road map. It maps where you *need to go* to get you where you *need to be*. As with any road map, there will be turns and detours, points of interest, estimated travel time, and alternate routes. But the goal is always there: your destination. Your statement of purpose doesn't need to be the size of an encyclopedia. In fact, it may be contained in a single paragraph. It will simply outline the direction your men's ministry will take.

Because yours is a Christian organization, Christ will be at the center. Your purpose should incorporate your commitment to honor Christ and to live and operate by biblical principles.

Each organization has its own characteristics. What works for some may not necessarily work for you, and vice versa. There is no other organization like yours. You have different men, with different skills and different needs. You have a unique environment. And you have a unique opportunity to make a spiritual and social impact on your community.

IMPLEMENTATION

In one sense, your *launch* will determine the *length of your journey*. But remember, a journey begins with first steps. You're in this for the long haul, but your organizational touchdown will be the result of yards gained per carry. A well-rounded ministry takes time to develop.

And just like launching a new boat, there will be a learning curve. New boats look good in the showroom. But they don't stay in the showroom. They'll be on a lake or river or ocean. There will be some unique factors that will definitely affect the journey:

- Launch site
- Knowledge of boating
- Crew
- Weather
- Equipment
- Navigational rules

Church-based organizations have factors similar to launching a boat.

- Your launch site is your facility. How will you prepare your facility for your new ministry?
- Your knowledge of boating is your experience. Does your leadership team have experience in management and planning?
- Your crew is your team and your helpers. Will there be enough help to carry out your purpose and plans?
- The weather may be the current atmosphere of your church. How will that atmosphere affect your organization? Will you have a prayer emphasis that will help you steer?
- Equipment includes the tools you will need for safe navigation. What physical tools will you need? Reference books? Bible studies? Possible events? Promotional materials?

And don't forget the ever-present navigational rules. Church-based organizations have their unique challenges. Not only are there rules on the books—including the use of facilities,

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the requirements for leadership, the amenability to boards or committees, and so on—but there are unwritten rules as well. Those will include the “We just don’t do such things in our church” principles. Often, *new* is a word that puts fear in the hearts of the hierarchy (and *low-archy*). Your new ideas about men’s ministry may be met with all the enthusiasm of a busted water pipe in the fellowship hall! But remember that *everything great* began with *something new*. If God is in the plans, the results will reflect His blessing. And you might also want to remember that His greatest plan, salvation, met with opposition at first!

The Big Event

Implementing your ministry may begin with a big event. After careful planning—and a lot of promotion—you may want to introduce your new ministry with a blockbuster event. It could be anything from a fishing trip to a motorcycle rally in the church parking lot. It could involve a banquet or pancake supper with a well-known sports figure as the speaker. A classic cars rally. An attempt at breaking a Guinness world record. Dream big. Plan big. Promote big. And expect big! However, numbers don’t spell success. If your event is a good fit for the size of your church and its men’s group, and draws a majority of men from the church, it can be considered a success no matter how many chairs are filled.

Entrance Doors

You’ll soon learn that in implementing your men’s ministry the more entrance doors you build, the greater the interest. Some of those entrances may include breakfasts, barbecues, sporting events, convention or rally attendance, service days, Bible studies, retreats, or equipping seminars. Your first entrance—your big event—should have a follow-up. “What’s next?” should be in the minds of every attendee.

Power, of course, needs a source: “‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty” (Zech. 4:6). You can’t do this without God’s help. But with His help, *you can!*