

Managing Change in the Local Church

The purpose of this module is to:

Encourage participants to see themselves as change agents God will use.

The objectives for this module are:

- **To identify the need for change and opportunity for change;**
- **To recognize the characteristics of a change agent;**
- **To develop action plans for handling change in the future.**

I. The Challenge of Change

- A. Current reality
- B. Maintaining commitment to change

II. Finding Opportunities for Change

If change is to occur within the church, we must look for opportunities manage that change so it is constructive to the Kingdom of God and to each of us as well. There are three key factors which I would signal in the search for opportunities:

A. _____ Ingredients: _____ Culture

Our local church has a culture of its own. Our district and our denomination also have unique cultures and are a factor in every challenge to change.

B. _____ Factors: A Changing _____ .

Our world is changing so rapidly that we are not keeping up:

1. Inventions
2. Music
3. Communication
4. Business
5. Relationships
6. Violence
7. Families

C. _____ Forces: _____ for Planning and Participation

In addition to the negative and positive changes that are being thrust upon us, new paradigms and tools for planning and participation are also rapidly developing.

III. Leaders as Agents of Change

In *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass Publisher, 1987), James Kouzes and Barry Posner gave us the results of their research. They summarized their findings into five common practices of great leaders and ten commitments (two for each common practice):

A. _____ the Present Process

Why do we do the things we do in the ways we do them?

1. _____ for Opportunities

To do strategic things for Christ may sometimes require the sacrifice of “programs.”

2. _____ and Taking Risks

This is difficult for large organizations or churches, but smaller churches sometimes have greater flexibility and creativity.

- B. _____ a Shared Vision

See *The Flight of the Buffalo* (James Belasco, Warner Books, 1993)—Geese leaders (shared leadership roles) are preferred over buffalo leaders (where a single leader is followed).

1. _____ the Future

These leaders realistically understand that our world will not be the same in ten, fifteen, or twenty years and are not waiting to react to what comes, but by Christ’s help, they are seeking a future that is ready when the changes (**which Christ already knows about**) arrive! What does Christ want us to do now to be ready for the demands of tomorrow?

2. _____ Others

These leaders have discovered that teams are much more effective than solitary leaders with a group of followers.

- C. _____ Others to Act

Ownership is crucial to participation and ownership begins with decision making.

1. _____ Collaboration.

2. Strengthening _____

Great leaders realize that the greatest recommendation of their leadership is the team of people around them who are better than they are— more effective than they are. These leaders devote themselves to strengthening the efforts and enhancing the abilities of these people.

- D. _____ the Way

It is never beneath the dignity of the leader to do any task that others are called upon to do.

1. Setting the _____

2. Planning for _____

Celebrate the victories together; making certain that everyone knows the joy of accomplishment together.

E. _____ the Heart

Let showing honor to others be your personal reward as a leader—take great joy in what God has done through them!

1. _____ Individual Contributions

Celebrate every contribution made! Make change “user friendly.” Make teamwork the model.

2. _____ Accomplishments

Visibility is the issue! These changes are significant and are making a difference in the Kingdom of God! Celebrate the small victories every time they occur and be magnanimous in your praise at the celebration of large victories and accomplishments.

IV. Obstacles to Change

A. _____ Required for Change

B. _____ Created by Change

C. Natural _____ of Commitment to Change

D. _____ Involved in Change

V. Realistic Strategy of Change for Our Church

A. A new perception of our value and contribution can bring renewal.

It is time for _____.

B. _____ are opportunities for learning.

_____ them.

C. Fear can mobilize your resources and stimulate your performance. Use it _____.

D. _____ is a great teacher about us and our behavior.

Learn from it.

E. _____ (stubbornness) for ego is destructive, but for right causes it is a powerful ally.

Stand for the right things, but not for your own ego.

F. _____ can stimulate important learning about what it takes to be successful.

Handle your “_____” correctly to transform them into beginnings.

Small Group Exercise

Gather in groups of three to five persons. Discuss the following questions:

- **How can we encourage change?**
- **How may we free our leaders to experiment with new methods?**
- **When people become uneasy with change, how can we reassure them?**

Action Planning/Reporting

The homework assignment for this module is:

Select an area of church life, such as leadership development, outreach, discipleship or stewardship, age group ministries.

What area would benefit most from change?

What changes would you be willing to try? (Do not discuss the problems. Focus on possible solutions.)

Experiment with change by implementing a change in the local church.