

Systems for . . .

Strategic Planning and Implementation

*“Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise,
making the most of every opportunity.” (Ephesians 5:15-16)*

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Getting Started

Using this Module

The LaunchTicket coaching system *Strategic Planning and Implementation* module is a tool designed to enhance the effectiveness of your church for the glory of God. From the outset and throughout the modules, we want to repeatedly encourage you to lay all of your planning before God and seek His wisdom and guidance. No amount of material can substitute for the crucial task of submitting yourself to the direction of Jesus Christ. Although the purpose of this module is to help you clarify and implement your strategic plan, we firmly believe that prayerful submission to God is critical every step of the way.

This module covers a great deal of information, which is broken down into topical sections in the module. Each section has one or more “Implementation Tasks” associated with it to help you put what you learn into immediate action and create and/or implement your own leadership system.

Because of the quantity of information covered in this program, it is important that you pace your learning to absorb and implement as much of each topic as possible. We recommend the following system to help you achieve the maximum benefit from this program:

1. Scan this entire module to gain an overview of its content and specific relevancy to the needs of your situation.
2. Discuss your implementation priorities with your coach.
3. Read the material and complete the implementation tasks assigned by your coach.
4. E-mail or fax each completed implementation task to your coach.
5. Be prepared to discuss your progress and questions related to each task during your next coaching session.

Your LaunchTicket coach is a critical part of this experience and is committed to helping you apply each task to your specific needs. If you have any questions while going through this program, don't hesitate to call for assistance.

Introduction to Strategic Planning Systems

Module Objectives

At the completion of this module you will be able to:

- ◆ Implement a well designed strategic plan to build your church.
- ◆ Identify the people your church is called to reach and determine how their needs and backgrounds will affect your ministry strategy.
- ◆ Develop powerful and God-honoring mission, vision, and values statements, which establish the non-negotiable direction of your church.
- ◆ Develop your church's discipleship outcomes which become the guiding agenda for all ministry planning and activity.
- ◆ Stay focused on the gauges (also called "critical success factors") that will determine your church's future.
- ◆ Create and maintain ministry alignment utilizing tracking and reviewing processes, and effective ministry communication systems.

Purpose of the Strategic Planning Module

The purpose of this module is to help you develop the leadership systems you need to realize God's vision for your church. Spirit-directed strategic planning is a powerful tool you can use to help your church grow and mature toward its maximum redemptive potential.

The value of future planning can't be overstated; yet, most pastors have never gone through a detailed planning process. Some see it as a waste of time. Others think it's something only mega-churches do. Strategic planning takes time, but it's an investment that pays big dividends in the long run—in both changed lives and effective ministry.

An airplane would not take off without a charted course. A hockey team wouldn't think of facing an opponent without a game plan. A football team makes certain that its plays are understood in advance. Achieving a desired result is not accidental, and it's not a matter of chance. It requires a clear vision of where you are headed and what it will look like when you get there.

The importance of planning can be seen throughout the Bible. Jesus laid out a compelling plan to His first followers when He said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NIV). In Acts 13, the church launched a compelling plan for the spread of the gospel in

Asia Minor when they sent Paul and Barnabas out to reach the lost and plant churches in unchurched cities.

Strategic planning requires you to set church-wide goals that ultimately result in changed lives. It takes an in-depth look at your situation and your external environment as you prayerfully formulate a course of action designed to reach those goals. Planning includes determining where you are now, where God wants you to go, and how He wants you to get there.

Like most church leaders, you probably entered ministry as a response to a deep sense of personal calling from God. But once you begin to consider your vision, you recognize the need for some tools to help you and your team reach your maximum redemptive potential.

Churches that make an impact don't just happen. Many pastors who lead dynamic churches also prayerfully lead a planning process for their church's future that results in a **compelling vision**. As this contagious vision for the future grips the hearts and minds of other key leaders and influencers in the church, it becomes a catalyst to both personal and church transformation.

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." Proverbs 16:3

Planning for the future is especially important to you as a pastor because changes in your church can have a significant impact on the lives of many people, both inside and outside your church. Strategic planning helps you shape the future and protects from vision drift. It allows you to see in advance what must be done and how God will supply the resources to get it done. It enables you to approach your church proactively rather than always being in a "fire-fighting" mode. It allows you to gain and keep control of your time so you can obey God's primary calling on your life; and, at the same time, keep the church focused on its overall mission.

Clearly defined goals give you a specific purpose for doing ministry each day. As a pastor, and especially as a church planter, your time is a precious resource that is in short supply. You need tools to enable you to apply this precious resource where it has the highest impact on the mission of the church. Clearly defined goals will help you make sure that the day-to-day activities in which you personally engage are directly related to achieving the unique purpose God has given your church.

"Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand." Isaiah 14:24

Have you ever become so caught up in your daily ministry demands that you lost sight of the *purpose* of your calling? Have you lost sight of what goals God has

directed your life toward reaching? Through the planning process, you can examine how you spend your time. You can determine if you're allocating the time needed to provide the strategic direction required to lead your church to fulfill God's ideal for it. You can also determine if you're spending time on activities not directly related to the fulfillment of God's objectives. It isn't good enough to know *how* to do a ministry task—you must also understand *why* you're doing it if you're going to be wise with the stewardship of your time. If the "why" isn't helping you achieve your God-given goals, you're unwisely investing your time.

Strategic planning takes the guesswork out of leadership. It lays the foundation that enables you to anticipate the future and make important decisions before problems arise—decisions such as which ministry programs should be aggressively promoted and which should be abandoned, or which outreach methods will be most effective.

This module is part of an ongoing process—careful planning never ends. The development of a church is a journey, not a destination. There is always some place further to go—a new ministry to begin or internal processes to improve. As long as there are people who don't know Jesus and needs within the body of Christ to be met, the planning process must continue. The strategic planning systems discussed in this module will lay the foundation on which the ongoing effectiveness of your church will be built.

What is Strategic Planning?

- Strategic planning is a process churches of all sizes use to turn God-inspired visions into realities. In effect, it's the recipe for effectiveness.
- As a result of this process, a strategic operating plan is created that charts the course to the realization of your vision.
- The plan communicates to the entire church and outsiders what your church will be working toward and defines the steps the church will take to get there.
- The process defines what objectives God has given your church and focuses the necessary attention and resources on those objectives.
- The outcome of a well-implemented strategic plan is the alignment of the people, resources and processes toward the accomplishment of your church's mission.

How do you get from where your church is to where you believe God wants it to be? Strategic planning bridges the gap between your present situation and what God wants your church to become. It also lays the foundation for your church to develop a unique life and personality of its own.

Think of your strategic plan as a road map you develop based on your God-given goals, the capabilities of your church, and potential obstacles. You create a strategic operating plan for the same reason you take a map along on a trip to an unfamiliar destination. You need direction.

Planning can be a great unifying force in your church as well. In developing a clear vision and course of action to follow, things get accomplished that

otherwise would never get done. A strategic plan can motivate members in the church to pool their interests, prayers, spiritual gifts, and resources together for the accomplishment of this plan.

Most church leaders start their journey with some kind of destination in mind—even if it's not well defined—but it isn't too long before they hit a bump in the road. For example:

- Perhaps the plans to expand a ministry have not succeeded.
- Perhaps the last mass mailing to the community failed to bring about the results they expected.
- Perhaps the person they asked to take over the children's ministry didn't work out.
- Perhaps the experiment with some new method was met with less than an enthusiastic response by some key influencers in the church.

Whatever the situation, they put on their brakes and get out to examine the potholes. They may fret and wonder whether they're on the right road after all. Perhaps they decide the road has too many obstacles and veer off in another direction, hoping it will eventually get them to the same destination as long as they keep driving. If they had their road map along, they would know that they were on the right path to their God-directed destination, even if they hit a few potholes or had to make a couple of detours along the way.

"I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted." Job 42:2

Your strategic plan will help you create a church environment that brings out the best in your ministry leaders and teams because everyone knows how they are contributing to the accomplishment of the plan.

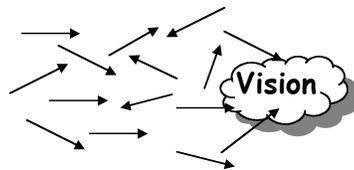
Everyone understands:

- What areas are critical for the church to focus on right now.
- What overarching objectives God has given to the whole church.
- What everyone can do to help fulfill those objectives.
- What each ministry area will do to help achieve those goals.

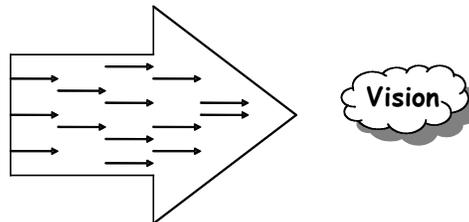
Answering these questions keeps the entire team going in the same direction and begins to unleash the power of alignment in your church.

The Power of Alignment

Many churches are comprised of good people with good hearts and good intentions, but the church is not strategically moving forward toward a significant vision. There is often some vague, cloudy idea of the vision of the church, but the efforts of individual people and ministries to do something great for God look something like the following diagram of diffused arrows pointing in many directions with only one or two actually aiming straight for the vision. Each of these arrows represents people and programs that take off and go in a certain direction—for a time. But there is a problem: they are not all part of a clear strategic plan that would align these efforts in the same direction toward a common vision. The result is fragmented plans and wasted time and energy; lots of activity but little effect on moving the church toward its desired vision.



A well designed strategic plan acts like a giant arrow which helps align all the people, process and plans within the ministry toward the accomplishment of your vision.



It is much easier to move forward and maintain unity when all your people, plans, and processes are aligned and heading in the same direction.

Strategic planning is an ongoing process that enables you to change your plan as needed or as God directs. It's a system for the continual development, improvement, maturing and refining of your church.

"But the noble man makes noble plans, and by noble deeds he stands." Isaiah 32:8

Your strategic operating plan doesn't have to be an elaborate or complex set of statements and charts. You are creating this plan to give your church direction and focus. You will use it internally to check your progress and to remind you of what God has called you to achieve.

The Strategic Planning Process

The result of your strategic planning process will be a strategic operating plan; yet much of the value lies in the planning process itself. The strategic planning process requires a pastor-led effort to evaluate and discuss your church with other key leaders, influencers, and even people in your community. Through the process, you will better define God's vision for your church. The process distills what you learn from all sources (biblical mandates, cultural research, personal insight, and ministry experience) and ties it together into a clear vision that will propel your church forward.

Although planning does lead to a strategic plan, it doesn't stop at that point. In the church environment, changes frequently occur and you have to be prepared to reassess and revise your strategic plan. For your church to remain effective, the strategic planning process must be ongoing.

"Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."
Proverbs 19:21

Planning your future requires commitment. The process can be challenging; it requires you to take a comprehensive and honest look at *all* of the factors that impact your church, including your internal processes and procedures, your church's spiritual health, the spiritual gifts on your team, and your community.

Strategic planning is a learning process that requires a willingness to take some risks and try new things. What you learn from these experiences will help you develop even better strategies in the future. Effective churches know that having a strategic plan in place is a clear ministry advantage.

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14

As much as it is a planning process, strategic planning is a *thinking* and *praying* process. Systems can process information, but only people can comprehend it and internalize it. To plan effectively requires you as the pastor to be a change agent and lead a strategic thought process. It involves innovation and creativity. It challenges your existing point of view and helps you look at your church from an exciting new perspective.

Hearing God's Voice

Finally, it is important to recognize that in the final analysis, strategic planning in the church is a spiritual discipline of listening to God's voice and intentional obedience to God's direction for your church. In John 10:27 Jesus says that His sheep listen to His voice and follow Him. A few chapters later, Jesus likens our relationship to Him to that of a branch attached to a vine. He says that so long as we remain in Him we will produce fruit, but apart from Him we produce nothing.

The lesson Jesus teaches is imperative. Hearing God's voice is not optional in the strategic planning process. Without His voice, your plans will be nothing more than human creativity, evidenced by goals that are never achieved.

Spiritual leaders must wait on God until they know what is on the heart of God for their church. It is far easier to proactively plan than it is to patiently listen for God's plan. When you plan you are creative, but when you listen you are obedient. Jesus reminds us that we are nothing without Him. As you move through this strategic planning process, make sure that you are listening to the direction and strategies that originate in the heart of God. This process is so important that *it should not be rushed*. The only urgency is to hear God's voice no matter how long it takes. This is best accomplished by getting alone with God. *Never move forward until God speaks*.

Strategic Planning and Implementation Module Overview

There are three phases to the strategic planning and implementation process. This module contains three sections designed to guide you through each of these phases.

Context Phase

Section 1: Understanding Your Community. Developing your strategic plan based on good information about the social context in which you do ministry helps you respond biblically and effectively to the needs, attitudes, values, and religious backgrounds of the people you are reaching and discipling.

Direction Phase

Section 2: Defining Your Core Ethos. Defining your mission, vision, values, and discipleship outcomes provides overall direction for your church and a foundation for all future planning.

Strategy Phase

Section 3: Developing Your Strategy. Staying focused on your gauges (also called "critical success factors"), measurements, and objectives, creates the strategy needed to move your new church in the direction you have defined.

Definition of Key Strategic Planning Terms

1. **Mission:** The ultimate reason and passion for your existence as a church. A contemporary restatement of the Gospel Commission.
2. **Vision:** A compelling picture of what your church will look like when it is reaching its maximum redemptive potential—when your mission is being accomplished.
3. **Core Values:** The fundamental principles that define how you will do ministry and life in your church.
4. **Discipleship Outcomes:** Three to six priorities that your members will live out when they fully embody your mission, vision and values. All of the ministries in your church are ultimately designed to serve these outcomes.
5. **Gauges (Critical Success Factors):** A few critical priorities that you must achieve if you will take the next step in reaching your vision.
6. **Measurements:** The areas you will measure to determine the extent to which you are achieving progress toward your critical success factors.
7. **Church-wide Objectives:** The primary aims to which your church will commit its efforts in order to create the results desired in each measurement area.
8. **Shared Goals:** These are goals everyone can participate in to help accomplish your church-wide objectives.

Section 1: Understanding Your Community

Your church is not an island. Believe it or not, you are interconnected with other congregations, social service agencies, charities, and other service industries. Too many churches rely on hunches, hearsay and old information as they make decisions they think will influence their community. Then they wonder why they are not experiencing a greater kingdom impact.

It may seem a bit “unspiritual” at first to not determine all your strategic plans on your knees. Although prayer, Bible study, and abiding reflection are the first steps to be taken in this process, God also expects your conception team to use the discerning minds that have been given by the Creator.

Early on in your church's strategic planning process, it is essential to understand the community around you. If seekers and the formerly churchd are the primary focus of your congregation, you need to understand who they are and what might attract them to your church. To be in touch with your community, make an intentional search for data on which to base your strategic plans.

As you work on this section of the material, it would be helpful to include members of your launch team who have knowledge of – or current professional experience in – sociology, marketing, city planning, or demographics collection.

“The king called in the seven highest officials of Persia and Media... These men were very wise and understood all the laws and customs of the country, and the king always asked them what they thought about such matters.” Esther 1:13,14

Take a good hard look at the social context in which your church is located. Determine the shape of ministry that best suits your context based on the findings of others in similar circumstances. Gather demographic data from a number of sources and evaluate it carefully. Define the attitudes, values, and religious preferences of the individuals in your people group. Zero in on the needs your church can address as part of the larger community. Having done all that, write a profile of the “customer” or spiritual seeker you want to attract to your congregation.

Determining Your Social Context

When people mention the name of your community, what first comes to mind? Determining the broad, social context is an attempt to get a grasp on the big picture. One place to begin is by looking at the community through the eyes of long-time residents. That can happen by interviewing people who have knowledge of the history of your area or by reading visitor's information or tourist brochures.

Another angle on social context is to consider the region of the country in which you are located. We've all heard of regions like the Gold Coast of California, the

Heartland of the Dakota farmers, or the Deep South of Georgia. The fact is, people have common perceptions about the region in which they live. Some perceptions may relate to attitudes about government, views on big business, pride in hospitality, or passion in living “the simple life.”

Even the weather and climate play a role in unique social contexts. Cold winters may bring some people together indoors more (or keep them apart), while warm weather may draw people away or into the area. Tourism, “snowbirds”, and even seasons all play a role in the movement and change of the social climate of your community.

An excellent feel for the social context will come from asking, “What drives the economy here?” Is it tied to an industry, government, education, or agriculture? What are the primary businesses in your area?

Finally, take a look at what some of the other congregations in your area are doing. If something is “working” in another church, take a look at what that something is. Lower your pride, set aside theological differences and simply ask, “What’s working well in other churches?”

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 1: Determining the Social Context of Your Ministry.

Studying Demographics

Why do you need to do a demographic study? A good study will tell you *who* lives *where* and how many of them there are. It will be extremely helpful as you plan your ministry to know something about the people you are trying to reach.

- ◆ Are the people you are trying to reach predominantly one ethnic group, or do you find a mixture of cultures in the area where your congregation exists?
- ◆ Do you find a lot of two-parent families in your area, or is there a high concentration of singles, or single-parent families?
- ◆ What is the educational level of the area in which your congregation is located?
- ◆ What is the income level of the households in your area?

All these questions and more can be answered by having a careful demographic study done of your community. One benefit of searching for your own information is the relationships you will build with people in your community. This may be one of the best reasons to do your own research. If you think you want to do your own looking on demographics, here are a few sources to consider:

Church Planting Solutions. For free basic demographic information for your target area, visit www.churchplanting4me.com/churchplantingresources.htm.

U.S. Census Data. Every decade the United States government conducts a thorough study of our country's population. The closer you are to the year in which the census was taken, the more helpful the information will be. The easiest place to find this data is at your local library. If your library doesn't have it, ask if you can get it on loan from a larger library.

You can also download census data right to your computer. Sometimes the information is free and sometimes you will need to pay a minimal fee. As you collect the census data, be sure to determine what the geographic boundaries are for the data you are collecting.

City and/or County Planning Commissions. This is another great place to get demographic information. Often these commissions will update the U.S. census data with current statistics or projections. If you find a person who is friendly, you might tap into a wealth of information—such as zoning issues, plans for road improvements, commercial and residential developments, etc.

Usually, for a nominal fee, these commissions will have good maps available to you that show some of this information. Remember that making good connections with someone in these agencies as you're doing your demographic study can pay off down the road.

School Boards. School boards are required to keep up-to-date demographic information on their school districts. By law, every citizen has the right to have access to this information. However, not every school board is helpful in sharing it. If the person you ask is cooperative, this can be useful. If he or she is not, you may spend an excess amount of time spinning your wheels while you could get your information elsewhere.

Public Utilities. Utilities depend on knowing population trends, but if it is a privately held company, it may be difficult to access their information unless you have a personal contact.

Local University. This is one of those hit-or-miss possibilities. Sometimes a student (particularly in the sociology department) will have done demographic research on an area that may be helpful to your church. If so, you have just saved yourself a lot of time with the help of an unpaid student assistant who may be delighted to have his or her work used.

Chamber of Commerce. Some are first-rate when it comes to keeping up-to-date census information. Some are duds. Again, if you happen to find one that is doing an outstanding job, you can get the kind of information you're looking for and will be able to keep it updated from year-to-year. And finding a good contact at the Chamber might be invaluable down the road.

Radio Stations. In order to sell advertising, radio stations have to gather up-to-date demographic information. They don't have to share their information with you, but often will do so just for good community relations. A side benefit to what they share with you will be the records of what kind of music the people you are trying to reach listen to. Do they like classical, country, contemporary, Christian,

or some other type? Consider this data when you think about the music you will use for your worship experience.

Businesses. This can be the most difficult to get, but if you have the right connections, it can be a veritable gold mine. Large businesses will pay hundreds and even thousands of dollars for information on the consumers to whom they are trying to market their products. They will get information on the people in their community that you didn't know was possible to get. If you know someone who is willing to share this information with you, consider yourself blessed!

Newspapers. Local newspapers often run stories on changes in the community with demographic information included that you may find useful. Contact with the right person in your local newspaper office can be helpful in getting research that someone has already done.

Commercial Geo-demographics. Several companies now exist which serve their customers by providing the latest in demographic research. The information that is provided is excellent, but it comes at a significant price. If you determine that the information they have is worth the money and you have the financial resources available, use one of these services.

What to Look For

From whatever sources you choose for your demographics, it would be prudent for you to find out the following pieces of information:

People Information. Look at figures such as age categories, marital status, educational attainment, average household income, people per household, cultural background, and employment status.

Population Trends. Compare population figures as far back as you can obtain them with current and projected populations. Look at specific areas within the community that may be growing or declining and try to determine causes for these trends.

Internal Migration Patterns. Are there segments of your community where various ethnic or cultural groups congregate? What are the trends and future projections?

Traffic Patterns. You need to determine where the high traffic volume areas are. What are the main thoroughfares in the community? Remember that typically people's driving patterns on the weekend are similar to what they are during the week. What does this tell you about where to start your church?

Land Use Projections. That empty plot of land you see today may be the site of a major development five years from now. Knowing what land use projections are may assist you in determining what location for your church will have the greatest potential for future growth.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 2: Studying Demographics.

Defining Attitudes, Values, and Religious Preferences

Measuring populations or economic growth in a community is a fairly objective exercise, but what about attitudes, values, and religious preferences? Though somewhat of a slippery set of data, understanding minds and hearts plays a key role in a strategy to serve your community effectively.

“Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it costs all you have, get understanding.” Proverbs 4:7

Let’s begin with the broad categories: Conservative vs. liberal. Your community is obviously a mixture of these overused descriptors. So, get specific. If people refer to their community as being mostly “conservative”, what do they mean by that? Conservative in politics? business? values?

One way to measure attitudes and values is by studying generations. There are noted generational personality differences between the GI generation (1928-1945), the Baby Boomer generation (1946-1964), the Buster generation (1965-1976), and the Bridger generation (1977-1993). A plethora of research has been conducted on generational differences. If necessary, do some research on the topic to give yourself a sense of these patterns.

As you study the various generations in your community and church, ask questions like, “What do people seem to value?” Fun? Family? Order? Honesty? etc. Also ask, “Why?” Has a natural crisis brought the community together (i.e. flood, fire, hurricane, tornado, etc.)?

Another important slice of your community pie to analyze is the multi-cultural make-up. Demographic studies can readily tell you by percentage what your county and even sections of cities are made up of: Asian, African American, Hispanic, and/or Caucasian. Note this in your compilation, because you will discover ethnicity is closely tied to values, attitudes and religious preferences.

Finally, assess the religious faiths that dominate your area. A quick scan of the Yellow Pages of your local phone book may tell you. Attend the local ministerial association. Find the primary churches in your area and visit them. Specifically look at how these churches impact the community. Sometimes there are deep, cultural traditions to denominational affiliation tied to family heritage and ethnicity. In other places, experimentation and openness are the word.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 3: Defining Attitudes, Values, and Religious Preferences.

Understanding Your Customer Profile

Who is the customer? Who is the church striving to reach? You may think the person in the pew is your customer. Actually, your customer is the one you have not seen yet coming through your doors. It is the targeted people who potentially could be members of your church.

“To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews... To the weak I became weak to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” 1 Corinthians 9:20-22

It may seem strange to you to call potential visitors to your church “customers,” but, in a sense, that’s what they are. A customer is a “buyer of goods and services.” When people attend your church, they come looking for “something.” It may be as tangible as a loaf of bread—but then again, it just might be they’re in the market for peace of mind, forgiveness, or a sense of meaning in their lives.

It is a biblical value to reach people for Christ. And by seeking to understand the people around your church whom God is calling you to reach, it is an invaluable step to simply take a look at *who* these people are.

Defining the profile of your “target customer” is not about being exclusive. It is about being intentional. It has nothing to do with who is welcome but has everything to do with how you package what you present.

Your assimilation, or next step, process should be designed to work with people at various spiritual stages. However, if a church doesn’t come to terms with the profile of their target group, it will be less effective than it could be at reaching people and meeting expectations. For example, if most people who come to your church have some church background, they will have different expectations than those who have no church background. For maximum redemptive impact, your church needs to match the expectations and needs of the majority of the people you are seeking to reach.

Once you define the profile of your target group, you should ask yourself this question: “If we were really committed (more intentional) about reaching and assimilating this type of person (your primary target), how would it affect what our church does in the community?”

As you gather data from this section, put it together and begin to formulate a composite of a typical person in your community. Write a profile of the “target” person your church is most likely to attract, following the step-by-step process in

Implementation Task 4. Don't make the mistake of setting aside your collected data to write this profile. Begin to think of the benefits of making decisions based on useful data.

Take Action!

*Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 4:
Understanding Your Customer Profile.*

Take Action!

Implementation Task 1: Determining the Social Context of Your Ministry.

Review the following segment in this module:

◆ *Determining Your Social Context*

Go to a visitor's bureau in your area, gather tourist materials—even if you think you know the area well. You may be surprised. Check out books at the library on the history of your area. See if the internet offers any material on the shaping of your community. Take notes below.

Determine Your Social Context

What is your community/city/neighborhood known for?

In what region of your country are you located? What are the perceptions about that region?

How does the weather affect the attitudes of your area?

What are the primary businesses in your area?

What are some of the other congregations in your area doing?

Take Action!

Implementation Task 2: Studying Demographics

Review the following segments in this module:

◆ *Studying Demographics*

Gather these materials. A checklist of places is enclosed with the organization named and blank spaces for your own leads. Take down names of people you meet so that you can easily reference them in the future. Sort out unwanted material and organize the rest.

Study Demographics

People Information

Population Trends

Internal Migration Patterns

Traffic Patterns

Land Use Projections

Take Action!

Implementation Task 3: Defining Attitudes, Values, and Religious Preferences

Review the following segments in this module:

◆ *Defining Attitudes, Values, and Religious Preferences*

Consult the Yellow Pages and do an informal count of different denominations represented in your community. Interview a sociologist of religion at a local college or university to gather his or her views on the religious climate in your area. Interview pastors at an interfaith meeting to get a pulse of your community's attitudes and values.

Define Attitudes, Values, and Religious Preferences

What percentage of your community is:

Conservative: _____

Liberal: _____

Progressive: _____

Fearful: _____

Open to change: _____

Traditional: _____

What generational personality differences/ similarities do you see in your community?

What do people value most in your community?
Fun? Family? Order? Honesty? etc.
Why?

What are the multi-cultural realities of your community?

What religious faiths dominate your area? What effect does this have on the community?

Take Action!

Implementation Task 4: Understanding Your Customer Profile

Review the following segments in this module:

◆ *Understanding Your Customer Profile*

Write a minimum of three profiles describing a typical person your church would try to reach in your community. The A profiles should define those your church is most likely to attract; B and C profiles are those you are less likely to attract. Be as specific as possible. Once again, consult all your data and be realistic on who you can reach or attract. (Note: In laying the foundation for mission agreement, it is most important to have clarity on the spiritual stage and religious background of the person your church will focus on reaching.)

Understand Your Customer	Profile "A"	Profile "B"	Profile "C"
Spiritual Stage			
Religious Background			
Age			
Income			
Occupation			
Gender			
Culture/Ethnicity			
Educational Level			
Area of Residence			
Understand Your Customer	Profile "A"	Profile "B"	Profile "C"
Hobbies			
Marital Status			
Persons per Household			
Household Pets			
Type of Car			
Vacation Activities			

Buying Habits			
Special Interests			
Health Status			
Physical Handicap			
Own/Rent Home			
Eating Habits			
Attitudes			
Other			

Section 2: Defining Your Core Ethos

The purpose of a compass is to provide an unchanging direction. Regardless of how you move, the compass continues to point to true north. Just as explorers need tools like the compass to help them arrive at their destination, churches need directional guidelines which help them determine where they are and where they need to be. We call this sense of direction 'Core Ethos.'

"Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; keep your foot from evil. My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge." Proverbs 4:25-27

Many churches take the wandering approach to church development, assuming that as long as they are busy and moving, they are headed in the right direction. It's like the marching band that assumes it has gone great distances because it has marched a lot but, in fact, it has traveled little. These churches are like the children of Israel, wandering in the desert yet never reaching the promised land. As you can imagine, this is frustrating and unproductive.

Much has been written in recent years about being mission-driven. Because of the numerous books, articles, and seminars available on the importance of establishing statements on mission, vision and values, not much time will be spent defending the importance of them. However, a definition of these terms is important in providing you with a clear understanding and common language when communicating about this strategic planning process.

In this section, you will discover how to develop and implement the four components that will help you establish and maintain your church's core identity:

- 1) **Mission**
- 2) **Vision**
- 3) **Values**
- 4) **Discipleship Outcomes**

Defining Your Mission

Leading a church begins with a different set of presuppositions than a business. A business has the challenge of deciding what it wants to be. A church, on the other hand, begins with a biblical mandate outlined in the Great Commission. Therefore, the mission statement of your church should ultimately be your church's understanding and expression of the Great Commission.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always.” Matthew 28:19,20

Unfortunately, many churches define themselves by the services and programs they offer. Theodore Levitt coined a term for this in the business world. He called it “marketing myopia.” He meant that people fail to recognize the broad scope of their business because they lack a marketing orientation. They unconsciously limit the scope of their business because they fail to look at it from a customer’s point of view. The same applies for pastors who limit the scope of their churches by failing to look at them from God’s perspective.

An example of marketing myopia is a railroad company that considers itself to only be in the “railroad” business. A customer-oriented description of the business would be: “We are in the transportation business.” With a marketing and customer focus, a telephone company becomes a communications organization, and a movie company becomes an entertainment organization.

Alfred Hitchcock recognized that he was in the “goose flesh” business. Charles Revlon, founder of Revlon Cosmetics, also understood this concept. He said, “In the factory we make perfume; in the store we sell hope.”

As you decipher what God has called your church to be, be sure to keep your mission statement broad enough to fulfill God’s biblical design. At the same time, make sure it is clear and concise enough to leave no doubt as to the primary focus of your church. Well-designed mission statements can be true to the biblical mandate and yet in some way reflect the unique identity or personality of your church. They are typically action oriented and express a clear understanding of the primary focus of your church.

Use the following questions to evaluate your mission statement:

- ◆ Does it express your church’s understanding of the Great Commission?
- ◆ Does it answer the question, “Why does our church exist?”
- ◆ Is it clear? Do the words chosen convey the meaning intended?
- ◆ Is it easily repeatable? Is it concise and easy to remember?
- ◆ Does it stir passion and commitment?

Mission Statement Examples

Following are several examples of mission statements that reflect a contemporary expression of the Great Commission:

- ◆ To turn unchurched people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.
- ◆ To create and sustain a community passionate about helping people experience transforming relationships with Christ.
- ◆ To devote our lives to Christ as we reach our community with His love.

- ◆ To lovingly lead seeking and believing friends to become fully devoted followers of Christ.
- ◆ To encourage seeking friends to develop a life-changing relationship with Christ.
- ◆ Meeting people where they are and loving them to where Christ wants them to be.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Tasks 5 and 6: Defining Your Mission and Evaluating Your Mission.

Determining Mission Support

It is very important to be clear on the mission of your church. In many cases, the root cause of problems and conflicts with members and ministry leaders is that they never really owned the mission of the church. Your challenge is to help people come to terms with their support of the mission. Just because they can quote it, doesn't mean they own it. They may say they support it, but do they really own and understand it? Whether your mission statement has been in existence for some time or is newly developed, the important thing is to understand the real level of understanding, ownership and support of your leaders and congregation for your mission.

Some people may know the general theme of your mission but they don't really own it or understand it. As the pastor, you may be able to talk for an hour on the mission because you own it and understand it, but many people in your church may not even be able to talk for two minutes about what it means to them.

If you were to ask the average person in your launch team to repeat your mission statement word-for-word from memory and to describe the meaning of each word, how do you think they would do? After all, every word in your mission statement should carry important meaning. If you can raise people's understanding of what your church is committed to, many of them will become much more supportive and will involve themselves in the implementation of your strategic plan.

To obtain a more objective view of the level of support your leaders and teams have for your mission, you can utilize the Mission Support Survey in the following Implementation Task:

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 7: Mission Support Survey.

Defining Your Vision

A vision statement is the snapshot of how things are going to be; the unique picture of a preferred future which is what it will look like when your mission is being lived out fully in your church. The vision statement answers the question, *What will it look like when we arrive?* Many churches confuse the vision statement with a mission statement. While many mission statements are often similar, a vision statement reflects the unique calling of your church. It is a succinct, distilled statement of where your church sees itself going.

Even though all churches must, in some way, embrace the Great Commission as their mission, each church has its own unique sense of calling or vision. One church may excel at lifting up the value of creativity, and another church may excel at ministries of compassion. God has arranged the parts of the Body in such a way that each part needs the other parts. This means that no church will be able to accomplish God's Kingdom agenda for our world by itself.

Until you can succinctly answer the question of why you exist as a specific church, you will probably be fuzzy about everything else. In one Peanuts cartoon, Charlie Brown is seen shooting arrows into a fence, and then drawing circles around each one. Linus says, "Charlie, that's no way to shoot arrows." Charlie responds, "I know, but this way I never miss." Many churches do what they've always done with little analysis of "why" and draw circles around their results as if to say, "We are succeeding." A vision statement defines your church's sense of destiny. Two churches with an identical mission might not share the same vision statement. God is not redundant and is not likely to raise up identical congregations right next to each other.

"I will praise the Lord who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I have set the Lord always before me. Because He is at my right hands, I will not be shaken." Psalm 16:7

Discovering God's Specific Calling

The best way to determine a vision is by discovering the specific calling of God for your church. Each church has a specific part in God's blueprint. More than any of the other components, defining a vision is the primary responsibility of the lead pastor. Throughout the Bible, God gives visions to individuals. For example, God gave Moses a peek into the Promised Land—a clear picture of where Israel was headed. It is very important that the pastor feels passionate about the vision and can communicate it in a variety of compelling ways.

There are no cookbook processes for drumming up a vision. It tends to be personal, intuitive, and passionate. A vision statement allows the congregation to simply and clearly connect with where the church is headed as a whole.

Subsequent programs, events, budgets, staff, goal-setting and strategic planning should align with this vision of the future.

Vision is the compelling picture of your preferable future. Some churches want to include specific measurable goals like the type or size of building. This can be desirable in certain circumstances, but often it is more effective to focus the vision on the quality or characteristics of your preferred future. A vision statement may be as dramatic as including a specific end result. For some it involves one large, outlandish but possible accomplishment. It may describe an accomplishment that will take 10-30 years. For Moses it was the promised land; for Abraham an endless line of descendants; for the disciples the coming of God's Kingdom on earth; for Paul a church planting movement. Vision empowers people to see what is possible and to move in that direction. A compelling vision tugs at our hearts and motivates our wills.

The kinds of vision statements that seem to have the greatest impact on the church over the long run are those that are boiled down to short pithy statements that the leaders can impregnate with meaning over and over again in a variety of ways. When good things happen in your church, you will be able to connect those events with the vision and permeate it with more and more meaning over time. So each time people hear the words of your vision statement they get excited about how the church is indeed becoming that vision.

Some pastors and churches will want to put quantitative goals in the vision and some will not. There is room for both.

Use the following questions to evaluate your vision statement:

- ◆ Does it clearly state the ideal future picture—what your church is going to become when your mission is being accomplished?
- ◆ Does it indicate what needs might go unmet or how the world might be a different place without your church?
- ◆ Is it clear? (Do the words chosen convey the meaning intended?)
- ◆ Is it easily repeatable? (Is it concise and easy to remember?)
- ◆ Is it believable, challenging, inspiring and compelling?

<p><i>"May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed."</i> Psalm 20:4</p>
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Vision Statement Examples

- ◆ To be a community where God's love and transforming power are demonstrated through our lives to our world.
- ◆ To provide a safe haven where people scarred by sin and burned by religion receive love, hope, and guidance through Jesus Christ.
- ◆ To be a biblically functioning community of believers so that Christ's redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.

- ◆ To become a vibrant congregation of 3,000 people which is developing leaders, starting new churches and meeting needs in our community.
- ◆ To become a church that leads an every increasing number of lost people to Christ, helps thousands of people move toward full devotion to Him, and experiences meaningful community.
- ◆ To be a small-groups community where spiritual growth flows out of intimacy with Christ and where people are attracted to Him through our lifestyles of compassion, humility, and service.

Your reason for existence as a church will generally revolve around a need that your church feels particularly called by God to meet. Maybe you saw a regional need, like a contemporary style in a neighborhood that lacked such a style of church. Perhaps it was a demographic need, such as a church that targets an increasingly elderly neighborhood. Answering the question, *What is our specific calling?* revolves around the need the church is filling or the problem it is committed to address.

Reflect about the specific needs your church feels called to meet and write down the reason why your church exists. Seek to answer this question, “If your church was never planted, what would be lost in your community and what would be lost in God’s kingdom?”

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Tasks 8 and 9: Defining Your Vision and Evaluating Your Vision Statement.

Determining Vision Support

As with your mission statement, it is important to gain clear knowledge of the level of support for the vision. To obtain a more objective view of the level of support your leaders and teams have for your vision, you can utilize the Vision Support Survey in the following Implementation Task:

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 10: Vision Support Survey.

Defining Your Core Values

The next step in defining the direction of your church is to identify the enduring, no-compromise principles that will guide how you do ministry in the pursuit of your mission and vision. Everyone holds values regarding many things in their life. You may have values related to your marriage, your kids, your finances, your recreational time, your doctrinal beliefs, etc. If you were developing a list of

values related to how you spend your recreational time, you might list things like fun, exercise, stress-free or affordable. If you were developing a list of values related to your doctrinal beliefs, you might list things like scriptural inerrancy, salvation by faith alone or baptism by immersion. But in the strategic planning process you are focusing on the values of your church related to how your church will do ministry together as you go about accomplishing your mission.

Although there are many values your church could list related to how they will do ministry together, you need to narrow the list down to the top five to ten most important values. Select the values that you feel most effectively describe the principle parameters that should guide the decisions, priorities and behaviors of your church as you carry out your mission.

Use the following questions to evaluate your values:

- ◆ Do they represent enduring values based on biblical truths?
- ◆ Are they the most important no-compromise, non-negotiable guiding principles regarding how we do ministry in our church?
- ◆ Are they principles that will guide the way decisions are made, money is spent, people are treated, and ministries are planned, executed, and evaluated?
- ◆ Are they stated in a way that will live in the hearts and minds of ministry leaders and guide their decisions and actions?

Following are several examples of the different ways that churches may choose to express their values:

Examples of Values Expressed in a Sentence

Some churches choose to describe their values in short descriptive sentences. Following are examples of this type of value statement: *

- ◆ We believe that anointed teaching is the catalyst for transformation in individuals' lives and in the church.
- ◆ We believe that lost people matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church.
- ◆ We believe that the church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.
- ◆ We believe that Christ-followers should manifest authenticity and yearn for continuous growth.
- ◆ We believe that a church should operate as a unified community of servants with men and women stewarding their spiritual gifts.
- ◆ We believe that loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life.
- ◆ We believe that life-change happens best in small groups.
- ◆ We believe that excellence honors God and inspires people.
- ◆ We believe that churches should be led by people with leadership gifts.
- ◆ We believe that the pursuit of full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every believer.

**Adapted from Willow Creek Community Church, Participating Membership Manual, 1995; Willow Creek Association.*

Examples of Values Expressed in a Word or Phrase

Some churches choose to describe their values in a one or two word phrase that is easy to remember. Following are examples of this type of value statement.

- ◆ Evangelism
- ◆ Unconditional Love
- ◆ Relevance of Gospel
- ◆ Discipleship
- ◆ Team Ministry
- ◆ Effective Leadership
- ◆ Golden Rule
- ◆ Passionate Worship
- ◆ Excellence

Examples of Descriptive Statements for Values

For greater clarity, some churches choose to develop descriptive statements that further explain what each value means or looks like in their church. These additional descriptive statements can be used as an educational tool to consistently communicate how you intend your values to affect the way your church does its ministry. These descriptive statements can help project your values into everyday action to clarify the philosophy behind what each value means to your church. These descriptions may deal with things like attitudes, relationships, style, process, demeanor, quality, etc. Following are examples of descriptive statements using the first three values from the previous list:

Example 1: Word or Phrase Values with Sentence Descriptions

1. **Evangelism**
Our singular mandate is to passionately seek to save the lost.
2. **Unconditional Love**
We unconditionally accept and encourage others in their spiritual journey.
3. **Relevance**
Our church is culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.

Example 2: Sentence Values with Expanded Description

1. **We believe that lost people matter to God, and they therefore ought to matter to us.**
This includes the concepts of relational evangelism, the belief that evangelism is a process, and the understanding that at this church there is always room for one more. Matt 18:12-14, Mark 2:15-17, Luke 15:1-10.
2. **We believe that loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life because life change happens best in relationships.**

This includes the concepts of unconditional love-driven relationships, ministry and discipleship accomplished in relational teams, vulnerability, accountability, and loving confrontation. Neh 3, Prov 27:17, Luke 10:1, John 13:34-35, Acts 2:44-47, 1 Cor 13, Eph 4:15-16.

3. We believe that the church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.

This includes the concept of sensitively relating to our culture through our facility, printed materials, the use of the arts, and the understanding that this will require continued change in our methods. 1 Cor 9:19-23.

Example 3: Word or Phrase Values with Expanded Description

1. Seeking Lost People

People who don't know Christ are extremely valuable to God and therefore they are highly valuable to us. We believe that every person who does not have a vital relationship with God is in some way seeking to fill that void. Because Christ paid the ultimate price to draw all people to God, it is our first priority to help spiritually seeking people develop a relationship with Him. We value the personal commitment of every believer to develop authentic relationships with spiritually lost people, influencing them toward a relationship with God. Personally and corporately we intentionally invest significant time, energy and resources pursuing those who are out of fellowship with God just as Jesus did when He was on earth. We want our public services to be sensitive to the needs of seeking people. And our goal is to provide a place where seekers are accepted regardless of their spiritual or life condition, and where they are led toward an intimate relationship with Christ. *Luke 15:1-10, 2 Peter 3:9*

2. Sharing Unconditional Love and Grace

Because Christ freely gives us favor we don't deserve, we seek to share this same grace with others. His grace alone, not our effort or accomplishment, is responsible for producing eternal life, freedom from sin and its control, and lasting change in our character. All our decisions and actions will be rooted in unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness. We are committed to focus on and celebrate grace, always seeking to create a prevalent atmosphere of graciousness where love is shown in practical, everyday ways. *John 13:34-35, 1 John 4:7-12, Phil 2:1-5*

3. Communicating a Culturally Relevant Gospel

We value the relevancy of the Gospel to every generation, culture and people group. The truth of God never changes, but the culture in which we apply these unchanging principles is constantly changing. We seek to understand our culture and to constantly improve the effectiveness of our communication of truth in creative ways. We evaluate our methods based on scripture, not tradition. We attempt to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a simple, practical, meaningful, and easy-to-understand manner that reaches the heart. *1 Cor 9:19-23, Col 4:5*

Examples of Values Expressed in a Sentence and Followed by a Question*

Biblical Authority

God has spoken to us through the Bible and we recognize it as the final authority for our lives.

Are your priorities consistent with Scripture?

Intimacy with God

God desires an intimate relationship with each of us.

Is your relationship with God growing?

Relevant Environments

Every environment should be designed to effectively connect with its target audience.

Are your environments appealing, engaging, and helpful?

Relational Evangelism

God's message of forgiveness through Christ is most effectively conveyed within the context of personal relationships.

In whom are you investing?

Authentic Community

Accountability, belonging, care and spiritual growth happen best with relationally-connected believers.

Are you in a small group?

Strategic Service

Our spiritual gifts have maximum impact when exercised in support of our strategy.

Where are you serving?

Intentional Apprenticing

We are responsible to pass along to others the knowledge, skills and opportunities that have been entrusted to us.

Who are you apprenticing?

**From North Point Community Church, www.northpoint.org.*

As you can see from these examples, the same core value can have different nuances of meaning and application to different churches. Gaining clarity about how you describe your values can help insure the desired application to the attitudes and behaviors of everyone involved in the ministry of your church.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Tasks 11 and 12: Identifying Your Values and Evaluating Your Values.

Turning Aspirational Values into Actual Values

Once you have defined a list of values, it may be helpful to go through a process of determining the degree to which each value is currently embraced within the daily life of your church. Hopefully there are some values on your list that are “actual” – those that just naturally exist and flow out of real experience. And there might be some values that are important to your church but are not held as an “actual value” which could affect the daily lives of everyone in your church. These might be called “aspirational values.” When you identify an aspirational value, it is often very enlightening for leaders to identify what alternate value is currently more held in place of the value you desire. As you identify the values that are being lived out in place of those to which you aspire, you may discover that there are many “unintentional values” that influence your church.

Following are some examples of unintentional values:

- ◆ All ideas will be measured by the phrase, “We’ve never done it that way before.”
- ◆ As long as we’re right, we don’t have to be loving.
- ◆ Our highest priority is to keep our existing members happy, comfortable and coming back.
- ◆ Compromising enough to please everyone is more important than accomplishing the clear vision God has given this church.
- ◆ Our music style (or the organ) is the most important thing in this church.

It is not likely that anyone would intentionally develop values like this, but you may be surprised at what values have unintentionally crept into your church—values that actually guide discussions and decisions every week in your church and are counter to the values your church aspires to live by.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 13: Identifying Actual Vs. Aspirational Values

Defining Your Discipleship Outcomes

The final step in setting a clear direction for your church is to define your discipleship outcomes. Just as an architect carefully designs the framework of a building to support the construction of a facility that will accomplish its intended purpose, so you must design the strategic framework of your church to support the development of a ministry full of people who are participating in your mission. The discipleship outcomes of your church can be defined by identifying those key characteristics that you expect to see in the lives of people who are fully participating in the mission of your church. If you could boil it down to just three to six categories, what do you want to see happen in the lives of those who are living out, or experiencing, the mission of your church? These are the

discipleship outcomes that you want every aspect of your church to cultivate and which will therefore influence the development of your church strategy.

Discipleship Outcomes Examples

In many ways, your discipleship outcomes are like a more detailed breakdown that assigns some categories to your church's mission. The Great Commission has just two major categories, which are to make disciples and to teach them. Saddleback Community Church breaks down the elements of the Great Commission into the Five M's (Membership, Maturity, Ministry, Mission, and Magnification). Willow Creek Community Church has Five G's (Grace, Growth, Groups, Good Stewardship, and Gifts). Community Christian Church (Naperville, IL) states their discipleship outcomes in three C's (Celebrate, Connect, Contribute). Other churches break it down into four E's (Evangelism, Edification, Exalting and Equipping). Still others choose to describe their outcomes in short phrases like: "Know Christ", "Grow in Christ", "Serve Christ" and "Share Christ." Or, "Worship God", "Live by God's Word", "Contribute to God's Work", and "Impact God's World".

Your discipleship outcomes provide the big picture agenda for how your church will accomplish its mission. Because of this, the remainder of the strategic planning and implementation process will be significantly influenced by your discipleship outcomes. However, defining your outcomes is not the same as defining the leadership structure of the church. Your outcomes may have some effect on staffing needs and reporting relationships, but ultimately, they have more to do with strategic planning and defining focus than with the staff flowchart of the church. Your organizational structure should be flexible enough to change as needed in order to most effectively accomplish the strategic focus that flows out of your discipleship outcome priorities at any point in time.

In an optimally, well-led organizational model, every ministry area in your church owns some responsibility for helping everyone in that ministry to experience each of your discipleship outcome factors. Once your church gets past grand opening, it will be helpful for you to create a matrix with the outcomes on the left axis and the major departments of your church on the top axis:

Organizational Structure — Ministry Departments

**O
U
T
C
O
M
E
S**

	Programming Ministry	Student Ministries	Adult Ministries	Operations Ministries	Small Group Ministries
Evangelism					
Edification					
Exalting					
Equipping					

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 14: Identifying Your Discipleship Outcomes.

Determining Your Discipleship Outcomes Support

Once you have clearly defined the discipleship outcomes upon which your church will be built, you need to develop routine processes to keep these outcomes in front of your people and help them regularly assess how well they understand and live them out in their life and ministry. The next implementation task will lead you through a process to develop an assessment tool that can be routinely utilized to raise each member's level of understanding and application of your outcomes.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 15: Assessing Your Discipleship Outcomes Support.

Determining Support for Your Core Ethos

You have now defined the four elements of your Core Ethos by defining your mission, vision, values and discipleship outcomes. Remember, your church's mission statement should restate the Great Commission in contemporary language. No matter how you say it, you should be able to draw a line directly to Matthew 28. Vision is about the specific calling and role of your church. It paints a picture of what your church will become when the Great Commission is carried out. Values are the foundational principles that guide how your regular attenders behave as they live out the mission, vision and values. Your discipleship outcomes outline the organizing strategy of the church which every program should be designed to support.

Once you have defined these important elements, it is important to gain an accurate assessment of everyone's understanding and support. Many pastors think that if they could just develop statements that are perfectly wordsmithed or if they present them in just the right way, somehow the church would begin to move in the right direction. But the transformational power of this process is not in the perfection or presentation of these statements. The power lies in the process of integrating the substance of each of these statements into the very fabric of your church. Over time you can learn how to insure that everyone in your church is bombarded with such a consistent set of signals that it will be impossible for anyone to misunderstand the direction of your church. In the next section of this module you will begin to develop a strategy that will help you align your programs, process, and plans, resources and energies toward the accomplishment of the direction you've defined.

Before you move on to developing your strategy, take some time to assess how well everyone understands and owns the direction of your church and to determine what can be done to increase that support. The greater the support for your Core Ethos, the greater the likelihood of unity and synergy in developing and implementing your church-wide strategy. The following Implementation Task will help you identify how well each of the leaders and teams in your church understand and support your Mission, Vision, Values and Discipleship Outcomes.

Take Action!

*Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 16:
Determining Support for the Core Ethos.*

Take Action!

Implementation Task 5: Defining Your Mission

Review the following segment in this module:

◆ Defining Your Mission

Step 1: Think about your church and determine its primary focus. In a way, you could ask the question, “What ‘business’ is our church really in?” Think about how you would describe the biblical mandate for your church. Then write it in the box below.

Step 1: Define what “business” your church is really in.

Step 2: Write a few drafts until you develop a mission statement that reflects your church’s understanding and commitment to the Great Commission. If you already have a mission statement, write it here.

Step 2: Write your mission statement.

Step 3: Determine how well your mission statement reflects what you wrote about the primary focus of your church in Step 1? Write down any ideas you have for improvement of your mission statement.

Step 3: Improve Your Mission Statement.

Take Action!

Implementation Task 7: Mission Support Survey

Review the following segment in this module:

◆ *Determining Mission Support*

Use the survey on the following two pages to create an assessment tool which will assist you in gaining an objective evaluation of the level of support your leaders have for your mission. Following is a suggested process to help you gain the most benefit from this type of assessment.

1. Provide the questions to your conception team. Encourage them to do a personal assessment of their support for the mission of your church.
2. Meet as a team and share individual assessment responses with the other team members. Then come up with an overall team assessment by calculating the average score given to each statement.
3. Reflect as a team on the results of this assessment and determine what can be done to improve their individual and team support of the mission.

Mission Support Survey

Our mission statement expresses what we believe to be the ultimate purpose of the church. It is our contemporary expression of the Great Commission.

A. Is it clear? (Can you recall the actual words of the statement?)

Write down our church mission statement, from memory, as close to word-for-word as you can.

On a scale of 1-6, rate how completely and easily you can recall this statement.

1 = Can't remember any of it

6 = Can easily repeat it word-for-word anytime

1

2

3

4

5

6

B. Is it understood? (Can you unpack the meaning of the words?)

Divide our mission statement into a few short phases and describe what each of these phrases means to you and why it is included in this statement.

Phrase 1:

What this means to me is:

Phrase 2:

What this means to me is:

Phrase 3:

What this means to me is:

Phrase 4:

What this means to me is:

What does our mission statement say about why our church exists — our ultimate objective or purpose?

On a scale of 1-6, rate how effectively you feel you can describe the meaning of this statement.

1 = Can't say much about the meaning

6 = Could easily give a passionate, compelling, impromptu talk to anyone about the meaning

1

2

3

4

5

6

C. Is there ownership? (Are you passionate about it and motivated by it?)

On a scale of 1-6, rate how strongly you agree that this fully represents the purpose of our church.

1 = Completely Disagree

6 = Strongly Agree.

1

2

3

4

5

6

On a scale of 1-6, rate how much this statement ignites your passion for involvement in our church.

1 = Doesn't move me at all

6 = Motivates me to passionately sacrifice for the cause

1

2

3

4

5

6

If you rated ownership of this statement low, explain why. What do you think is missing?

Take Action!

Implementation Task 8: Defining Your Vision

Review the following segment in this Module:

◆ Defining Your Vision

Think about what specific needs your church exists to fulfill. What do you sense is God's specific calling for your church? Write your ideas in the box below.

What specific needs does your church fulfill?

Step 2: Write a few drafts until you develop a vision statement that describes the ideal future of your church. Or if you already have a vision statement, write it here.

Step 2: Write your vision statement.

Step 3: Determine how well your vision statement reflects what you wrote about the specific calling of your church in Step 1. Write down any ideas you have for improvement of your vision statement.

Step 3: Improving Your Vision Statement.

Take Action!

Implementation Task 10: Vision Support Survey

Review the following segment in this module:

◆ *Determining Vision Support*

Use the survey on the following two pages to create an assessment tool that will assist you in gaining an objective evaluation of the level of support your leaders have for your vision. Following is a suggested process to help you gain the most benefit from this type of assessment.

1. Provide the questions to your conception team to encourage them to do a personal assessment of their support for the vision of your church.
2. Meet as a team and share individual assessment responses with the other team members. Then come up with an overall team assessment by calculating the average score given to each statement.
3. The team can then reflect on the results of this assessment and determine what can be done to improve their individual and team support of the vision.

Vision Support Survey

Our vision statement expresses what we believe our church will be like when we are living out our mission. It is our expression of the ideal future for this particular church.

A. Is our vision clear? (Can you recall the actual words of the statement?)

Write down our church vision statement, from memory, as close to word-for-word as you can.

On a scale of 1-6, rate how completely and easily you can recall this vision statement.

1 = Can't remember any of it

6 = Can easily repeat it word-for-word anytime

1

2

3

4

5

6

B. Is our vision understood? (Can you unpack the meaning of the words?)

Divide our vision statement into a few short phases and describe what each of these phrases means to you and why it is included in this statement.

Phrase 1:

What this means to me is:

Phrase 2:

What this means to me is:

Phrase 3:

What this means to me is:

Phrase 4:

What this means to me is:

What does our vision statement say about why our church exists — our ultimate objective or purpose?

On a scale of 1-6, rate how effectively you feel you can describe the meaning of this vision statement.

1 = Can't say much about the meaning

6 = Could easily give a passionate, compelling, impromptu talk to anyone about the meaning

1 2 3 4 5 6

C. Is there ownership of our vision? (Are you passionate about it and motivated by it?)

On a scale of 1-6, rate how strongly you agree that this vision statement fully represents a picture of the desired future our church

1 = Completely Disagree

6 = Strongly Agree

1 2 3 4 5 6

On a scale of 1-6, rate how much this statement ignites your passion for involvement in our church.

1 = Doesn't move me at all

6 = Motivates me to passionately sacrifice for the cause

1 2 3 4 5 6

If you rated ownership of this statement low, explain why? What do you think is missing?

D. Is there energy toward creating alignment toward our vision?

To what degree do you feel everything in our church supports this vision?

1 = Hardly anything supports it

6 = Every process, practice, program and person is clearly aligned toward accomplishing it

1 2 3 4 5 6

To what degree do you proactively communicate this vision and seek to instill it into the regular activities of ministry processes, practices and programs?

1 = Never talk about it

6 = Always talk about it and find new ways to implement it

1 2 3 4 5 6

Take Action!

Implementation Task 11: Identifying Your Values

Review the following segment in this Module:

◆ Identifying Your Values

Think about the top 5-10 most important enduring, no-compromise principals that will guide our ministry as we seek to accomplish our mission and vision. Write your Values ideas on the chart below.

Values	Biblical Reference
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Take Action!

*Implementation Task 13:
Identifying Actual vs. Aspirational Values*

Review the following segment in this Module:

◆ Turning Aspirational Values Into Actual Values

Meet with your conception team to make a list of your values. Write “Aspirational” next to those you hope your church will fully embrace someday and “Actual” next to those that you feel your group currently embraces well. Then, below those values marked “Aspirational,” write down the unintentional value that is currently held in reality.

Values	Actual or Aspirational?
1.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
2.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
3.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
4.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
5.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
6.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
7.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	

8.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
9.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	
10.	
If aspirational, what are the related unintentional values?	

Take Action!

*Implementation Task 14:
Identifying Your Discipleship Outcomes*

Review the following segment in this module:

◆ Identifying Your Discipleship Outcomes

Write your answers to the following questions in the space below:

If you could define three to five key elements that you believe your church should be organized to accomplish, what would they be?

What are the discipleship outcomes around which your church will be organized?
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Now think of a descriptive, easy to remember, one or two word label for each element of your outcomes and write your labels in the space below.

Give clear titles to your discipleship outcome factors.
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Take Action!

Implementation Task 15: Assessing Your Discipleship Outcomes Support

Review the following segment in this module:

◆ *Determining Your Discipleship Outcomes Support*

After you have established the discipleship outcomes of your church, develop an assessment tool to help individuals understand how well they understand and live the outcomes you have defined. To do this, first review the two samples below. Then complete the following blank template by working through these four steps:

1. Write down the title of each of your outcome factors.
2. Develop a brief description of each outcome factor that could serve as an introduction to explain why the assessment questions related to each factor are being asked.
3. For each outcome factor, develop three to five questions that helps individuals assess how well they understand and live out each factor.
4. Develop definitions for the rating continuum you will use related to each outcome factor.

Discipleship Outcome Factor Assessment Questions – **Sample 1:**

<p>Outcome Factor: Growth (Spiritual Formation)</p> <p><i>Description of this Outcome Factor:</i></p> <p>In order to accomplish our mission of helping people become fully devoted followers of Christ, it is our goal to help everyone in our church identify and take the next step(s) they need to take to continually grow spiritually. This assessment will help you identify areas of strengths and areas for improvement that are related to growing in your relationship with Christ. Please evaluate yourself in each area below by circling a number on each continuum that indicates what you feel is your current position.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Do I read and apply God's Word?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= I struggle connecting with God and don't read God's Word very often. 4= I read occasionally but it's hard to apply. 7= I consistently read, understand and apply God's Word.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Do I have quiet time with God?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= I do not practice solitude. 4= I have times of solitude but not very often. 7= I regularly spend quiet time alone with God.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Do I listen to God's voice during prayer?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= I don't know how to discern God's voice. 4= I am not sure if it is His voice or mine. 7= I consistently discern God's voice and know His will for my life.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Am I an active, authentic worshipper at church and at home?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= I struggle with this; it is difficult to yield or give my self fully to worship. 4= I have made some progress in yielding in this area. 7= God has consistent control of my life in this area.</p>						

Discipleship Outcome Factor Assessment Questions – **Sample 2:**

<p>Outcome Factor: Group (Community/Fellowship)</p> <p><i>Description of this Outcome Factor:</i></p> <p>In order to accomplish our mission of helping people become fully devoted followers of Christ, it is our goal to help everyone in our church experience healthy relationships in authentic Christian community. This assessment will help you identify areas of strengths and areas for improvement that are related to your experience of fellowship in our church. Please evaluate yourself in each area below by circling a number on each continuum that indicates what you feel is your current position.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Do I invest time in building relationships?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= I have few or no close relationships in a small group or life. 4= I have some relationships that are meaningful. 7= I have strong, authentic relationships in my small group and in my life.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Do I ask thoughtful, pertinent questions and really listen to understand those in my life?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= I find it difficult to listen without talking too. 4= I am a fair listener but need to improve. 7= People tell me they feel "listened to" and understood by me.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Do I have healthy relationships?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= I do not set healthy boundaries. 4= Sometimes the boundaries I set are appropriate. 7= I consistently set appropriate boundaries in my relationships.</p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p> <p>Do I "speak the truth in love"?</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p> <p>1= This is very difficult for me to do. 4= I can do this sometimes, but not always. 7= I consistently speak both tough and tender words in love.</p>						

Discipleship Outcome Factor Assessment Questions – **Worksheet:**

<p>Factor 1:</p> <p><i>Description of this Outcome Factor:</i></p>						
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p>						
1=			4=			7
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p>						
1=			4=			7=
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p>						
1=			4=			7=
<p><i>Assessment Question:</i></p>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<p><i>Assessment Rating Definitions:</i></p>						
1			4=			7=

Take Action!

Implementation Task 16: Determining Support for the Core Ethos

Review the following segment in this module:

◆ *Your Core Ethos*

Completing this exercise with your conception team will help you determine how well your leaders understand the Mission, Vision, Values, and Discipleship Outcomes of your church. Think about the four elements of your core ethos and ask the following questions about each of them.

Question 1: **Is it clear?** Are the words obviously comprehensible, simple, usable and repeatable?

	<i>Not at All</i>		<i>So-so</i>		<i>Totally</i>
Mission	1	2	3	4	5
Vision	1	2	3	4	5
Values	1	2	3	4	5
Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5

Question 2: **Is it understood?** Can people unpack the meaning of the words in such a way that reveals they “get it?”

	<i>Not at All</i>		<i>So-so</i>		<i>Totally</i>
Mission	1	2	3	4	5
Vision	1	2	3	4	5
Values	1	2	3	4	5
Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5

Question 3: **Is there ownership?** Are people passionate about it, willing to sacrifice for it, and motivated by it?

	<i>Not at All</i>		<i>So-so</i>		<i>Totally</i>
Mission	1	2	3	4	5
Vision	1	2	3	4	5
Values	1	2	3	4	5
Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5

Question 4: **Is there energy toward creating alignment?** Do people invest proactive effort to express the core ethos and instill it

into the regular activities of ministry processes, practices and programs?

	<i>Not at All</i>		<i>So-so</i>		<i>Totally</i>	
Mission	1	2	3	4	5	
Vision	1	2	3	4	5	
Values	1	2	3	4	5	
Outcomes	1	2	3	4	5	

Section 3: Developing Your Strategy

The first two sections of this module lay a critical foundation for the rest of the strategic planning and implementation process. Your mission, vision, values and discipleship outcomes declare what you believe to be God's desired destination for your church. The next phase of strategic planning is to identify the gauges (critical success factors), measurements, and church-wide objectives that will get you to that desired destination. During the pre-launch phase of your church, you must stay focused on the activities that will create the DNA, systems and momentum that will eventually make your church a powerful force for the kingdom. This section will help your entire church begin to move in the direction you've just defined.

By clearly articulating your core ethos, you help everyone around you understand what you believe to be the heart of God for your church. Developing your church strategy is really about organizational alignment. It is about systemic, church-wide obedience to follow in the direction God is leading. This begins with asking God, "What do you want us to do so that your direction might be fulfilled in us?" The essence of systematic obedience for a church is understanding where you believe God is calling your church to go and then being very intentional about being and doing what He has called you to.

"...describe the temple to the people of Israel... Let them consider the plan...make known to them the design of the temple – its arrangement, its exits and entrances – its whole design and all its regulations and laws. Write these down before them so that they may be faithful to its design and follow all its regulations." Ezekiel 43:10

Strategy Overview

There are five steps involved in developing an effective strategy that will move your church in the direction you've established by creating your core ethos:

1. Identify your **Gauges (Critical Success Factors)** — What are the few strategic areas on which it is critical to focus at this stage in order to accomplish your mission and vision?
2. Determine your **Measurements** — How will you measure progress in each of the gauges you've defined?
3. Identify your **Church-Wide Objectives** — Based on how you've determined you'll measure progress, what is one far-reaching church-wide initiative that will insure progress in each critical area?
4. Identify your **Shared Goals** — What will each ministry area contribute to the accomplishment of each church-wide objective?
5. Develop **Ministry Area Plans** — What specific plans will each ministry area implement in order to help achieve the shared goals of the church?

During the pre-launch phase of your church, your coach will keep it simple. He will help you understand and implement the first four steps above. He will even prescribe for you the gauges that you need to watch during your first eleven months. Once your church moves beyond grand opening, you will hopefully enroll in the Ministry Advantage coaching system. Your MA coach will at that time help you move through all five steps and customize your strategic plan according to your church's long-term vision and unique realities.

Understanding Your Gauges

The gauges are the key areas in the current reality of your church where exceptional performance is critical. They are the factors that are most likely to determine the success of following God's direction for your ministry during this stage in the development of your church. They are key areas where failure to perform well will harm your church or even lead to ultimate failure. Your strategy will ultimately focus the attention and energy of every ministry in your church on these few critical areas in order to make significant progress.

Paying proper attention to the gauges keeps you from getting distracted or from trying to do too many things, and protects your launch team from burnout. While the critical areas of strategic focus may vary among established churches, and even from year to year within the same church, they are constant with emerging churches. If you pay attention to your gauges during pre-launch and they indicate health and progress, you're on your way to launching a church of great impact. If you ignore the gauges or measure the wrong things, your church will likely plateau early and your long-term results will be insignificant. Remember that your gauges lay the foundation for everything you do and everything you will become.

Imagine riding in a plane at 30,000 feet and looking down on your church through the lens of your mission, vision, values and discipleship outcomes. From that perspective, notice the things at which your church must excel during this period of time to provide the impetus to move in the direction you've defined. There are hundreds of important things your church can do. But during the pre-launch phase of your church, you must prevail in four key areas if your mission, vision, values and outcomes will become a reality.

Identifying Your Gauges

Think of your gauges or critical success factors as the vital signs of your church. What should you be doing well? Imagine that you were absent for a period of time and you were unable to communicate with anyone in your church. If you were finally able to make one brief phone call in which you could ask only a few questions, what would you ask to determine if the church was on track? Another way of stressing this importance of the gauges is to ask: In what areas do we need to hit a homerun in order to have a great grand opening?

Glad you asked! Here are the five gauges that you will be watching:

Gauge #1: Investing

Definition: Investing is a missional way of life. Using Jesus as our example, investing is: (a) going out where people are, intentionally interacting with those who need what you have to offer (a relationship with Jesus and a meaningful community of faith); and (b) helping those who are ready take the next step on their spiritual journey. We invest in people we know as well as those we don't.

Jesus modeled investing with three focal points. First, the three disciples, Peter, James and John. Second, the remainder of the 12 disciples (and later the 70). Third, the people whose lives He could change by His ministry of compassion and His death on the cross.

Each person on your launch team will also invest with three focal points. First, each person will create his or her Impact List of three local lost people who will not go to heaven unless something changes between now and eternity. Second, each person will invest in his or her larger sphere of influence. The Greek word for this is *oikos* and refers to one's household in a broader sense. It includes local family, friends, neighbors and coworkers. Third, each person in your church will pray for ways to invest in the lives of others throughout your city or region. They will consider every interaction as a potential opportunity to nudge them closer to Christ. (See Module 3, *Outreach and Assimilation*.)

Qualifying interactions

- Have a spiritual conversation
- Give a church brochure and/or business card
- Invite to a church-sponsored event
- Add to the church's special events mailing list
- Rapport-building interaction
- Conduct a community survey

Note: Interactions with launch team members do not qualify.

Gauge #2: Compelling Weekend Experiences

Definition: A compelling weekend experience is an event you are blessed by attending, and to which you are proud to invite a friend. We call this the "Oh Darn!" factor. If you leave the weekend experience and say to yourself, "Oh darn! I should have brought a friend to this one!", that qualifies as a compelling weekend experience. If that becomes the pattern, you and others will invite the people in whom you are investing. (See Module 4, *Weekend Experiences*.)

Gauge #3: Grand Opening Ministry Teams

Definition: From day one of your church plant through your official grand opening, the church focuses primarily on (a) personal investing, (b) two types of public events: weekend experiences and bridge events, and (c) the infrastructure necessary to support them. If you try to pretend that you are a full-fledged church during pre-launch, you will disappoint those who attend and/or your

launch team will burn out. As you build toward grand opening, you will stay particularly focused on the following eleven critical tasks. They can be done by 11 teams, based on your fractal. (See illustration in the Handbook and in Module 1, *Starting from Square One*.)

Team 1: Weekend Experience

- ◆ Programming
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Tech
- ◆ Set-up and take-down
- ◆ Impressions

Team 2: Outreach

- ◆ Bridge events
- ◆ Marketing

Team 3: Operations

- ◆ Data management
- ◆ Financial systems

Team 4: KidZone

- ◆ Programming
- ◆ Impressions

Gauge #4: Increasing Attendance

Definition: If you will plant a church that never stops making an ever-larger impact on its community, you must begin to build momentum and create the DNA of constant growth. Do not concern yourself with the size of your launch team when you start. Be concerned instead with the trend of attendance at your preview services.

Gauge #5: Church Finances

Definition: Oftentimes church planters are afraid to talk about finances; they act as if money is a four-letter word. The result is low commitment on the part of the launch team and ongoing financial struggles. No one thinks that a church can serve the community and reach the lost without money. Seekers don't mind it when the offering basket is passed or announcements are made about the financial side of the church – as long as it is done appropriately. Healthy churches regularly challenge their launch team members to return a faithful tithe and to sacrifice beyond the tithe to see the church prosper. As church attendance grows, finances should grow as well.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 17: Understanding Your Gauges.

Determining Measurements

Once you understand the critical areas that require strategic focus, you will need to know how to measure progress in each of those areas. These measurements will serve as guideposts to help you develop the objectives and goals that are most likely to produce the desired outcome for your church.

Choosing the right measurement for each critical success factor is a process that forces you to prayerfully answer the question, "At this stage in the development of our church, how will we define improvement or effectiveness in this critical area?"

Determining the right measurements will also lay a foundation for goal setting and evaluation that will enable you to "manage by fact" rather than simply managing by intuition or subjective judgment. By clearly determining what you will measure to mark your progress in area, you will be able to set goals and evaluate results based on facts about the ministry environment and actual effectiveness. By definition, measurements must be something you can verify, quantify or objectively evaluate, and as a general rule this will require that you are able to take "before measures" (measures taken before the strategy is implemented) and "after measures" (measures taken after the strategy is implemented).

Gauge #1	<i>Investing</i>
Measurement	<i>Total number of investing interactions of the lead pastor per month.</i>

Every launch team member makes investing a way of life and analyzes the number and quality of investing contacts. As a church, however, your measurement for effectiveness is the total number of investing interactions of the lead pastor each month. As the lead pastor makes investing a priority and shares his/her stories with the launch team, the members will do the same.

Gauge #2	<i>Compelling Weekend Experiences</i>
Measurement	<i>Rating of the preview service each month.</i>

The rating number tells you if the worship experience is contributing to (or hindering) the growth of the church. It helps you know if your church is prepared for an official grand opening.

We suggest that your church prints cards that will be distributed at your monthly preview service. (A sample is at the end of this module.) The card will say:

Striving to Be Compelling

Today's Date _____

*We want to offer an experience to which you are proud to invite a friend.
As you think about bringing people, how would you rate today's experience?*

Poor		Average		Great
1	2	3	4	5

What did you like about today's service?

How can we do better?

Comments:

Gauge #3	<i>Grand Opening Ministry Teams</i>
Measurement	<i>Rating the readiness of ministry teams for grand opening.</i>

Your church will keep track of how many people are serving on a ministry team and the percentage of those who attend somewhat regularly who are serving. Also, each team will evaluate their own readiness for grand opening on a scale of 1-5 starting with the month when the team is formed. We suggest that your church print cards that each task leader will fill out and give to the lead pastor each month. (A sample is at the end of this module.) The card will say:

Readiness for Grand Opening

Task _____ Task Leader _____ Month _____

This task is part of the: **q** Weekend Experience Team; **q** Outreach Team;
q Operations Team; **q** KidZone Team

How many people served this month in the accomplishment of this task? _____

Thinking about how your ministry has performed this month, how ready is your team for grand opening?

Poor		Average		Great
1	2	3	4	5

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 18: Grand Opening Ministry Teams.

Gauge #4	<i>Increasing Attendance</i>
Measurement	<i>Number of persons in attendance at preview services.</i>

Using your first advertised preview service as a benchmark, total attendance at preview services will increase each month. Attendance at your final preview service should be no less than 50% of your target number for grand opening.

Gauge #5	<i>Church Finances</i>
Measurement	<i>Income from launch team members and others, tracked separately</i>

Your church will keep track of giving from those on the launch team and from others. As the launch team grows in number over the months, the giving from that category should increase. If the church is attracting others from the community, giving from that category will increase as well.

Identifying Church-Wide Objectives

The process of identifying your objectives flows naturally out of the measurements you have defined. Once you have decided how you will measure progress in the critical areas of your church, you are now in a position to identify the primary aims to which your church will commit its efforts and resources in order to create the results desired. Setting clear objectives will convert your intentions about the next steps toward your mission and vision into a picture of specific performance aims. When you communicate these objectives so everyone understands what progress look like, people will be inspired to participate. Over time, the objectives you set will direct the attention and energy of every activity in your church toward the same shared goals. So the outcome of this next step of strategic planning is to identify one specific objective related to each measurement you've defined.

The objectives you establish should relate directly back to your gauges and measurements. They should contain a single theme and focus on **end results**. Because your objectives will grow out of the measurements you have defined, they should obviously be **measurable**. For instance, investing contacts, compelling weekend experiences, grand opening ministry teams, increased attendance, and church finances can all be measured. Measurable objectives allow you to **monitor progress**.

We will recommend the objectives for each of the gauges. The quantitative numbers are not just pulled out of thin air or based on wishful thinking. They are based on sincere prayer, sound thinking and experience. As you discuss these objectives with your conception team and your coach, you may decide to adjust them one way or the other. Use what we suggest as a starting point, then with an accurate picture of the known realities in mind, ask God to help you understand His desires for your future reality.

Gauge #1	<i>Investing</i>
Measurement	<i>Total number of investing interactions of the lead pastor per month.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>The lead pastor has 20 interactions per week. Launch team members set their own goal of three to five interactions per week.</i>

Gauge #2	<i>Compelling Weekend Experiences</i>
Measurement	<i>Rating of the preview service each month.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>Achieve an average of at least “4” by grand opening.</i>

Gauge #3	<i>Grand Opening Ministry Teams</i>
Measurement	<i>Rating the readiness of ministry teams for grand opening.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>All ministry teams have achieved an average rating of “4” or higher for each task by grand opening.</i>

Gauge #4	<i>Increasing Attendance</i>
Measurement	<i>Number of persons in attendance at preview services.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>Using your first advertised preview service as a benchmark, total attendance at preview services will increase each month. Attendance at your final preview service should be no less than 50% of your target number for grand opening.</i>

Gauge #5	Church Finances
Measurement	<i>Income from launch team members and others, tracked separately.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>Using your first full month of receiving tithe and offering as a benchmark, the number of donors and total giving increases each month from each group (launch team members and others).</i>

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 19: Tracking Your Church-wide Objectives.

<i>“The plans of the Lord stand firm forever.” Psalm 33:11</i>
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Developing Shared Goals

Once a church-wide objective is identified, it needs to be broken down into a specific shared goal in which everyone in your church could participate to help reach that objective. Look at each of your objectives and think about what specific activity everyone in your church could potentially participate in to contribute to the accomplishment of the objective.

If an objective is for everyone in the launch team to make investing a way of life, how are you going to make sure this happens? You might preach a sermon or even a series about the power of praying for and getting up close to lost people. You might give recognition or encouragement to launch team members who engage in investing. You might find someone in your church who is willing to lead a *Just Walk Across the Room* seminar. But these methods still leave the responsibility for the accomplishment of this important objective in the hands of a very few leaders. So what goal could you set that would potentially involve everyone in your church in the accomplishment of that objective?

Below are the suggested shared goals for each of the five gauges. You may feel free to adjust these goals as you reflect on your situation with your conception team and your coach.

Gauge #1	Investing
Measurement	<i>Total number of investing interactions of the lead pastor per month.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>The lead pastor has 20 interactions per week. Launch team members set their own goal of three to five interactions per week.</i>
Shared Goal	<i>100% of launch team members actively participate in investing.</i>

Gauge #2	Compelling Weekend Experiences
Measurement	<i>Rating of the preview service each month.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>Achieve an average of at least “4” by grand opening.</i>
Shared Goal	<i>Launch team members provide feedback, ideas, and suggestions re: preview services to ministry leaders.</i>

Note: it is important to keep the focus of your launch team members on worship, not evaluation. Be careful not to turn your people into analyzers rather than worshippers.

Gauge #3	Grand Opening Ministry Teams
Measurement	<i>Rating the readiness of ministry teams for grand opening.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>All ministry teams have achieved an average rating of “4” or higher for each task by grand opening.</i>
Shared Goal	<i>100% of launch team members (a) serve on a ministry team, (b) seek to add others to the team, and (c) provide feedback, ideas, and suggestions for making the team highly effective.</i>

Gauge #4	Increasing Attendance
Measurement	<i>Number of persons in attendance at preview services.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>Using your first advertised preview service as a benchmark, total attendance at preview services will increase each month. Attendance at your final preview service should be no less than 50% of your target number for grand opening.</i>
Shared Goal	<i>100% of launch team members pray, participate in investing, and invite others to church-sponsored events.</i>

Gauge #5	Church Finances
Measurement	<i>Income from launch team members and others, tracked separately.</i>
Church-wide Objective	<i>Using your first full month of receiving tithe and offering as a benchmark, the number of donors and total giving increases each month from each group (launch team members and others).</i>
Shared Goal	<i>100% of launch team members returning tithe and offering, and non-launch team members are challenged appropriately and regularly.</i>

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 20: Turning Your Shared Goals into Reality.

<p><i>“Greater love has no one than this, than he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name.”</i></p> <p>John 15:13-16</p>

Putting It All Together

The final step in developing a strategic plan is to determine what resources you need to accomplish the plans, what tasks are needed and who will be responsible for implementation. Resources usually include time, people, and money. Tasks are the specific steps that will help accomplish each goal. And responsibility needs to be given to specific people who will shepherd the accomplishment of each task.

Keep in mind that if God has asked you to do something, God will provide the necessary resources to accomplish the task. Although it is helpful to do a realistic evaluation of the resources that might be required to accomplish your plans, don’t limit the plans God might desire based on the resources currently available. Visionary plans will create room for both financial and human resources that you do not currently have available. God is honored when we respond to his leadings in faith.

“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going... For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Hebrews 11:8,10

People

God uses people in order to accomplish plans. As you look at the congregation, you'll need to make decisions on who can help accomplish these tasks based on availability, spiritual gifts, and time commitments. You need to ask questions like:

- ◆ What spiritual gifts are necessary to accomplish this task?
- ◆ Who is available who has these gifts?
- ◆ Does this person have time to accomplish the task?
- ◆ How much time should be spent training a person to successfully accomplish the task?
- ◆ Can a volunteer handle this task or will it need to be done by a staff person?
- ◆ Could there be a high level of burnout associated with this task?

Gifts

When assigning tasks, be sure and ask yourself whether the person you are assigning the task to is gifted by God to complete the task. If this person will be in a leadership role, you will need to examine their leadership gifts. The most draining experience for a church and its people is to have people serving in positions for which they are not gifted!

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms... If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides.” 1 Peter 4:10-11

Skills

If part of the action plan requires a budget to be developed, make sure the person developing the budget has the necessary skills. If you do not have a qualified person, you will need to either train someone in the congregation or hire someone who already possesses the necessary spiritual gifts and skills. Do you best to get the right people serving in the right places.

“Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people – men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain – and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.” Exodus 18:20-22

Once you have selected an individual to perform a task, ask yourself:

- ◆ How do I focus the person on implementing the task?
- ◆ Do I need to train the person and support the implementation?
- ◆ Does the person performing the task have all the necessary information and resources to carry it out?

Time

There are two areas to consider when looking at time. First, determine how many hours a task will take to complete. Second, determine by what date the task should be completed. Time places emphasis on getting the task done. You want to allow enough time to do the task correctly, but you also need a due date so the task doesn't end up "on the back burner."

One advantage of systematic obedience is that it enables you to make sure your daily activities are focused on accomplishing God's direction. Be sure time is invested in activities that support the direction and the strategy that have been developed.

Money

When people think about resources, they tend to think about money. "*How much will it cost?*" is the first question you're likely to ask. Some tasks will require more money than others. For example, the resources required to design and print a church brochure would vary depending on the strategy applied. If you chose to hire an external graphic designer, money may be the primary resource required. If you decide to keep the project in-house, time and people resources might take priority.

"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?" Luke 14:28

Some questions to ask regarding money include:

- ◆ What is the budget required to accomplish each task?
- ◆ Are there any budget constraints?
- ◆ What other resources are needed to accomplish each task?
- ◆ What are the internal and external options for each task?

Action Plan Tips

- ◆ Spend quality time seeking God through prayer.
- ◆ Go slowly at first. Identify obstacles that could hinder implementing the ministry plans.
- ◆ Concentrate resources on high-priority tasks first.
- ◆ Don't limit God by the resources you have on hand. Remember, this

is God's project, not yours.

How does each component of the strategy work together? A soccer team's desire to win a game is a good analogy to illustrate the difference between church-wide objectives, goals, ministry area plans and tasks. If the team's mission is to win the national championship, its current *objective* is to win the next game. In order to win the game they will need to score the next *goal*. To score a goal, subsets of the total team execute specific *plans* or plays. In order to execute the specific play each player is assigned specific *tasks*.

In a similar way, in order to accomplish your mission, your church will define church-wide objectives and goals that accomplish the objectives. Then subsets of the entire church (each ministry team) will execute specific plans, and each ministry team member will perform certain tasks to accomplish those plans.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 21: Creating a Strategic Plan Summary.

Documenting the Plan

Once you have gained clarity on the key elements of your direction and strategy, you are ready to document your strategic plan in a way that can be easily shared with others. By now you and many of those involved in developing your strategic plan will have a good understanding of what you feel God is calling your church to be and do, but it needs to be recorded and communicated to others through a simple written document. The written plan acts as a reference and ensures that everyone in your church is unified and committed to the same thing. In Task 22 you created a one-page summary of your strategic plan. Take the key information from this summary and create a simple, dynamic document that you can publish and distribute to your entire congregation.

Once the plan is written, a key step to insure alignment is to communicate it to everyone involved in the church. Not only is everyone's commitment to the plan important, but you want to get feedback on the plan as well.

Presenting the plan involves more than producing a written document for everyone to read. It's casting a vision. When you present the plan, explain what you see for the future of the church. Tell people how God's kingdom will benefit. At a minimum, you should present the church's directional elements (mission, vision, values and discipleship outcomes) in creative and compelling ways to everyone in the church. And when you are introducing a new strategy, you will use the gauges and church-wide objectives as a tool for casting a clear vision for the next steps your church will take.

When you present the plan to the entire church, use this time to enlist their help and encourage feedback. Asking for feedback lets people know they are an

important part of what God wants to do. It also communicates that you believe God can speak to more than just you or a select few in your church. Their input will strengthen the final plan. Make sure everyone knows that what they say counts. Members are more likely to care about the church if you care about their input and participation. People will be more likely to trust and support a plan if they participate and understand how it was created. So explain the assumptions behind the plan, describe likely scenarios that may develop as the plan is implemented, and explain why one strategy may be selected over another.

Many strategic plans never get out of the strategic planning notebook. Taking the time to plan an effective means of creatively introducing your plan is an important step in beginning to align people's lives to the plan.

Take Action!

Turn to the end of this section and complete Implementation Task 22: Publishing A Popular Version of Your Strategic Plan.

Take Action!

Implementation Task 17: Understanding Your Gauges

Review the following segment of Section 3 in this Module:

◆ *Understanding Your Gauges*

1. Take note of the following gauges.

- Investing
- Compelling Weekend Experiences
- Grand Opening Ministry Teams
- Increasing Attendance
- Church Finances

2. Thoroughly discuss these questions with your conception team:

- ◆ To what extent does each of us understand what each gauge is all about?
- ◆ Can each conception team member explain how paying attention to this gauge determines the success of our ministry?
- ◆ Are we all fully committed to exceptional performance in this area?

Take Action!

Implementation Task 18: Grand Opening Ministry Teams

Review the following segment of Section 3 in this Module:

◆ Grand Opening Ministry Teams

In order to have an effective grand opening, eleven critical tasks must happen well. Having grand opening teams in place that perform these tasks with excellence is one of the five gauges you will watch to determine if you are ready for grand opening.

As the church enters the pre-launch phase, the conception team must decide when each of the tasks will begin and who is responsible for it. Sometime during the early months of pre-launch, you will begin to measure the readiness of each task for grand opening. For now, you must set a target date for each task to begin to happen, and you will add the names of those responsible for each team and task as that person comes on board.

Area / Task	Area Leader	Task Leader	Team Members
Weekend Experience			
<i>Programming</i>			
<i>Music</i>			
<i>Tech</i>			
<i>Set-up & take-down</i>			
<i>Impressions</i>			
Outreach			
<i>Bridge events</i>			
<i>Marketing</i>			
Operations			
<i>Data management</i>			
<i>Financial systems</i>			
KidZone			
<i>Programming</i>			
<i>Impressions</i>			

Take Action!

Implementation Task 19: Tracking Your Church-Wide Objectives

Review the following segment of Section 3 in this Module:

◆ Identifying Church-wide Objectives

Use the following chart to review the Gauges, Measurements and Church-wide Objectives. Then discuss the following questions with your conception team:

1. When will we begin to track each gauge?
2. What mechanism or method will we use to take the “before” and “after” measurements? (i.e. surveys, leadership reports, etc.)
3. Are the suggested objectives realistic for our situation or do we need to adjust them up or down?
4. Who will be responsible for tracking each gauge?

Gauges	Measurements	Current Numbers	Objectives
Investing	Total number of investing interactions of the lead pastor per month.		20 interactions per week by the lead pastor
Compelling Weekend Experiences	Rating of one Bible study and one worship experience per month.		Achieve an average of at least “4” by Grand Opening.
Grand Opening Ministry Teams	Rating the readiness of ministry teams for Grand Opening.		All ministry teams have achieved an average rating of “4” or higher for each task by Grand Opening.
Increasing Attendance	Number of persons in attendance at preview services.		Using your second month as a benchmark, total attendance at preview services will double by month five and again by the end of month ten (Grand Opening).
Church Finances	Income from launch team members and others, tracked separately.		Using your first full month of receiving tithe and offering as a benchmark, the number of donors and total giving increases each month from each group (launch team members and others).

Take Action!

Implementation Task 20: Turning Your Shared Goals into Reality

Review the following segment of Section 3 in this Module:

◆ *Developing Shared Goals*

Referring to the gauges, measurements, church-wide objectives and shared goals, discuss the following questions with your conception team:

1. Which of these goals can easily be accomplished? Which are more difficult?
2. What strengths does our group possess that will help us achieve the goals? What weaknesses will make it difficult?
3. How will we keep these goals before the people who attend our church?
4. How often and in what setting will we discuss our progress as a church in relationship to these gauges, measurements, objectives and goals?

Take Action!

Implementation Task 21: Creating a Strategic Plan Summary

After completing the tasks related to Section 3 of this module, summarize the eight components of your strategic plan in a one-page overview using the following template.

Strategic Plan Summary

Our Direction

Mission

Vision

Values

Discipleship Outcomes

Our Strategy

Gauges	Measurements	Church-wide Objectives	Shared Goals

Take Action!

Implementation Task 22: Publishing a Popular Version of Your Strategic Plan

Review the following segment of Section 3 in this Module:

◆ *Documenting the Plan*

Review the one-page Strategic Plan Summary that you created in Task 21, then complete the following chart to help you create a simple popular version of your strategic plan that can be used for effective vision casting and strategic communication.

Strategic Plan Publishing Process
Determine what information you want to communicate to your entire church. (For example, you may choose to just publish the mission, vision, values, discipleship outcomes and church-wide objectives.)
Determine the wording you will use for the public written communication.
Determine how you will publish the strategic plan document. (For example, will it be in a full-color brochure, a one-page laser printed document, on a card, etc.)
Decide when and how you will distribute this document.

Striving to Be Compelling

Today's Date _____

We want to offer an experience to which you are proud to invite a friend. As you think about bringing people, how would you rate today's experience?

Poor		Average		Great
1	2	3	4	5

What did you like about today's service?

How can we do better?

Comments:

Readiness for Grand Opening

Task _____ Task Leader _____ Month _____

This task is part of the:

- Weekend Experience Team
- Outreach Team
- Operations Team
- KidZone Team

How many people served this month in the accomplishment of this task? _____

Thinking about how our ministry has performed this month, how ready is our team for Grand Opening?

Poor
1

2

Average
3

4

Great
5

The team leader should submit this completed form to the lead pastor at the end of each month.

Readiness for Grand Opening

All Tasks

Each month, the completed forms from each task leader are submitted to the lead pastor who enters the ratings into this form.

TRACK A	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Weekend Experience										
Programming										
Music										
Tech										
Set-up & take-down										
Impressions										
Outreach										
Bridge events										
Marketing										
Operations										
Data management										
Financial systems										
KidZone										
Programming										
Impressions										
Number of tasks being done										
Number of people serving										