

HOW STATE CONVENTIONS CAN HELP CHURCHES DEAL WITH CHANGE

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(These are extensive notes, not a manuscript)**

It is amazing how many “secular” books on business are really founded in Scripture, most of the time w/o the author realizing it. Here are some thoughts in “Companies Don’t Succeed . . . People Do” by Mac Anderson Deals with how to treat employees. These suggestions are strong guides for those of us who lead churches, and how to treat the people we lead.

1. Treat your people like customers. Your congregation will not treat others any better than you treat them. Build relationships. Serve your people.

2. Understand the value of recognition (celebration). Give recognition to your people for all they do and celebrate great moments in church.

3. Tap into heart power. Capture the hearts of your people.

4. It starts at the top. Pastors must capture the hearts of their people. State Conventions must capture hearts of pastors & church leaders.

Tom Peters: “We wildly underestimate the power of the tiniest personal touch.” I wrote handwritten notes for all Nashville employees while I was president of LifeWay for 15 years. It paid off in a big way in building relationships with the employees. I still write anniversary milestones of employees who served with me at LifeWay.

5. Make people feel important because they are! Value people.

6. Establish “people” goals. Great ideas don’t succeed, great people make them succeed. Goals need specific time frames and measurable plans.

7. Involve all of your people.

8. Staff & key leaders will make it or break it.

9. Always express appreciation. Give credit to people for what they do. Don't hog the spotlight. Be a grateful person who recognizes your need for everyone being involved.

10. Get details right. Good things happen when planned. Bad things happen on their own. You never drift anywhere worth going.

11. Don't expect perfection – just keep moving toward goal and be quick to forgive.

12. Celebrate success & milestones.

13. Changing culture of church isn't easy (or of a state convention)!

14. Set the example. Serve the people and they will begin to serve each other.

15. Create moments to remember.

16. Never underestimate the power of kindness.

17. Don't wait for your ship to come in, swim out to it. "Don't be afraid to go out on a limb, that's where the fruit is."

Some challenges about change and how to manage change.

1. Change is changing! Now faster and systemic. Never be the same again.

2. Changes in patterns of doing church & state conventions.

3. Technology & social media are new challenges & opportunities.

4. Emergence of 24 hour society. People today won't accept that if they miss our service times, they just missed it. There has to be another way.

5. Shift in world economies and financial stabilization impacts us all.

6. Laws have changed that impact every church. It is important for every church to have a good constitution and by-laws.

7. Community & non-denominational churches with sound theology are thriving while many denominational churches are plateaued or dying.

8. State conventions & churches must learn to change more quickly.

Time is the new currency.

9. Meaningful innovation in every aspect of church life is required now.

10. Must create a meaningful community of faith. Unity, harmony.

11. Success sometimes can result in learning being disabled. Nothing remains the same. Every effective church must constantly tweak & adapt & modify. **Ed Young and bell curve. Know when to abandon an effective strategy. We must constantly be improving which means change.

12. Every change requires a different approach to managing it.

13. Strategy and vision is never set in concrete.

14. Change often requires all elements of church at the same time. It is rare to just change in one area without impacting others. Creates great stress on leadership. Could result in disengagement by the people. Change often is multiple transitions heading toward an unclear future.

15. Responding to change must be fast, but making change takes time. It will not be quick to change culture or DNA of church or state convention.

16. Leadership must be united in both the change goal & the implementation. Staff must speak with one voice.

17. Failure to effectively manage will result in blame, factions forming, informal leaders emerging and a resorting back to personal relationships.

****SBC Controversy – many chose sides based on relationships.**

18. Identify reasons for dissatisfaction. Most people & organizations are comfortable with the status quo. Key is to make people think the needed change is their idea. Not easy, but properly built relationships can make it happen.

19. Magnify rewards of successful change. You must answer these questions: “What difference does it make?” and “What’s in it for me?” People will respond to change if they can see positive benefits from the change. They need to know it will be beneficial for them.

20. Clear communication must be given. Repetition is vital to communication. Keep stable vision and don’t allow conflicting views/visions to take root.

21. Lead people to see changes are necessary in today’s culture and to fulfill the Great Commission.

22. People will be positive and maturing if they feel involved in what is happening and if they feel a stewardship/ownership for change. They need to know it will benefit the church’s vision and their own lives. Lead them to believe that they are designers and not victims.

23. Communicate – communicate – communicate.

****In FBCE we took a full year to communicate the need to go to dual Bible Study and Worship services back to back.**

****Organizational Task Force at LifeWay.**

24. A world that is changing faster and more permanent must be met with adaptable & flexible church. Message never changes, but buildings, equipment, expectations and demands will always change.

25. Train your people to know how to become part of change effectively and how to benefit from it. ** LifeWay’s new building and the special training they are giving employees.

26. Diversity of people and culture has constant impact on church. Business as usual is not an option.

27. Find ways to listen to the people. Don’t be so busy that there is no time for reflection, evaluation of practices (change) and willingness to tweak or change the change process itself.

28. Build a culture of strong relationships.

29. Keep people focused on the Lord and not on themselves. Keep them focused on the future and not the past. Keep them focused on the goal and not the change.

30. Allow Scripture to be the basis and the driver for change. If you can't justify change by Scripture, then it probably shouldn't be done.

31. Develop champion leaders for change. Obtaining and developing such leaders is a must for dealing with change.

32. Such leaders must be individuals of deep devotion to God, personal integrity, ability to adapt quickly to changing conditions and must be individual who use their influence without being authoritative. Leadership is about influence, not authority.

33. Change must be led by those who build teamwork and inspire loyalty.

34. Champions & leaders need to demonstrate behavior that supports the change, that is consistent with values & vision of the church or state convention.

35. Leaders must to project a clear vision, be capable of energizing and rallying the congregation and the skill to enable the people in a way to maximize change. Effective leadership for change requires leaders who can excite people about the vision, mobilize them for the task and direct their energies to fulfill their assignments.

36. Our culture & world today necessitates change. It is not optional, but inevitable. Most of us do not like being forced to change, so we naturally hold on to the things we can control, like our habits and preferences of a lifetime. The older we get the harder that is.

37. Some conclusions:

*** Change must be addressed & managed**

*** The speed of change will only become faster & more demanding in the future.**

***We must keep the focus on God, the Gospel, the Great Commission & the urgency of evangelism & discipleship.**

***Celebrate milestones of change till it becomes part of the culture/DNA of the ministry.**

***Additional flexibility & change will be required with every celebrated milestone. Each celebration will make the next milestone easier.**

***Build a sense of urgency based on Biblical commands. Urgency builds and bonds people together.**

***Always keep the goal/vision in forefront.**

***Always magnify every person as of great value & possibility.**

***Vision paints the picture of the future as desirable, possible, attainable, flexible, easy to communicate & probable or certain.**

***Communication must be simple, clear and compelling.**

*** Repetition is best form of communication.**

***All of us must lead by example. Do as I say and not as I do has never worked and never will.**

***Leadership demands being a good listener. We must learn to really hear people!**

***Leaders bring out the best in people and help them succeed. No leader succeeds if those he leads are not successful. I always told employees at LifeWay, "If you don't succeed, I don't succeed." And "If the churches don't succeed, we don't succeed."**

***True leadership is servant leadership. Even Jesus said He came to serve, not to be served: Matt. 20:28, Mark 10:45, Luke 24:25-30**

***Training for change is always helpful to encourage change. Help people see the reasons for and benefits of change.**

***Successful change encourages future change and makes it easier.**

***Successful change insures transformation of culture of church.**

***Transformation comes after change, not before. Salvation comes first then transformation. People are not transformed until they get saved. The transformation brought by change is not present until the change has been made.**

***Always keep a sense of urgency about change.**

***Getting people to feel ownership and empowered stewardship is essential to change.**

SUGGESTED READING LIST FROM BUSINESS WORLD

“Leading Change” by John P. Kotter

“Good to Great” by Jim Collins

“Companies Don’t Succeed...People Do” by Mac Anderson

“The Performance Factor” by Pat MacMillan

“The Purple Cow” by Seth Godin

“Focus” by Al Ries

“Barbarians to Bureaucrats” by Lawrence M. Miller

“The Experience: The 5 Principles of Disney Service & Relationship Excellence” by Bruce Loeffler & Brian T. Church

“Reaching the Peak Performance Zone” by Gerald Kuschel

“The Passionate Organization” by James R. Lucas

“Bringing out the Best in People” by Aubrey C. Daniels

“Discontinuous Change” by Jossey-Bass Management Series