

Introduction to Equipping

Value One: Compelling Clarity

Starting with the "win" in mind

Is 14:24; 46:10-11; Ps 33:11; Eph 3:10-11; Jer 29:11; Eph 1:11; Rev 7:9ff; 21

Driver

Vision

As God models, it is best to see the end from the beginning. By defining a clear, God-honoring vision from the outset, ministry leaders are better positioned to clarify: 1) The "wins" for the audience being served and 2) The kinds of servants that will be needed to realize the vision and what success will look like for them.

Related Steps:

1. Begin the process of defining the time-sensitive vision that leaders are discerning for the next year(s). (*A timeless vision is one that will never be fully realized and typically serves as a consistent slogan for a team or community such as "Love God; Love One Another; Love the Lost."*) As needed, also articulate and affirm the vision's related theology, philosophic assumptions, mission etc.
2. Detail the *desired outcomes* or "wins" for both the target audience of the vision and the servants who will serve within the ministry.
3. Sustain the process of clarity by empowering diverse teams to collaboratively shape the vision's planning process by specifying the needed phases, mile markers, timelines, teams, resources, strategies and objectives. Clarify no more or less than is needed.

Questions

What will the community / ministry look like when the time sensitive vision is realized? What does success look like? What will life be like when we get there?

Based on the discerned vision, what are the "wins" for both the target audience of our ministry and the servants who are part of the team? What does success look like for each?

What are the best strategies for achieving the desired outcomes we have discerned? How should these strategies be sequenced to maximize their impact? What is the scope, nature and dimensions of the team(s) that will be needed to activate these strategies? What resources will be needed in order to accomplish these strategies?

Value Two: Anointed Fit

Getting the right people in the right roles

*Ex 18:21; Ps 78:72; Lk 6:12-13; Acts 6:3; 1 Pt 4:10;
Jer 29:11; Eph 2:10, 4:16; 2 Tim 2:2*

Drivers

Identification

Given an affirmed vision, the next driver is to identify the servant profile of those who fit the vision.

Related Steps:

1. Utilize the vision's clarity to define each team role including:
a) the vision and its desired outcomes; b) any spiritual/ ministry boundaries; c) the baseline capacity (giftings and experience) needed and; d) practical expectations for servants. It is best to capture these in writing.
2. Pursuing qualified candidates is better than reacting to self-referrals. Therefore, network within and without the team to identify known disciples that appear to fit.
3. Brainstorm what kinds of places, events or ministry opportunities might attract newer prospects that are not as well known. Initiate these kinds of identification strategies and be prepared to assess emerging prospects based on the role descriptions.

Questions:

What is expected of the equipping leader(s)? What are the related desired outcomes for the group that they will catalyze?

What are the sub-roles on the team(s)? What types of folks would be most effective in becoming effective partners in this emerging vision?

Where might disciples with this kind of passion and skill congregate?

What strategies might be employed to attract them?

Invitation

The obvious next driver as we see in Scripture is inviting; casting the vision to the right disciples by affirming the relevance of their heart and unique gift mix.

Related Steps:

1. Discern patiently; avoid compulsivity.
2. Approach and schedule appointments with candidates that appear to fit the team's needs. Envision these meetings as an opportunity to affirm, not recruit. Clarify what you have been seeing in them before describing the role that appears to fit their anointing.
3. Describe the ministry with enthusiasm and help them see themselves being effective and fulfilled in the role. Stop talking and let them respond. Be prepared: a) with a role description if relevant; b) to follow up with them at a later time and or; c) to answer questions on the spot.

Questions:

What is the best time and way to approach potential team members that have been spotted?

How will we cast a compelling vision and extend an invitation?

When using a group-based invitation strategy, who will do the "casting and sorting" follow up?

Clarifying Unique vs. Community Contributions: There are differing ways in which Jesus' disciples serve His Kingdom and houses. A "unique contribution" is our anointed place of ministry that reflects our distinctive character, capacity and calling. It's the primary focus of the equipping process I am highlighting here. A "community contribution" *is a form of service that is driven by the needs of body* as opposed to someone's gift mix and passion. I encourage all servants of Jesus houses to pursue the former and expect the latter. My gift of teaching brings me great joy, but sometimes, shoveling snow or stacking chairs is my next step of obedient service!

Value Three: Patient Apprenticing

Making outsiders insiders

*Gen 12:1-4; 1 Samuel 16:12-13; Mt 10:1,5-6; Gal 1:11-12;
Acts 9:27; Phil 4:9; 2 Tim 2:2*

Drivers

Orientation

The onramping of new team members is initially driven by sharing the larger community's vision if they do not already know it.

Related Steps:

1. Assess new team servants to confirm who needs to learn what - a competency - based approach.
2. Define how the team and its roles fit into the larger vision of the community. (The breadth and depth of this process step varies based on the complexity of the role.)

Questions:

How will new ministry servants understand their role within the larger context of the congregation's / movement's vision?

Who is responsible for onramping them and what resources would be helpful?

Given the ministry, how much time is ideal for this process?

Start-up Training

This driver provides servants what they need to be competent and confident on their first day.

Related Steps:

1. Use a pre-assessment process to clarify the readiness of each new servant for their team role. Some will need a full process of training while others will need an abridged version.
2. Provide novices with mentors to walk with them as they begin. Focus on what people need to start: ongoing training is assumed and a part of the next value, coaching.
3. Reconnect with new servants shortly after their first experience in the role. Debrief their experience in order to affirm their effort, reinforce their learning process and or discover any needs they have before next time.

Questions:

Who will interview the servants to get a baseline of what they know and need? How will the new servants' competencies be evaluated and measured?

Is the essential information participants need to know about their new ministry role written down? Does it include clear desired outcomes for those they will be serving?

What start up training does each need to receive In order to feel competent and confident?

Who would be good to partner with the new servants at the beginning (the "buddy system")?

Belonging

As you might expect from Section One, establishing relationships between new and existing team members is also a driver of this onramping process.

Related Steps:

1. Insure names are known; they are important!
2. Prioritize this objective based on the nature, focus and scope of the team. the need and relevance of relationship building will vary greatly from team to team.
3. At minimum, make time for relational team building even if it is only one-on-one time for a few minutes each time servant's gather.

Questions:

Who within the ministry is responsible for making this happen so that servants feel accepted? When will this be accomplished?

How will the new servants meet and get to know current team members? How much time is needed given the scope and purpose of the ministry?

How will team building occur throughout the year?

Value Four: Life-giving Coaching

Putting more into servants than we take out

Ex 18:19-21; John 14:10; 25-26; Eph 4:11-16; 2 Tim 2:2; Phil 4:9

Drivers

Investing

Once ministry servants have begun, equipping leaders shift their focus from onboarding to sustaining. Initially, this process involves esteeming servants with relevant encouragement, communication and affirmation.

Related Steps:

1. Develop a rhythm and discipline for connecting with team servants based on their need and the team's best interest.
2. Learn their love language and take advantage of it.
3. Think developmentally; what they need from you to accelerate their faithfulness.

Questions:

How will team leaders / ministry equippers "*put in more than they take out*"? What is the love language of each servant - the best way to communicate support?

Does each servant on the team(s) have someone who is checking in with them about their heart discipleship needs? (The goal is to be sure people are networked to ongoing discipleship relationships or groups.)

How long has it been since there was a "put in" activity for the whole team? Are there team building strategies that would be helpful for all or most of the team?

Assessing

As disciples continue serving, they benefit from ongoing clear, honest and helpful feedback. In the same way that God is constantly mentoring us, we, too, are called to keep instructing and guiding those we are coaching so they can succeed and thrive in their role.

Related Steps:

1. Develop a rhythm and discipline for informal debriefing with those you are equipping - intentional spontaneity.
2. Build a foundation of trust by affirming their contributions while facilitating feedback through question asking -- mimic godly parents with their kids.
3. Allow servants to use the desired outcomes to assess their own progress before sharing your perspective; self-criticism is easier to receive than external criticism.

Questions:

Has a culture of feedback (and excellence) been embedded in ministry servants from the outset?

Do servants receive honest, nose-to-nose feedback regarding their development?

How will servants be assessed as to their current competencies and training needs? How often is this expected to happen?

Expanding

Our destiny is rarely to remain in our current role and its expectations for the rest of our lives. We all need help growing into our full, kingdom potential through skilled mentoring and hands-on experience.

Related Steps:

1. Partner with servants to crystallize a developmental plan that is grounded in their assessment process. Clarify outcomes, ownership, timelines and goals.
2. Network servants with relevant mentors, resources and or groups based on their needs. Don't assume that their equipping managers will do all the training.
3. Stay in touch to keep the process moving forward.

Questions:

How are ministry leaders planning ahead to enable the ministry and its servants to grow?

Who are currently capable of mentoring someone for an expanded role? How many of them have an apprentice?

Which model(s) of development is most relevant for expanding each servant's capacity? One-on-one apprenticing? Team apprenticing (the trainer resources the group as a unit and then moves on when the equipping process is completed)? A model group strategy (all group members as individually prepared to lead and the group is disbanded when the training is completed; Jesus strategy with the twelve)?

Value Five: Honoring Transition

Helping disciples take their next, right step of faith

Deut 34:1-4; 2 Kings 2:9-10; John 21:15; Acts 1:1-3; Eph 4:15; 2:10

Drivers

Discernment

The Assessing and Expanding process strategies just detailed have a way of triggering changes that impact both servants and their ministry teams. Discernment allows equippers to be attentive to these shifts, the related transitions that are needed and the implementation. In other words, when the need for a change is emerging, equipping leaders guide the way both pastorally and organizationally.

Related Steps:

1. When servants are failing in ministry, set aside sufficient time to discover all the reasons why. Consider all the options that exist for a new direction.
2. Ask lots of questions to catalyze learning for both yourself and ministry servants.
3. When servants are excelling, be proactive and initiate a process to discuss what is next.

Questions:

What are the process steps by which equippers guide servants who are struggling with their effectiveness or boredom in ministry?

How are these servants included in the discernment process?

When servants shift into a new and/or larger role, who will guide the process?

How will this matter be communicated in a way that honors everyone?

How will the process help those who are most impacted by the transition?

Carefrontation

Most of us needed our equipping leader to provide us with “tough love” sometimes when we are not succeeding; authentic and gracious communication shared with godly honor and respect.

Related Steps:

1. Work diligently to create a safe environment for those that are struggling. It will help them to hear what equipping leaders are saying, although there are no guarantees.
2. Pray fervently for the person, process and next steps. Be overly gracious; its best in the long run.
3. Be an advocate for clarity either through written documentation, third party listeners or both.

Questions:

Is prayer a central aspect of this process? What are the process steps when these types of matters arise? Are ministry leaders gracious in these situations

Is this ministry’s leadership assertive when there are obvious problems on the team? Afterwards, do people find they have been heard well and treated fairly?

Has the process been documented for the benefit of the servant? Is there a restoration team that needs to be assembled? Are there collateral issues that need addressing?

Transition

The heart of an equipper is revealed by how well they bridge their team members to their next ministry role.

Related Steps:

1. Insure that servants have received help in understanding their current passion for ministry and the spiritual gifts that others have affirmed in them.
2. Help these disciples see their options and what God is up to.
3. Don't fully let go until servants have been connected to the next step

Questions:

When people are moving on—for whatever reason—what is the process for getting them connected to their next place of ministry?

What are the referral strategies utilized to help them? If they are being connected with another ministry, how does this practically happen? What is the responsibility of the team leader and the servant in these situations?

What is done to celebrate long-time contributors? Who makes this happen?