

The Strat Op - How EFCA West Can Help You Instantly Get Unstuck

“You can’t figure out where you should go until you first determine where you are.” We all listened intently as Bob Osborne, EFCA West Director of Church Health, began to lead us on a journey of clarity and alignment. Fifteen key leaders – pastors and elders, paid staff and volunteers, men and women, older and younger, even an intern or two, gathered together for one purpose: *to “confront the brutal facts” and chart a clear way forward.*

The mechanism Bob led us through is called the Strat Op. It’s a strategic planning process developed by the Paterson Center (www.patersoncenter.com) designed to generate focus and momentum in an organization. While the materials themselves are world class, the key is the facilitator. Bob is authentic, humble, and yet seriously smart. He took on the challenges we were facing as if they were his own. In other words, he was heart-deep with us! What we appreciated the most was the gentle and yet genuine way he helped us see, with new eyes, solutions to the challenges we were facing.

After two intense and yet inspiring days of looking at where we’ve been, where we are, what we value, and the opportunities in front of us, we emerged with five initiatives that are known as W.I.N.’s – *What’s Important Now*. These are the key areas that we all agreed should be our strategic priorities over the next three to five years.

Everyone knows, however, that often a strategic planning process like this merely leads to a tidy document that is celebrated for a week before it’s thrown in a drawer and forgotten. Then inevitably someone stumbles across it three years later while looking for a copy of the bylaws: *Hey everyone! Remember this?*

We vowed that would not happen. So, every other Wednesday for the past five months, no matter what else is going on, we spend two and half hours with several key pastors and staff driving through the initiatives revealed to us through the Strat Op. For example, our key “W.I.N.” was creating a volunteer culture. Thus, we have produced an “all hands on deck” environment at our church and created workflows to make sure that people who want to get involved don’t slip through the cracks. And, amazingly enough, it’s working! Here’s the key: *contrary to what often happens, our clarity has only intensified since the Strat Op.*

Bottom line: if you’re stuck, or just need an instant momentum builder among your leadership team, doing a Strat Op is hitting the easy button. This is yet another asset available to you to leverage as part of being an EFCA West church. Plus, you get Bob. So I encourage you to reach out to him at bob.osborne@efca.org, tell him Tim sent you, and start moving forward!