

## Paul, Training leaders when the talent pool is shallow Paul

Turnaround Pastors

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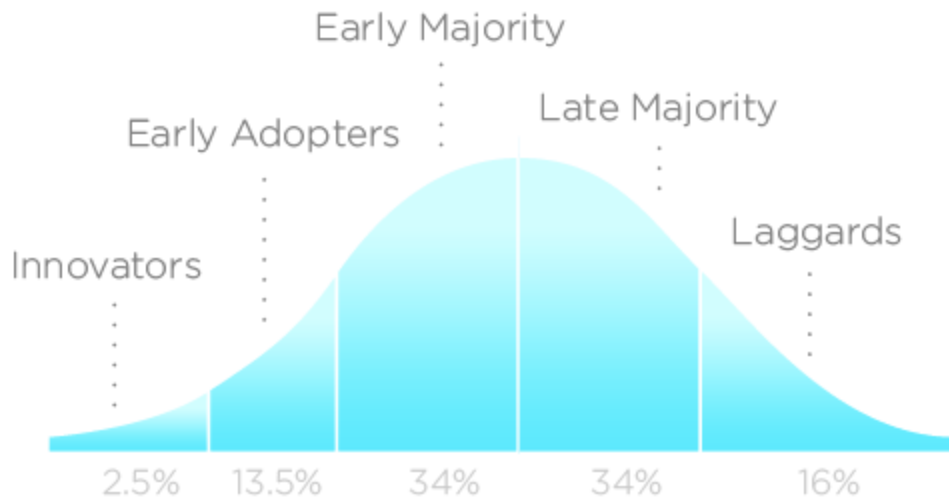


Among the many challenges faced by pastors of churches that are "stuck" is the need to develop new leaders. It is a severe problem, but it's one you must solve if you're going to move that stalled church off the dime.

Church revitalization requires new leaders in key ministry positions. They can be "new" in the sense of catching your vision and realigning their ministry to fit the new mission and vision, or they can be "new" in the literal sense of that term - they replace a previous ministry leader who is either incapable or unwilling to lead the ministry in concert with the church's mission and vision.

### **Recruit**

First, you'll want to recruit and train thought leaders, innovators, and early adopters because these are the people who will join you in your efforts to get the church back on track. But these people are a relatively small percentage of the church population. Consider the ramifications of this chart for a moment:



## INNOVATION ADOPTION LIFECYCLE

The "talent" pool you'll want to select from consists of approximately 15% of the congregation. If yours is a church of forty people, you've got somewhere between 6 and 8 people that fit the bill. The number of potential leadership trainees is more in larger churches, but regardless of the size of your church, you'll want to restrict your initial leadership development efforts to a relatively small handful of people.

Recruiting these people is challenging. Before you approach them, your vision for the specific ministry to which you are recruiting must be crystal clear. You must be able to explain what this ministry is going to do and how it contributes to the church's mission and vision.

But you're doing more than giving information when you recruit people to leadership positions. You are calling them to serve Jesus, you are showing them how their efforts will bless others and advance the church's mission, and you are promising to give them all the training they need to succeed.

## Train

The second challenge is developing a process that trains people how to lead. Busy pastors rarely have the time to sit down and draw up an effective training plan from scratch. Neither do they have time to read the dozens of books on this subject and adapt what they've read to themselves, their churches, and their new leaders. Let me suggest how to get past this second challenge, even if you're the pastor of 40 people. There's a simple four-tier training process that requires little preparation on your part, but it is proven effective:

1. Direct

2. Coach
3. Support
4. Delegate

What follows is sample dialog that a pastor might use in each of the four stages of the training cycle.

## **Direct**

In this first stage, the pastor leads the ministry, and the leadership trainee shadows the pastor every step of the way.

"Here's what the job consists of; here's what to do how I do it."

"Eventually you'll have full responsibility and full authority to run this ministry. To get you there we'll take the time you need to get up to speed and feel comfortable in your leadership role."

"So to begin with, you will be shadowing me as I run this ministry. I'll preside over the meetings of the ministry team. I'll conduct the training, and handle the administrative tasks. You'll be by my side every step of the way so that you'll see how I do things."

"But I'm not interested in a clone. I want your leadership to be genuine to you. So I'll be giving you a few small tasks to handle. Eventually, we'll transition to the next phase of your development."

## **Coach**

In this second stage, the trainee takes on leadership responsibility with the pastor close at hand to provide guidance.

"When the time is right our roles will switch. You'll step into the leadership position, and I'll step back. But I'll still be close by to provide direction, offer suggestions, and guide you as you fashion this to become your ministry. I want you to put your stamp on this and do things your way. But until you feel confident enough to pull that off, I'll be shadowing you and occasionally whispering in your ear."

"Together we'll keep track of your progress and leadership development, and I'll suggest mid-course corrections in a respectful and helpful manner that suits you. When the time is right, I'll move from the passenger's seat to the back seat. I won't be your coach any longer."

## **Support**

In this third stage, the trainee has full responsibility for leading. The pastor is less actively involved but remains on standby to provide support on an ad hoc basis.

"When the time is ripe, I'll hand the baton to you. At that point, you'll have full responsibility and full authority to conduct your ministry. I'll be available as needed in the event you run into a problem you can't solve. You can ping me when you need to talk issues through or when you need specific advice. As time goes along, your need for my support will diminish."

"In this phase of training, you'll keep me informed of your progress. I only ask that you operate within our church's value system and that I'm never surprised by anything coming out of your domain."

## **Delegate**

In this final phase, the person becomes an independent, self-sustaining member of the church leadership team.

"Eventually this ministry will be in your bailiwick. I know that you'll be doing things differently than I would, but we'll work that out. I want to develop your leadership abilities such that I'm able to say, 'this is yours. Get the job done however you see fit, as long as you operate within our church's value system. Let me know what you did.'"

## **Warning**

Beware of micromanaging the people you develop for leadership. This is a guaranteed way to develop passive leaders and ineffective ministries. Pastor, get used to the fact that they're not going to do things the way you would do them, and they probably won't do them as well.

That's okay. Remember your job: to develop people who lead.

## **Do it!**

Now that you've developed one leader go and do it again. And again. And again. This is the job (Ephesians 4:12).

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