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SUCCESSING IN SUCCESSION

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**Whether you realize it or not,
you are participating in a succession process
right now.**



Leadership changes are experienced in every ministry context. Every single one. At some point, every leader currently serving will step out of their role. Succeeding in succession starts long before a change in leadership.

Leadership *matters*. It is crucial to advancing the mission of your ministry.

Leadership is to be held in *high regard*. It should not be too quickly dismissed or ignored. A lack of leadership is a serious matter with devastating consequences.

Healthy ministries are led by healthy leaders.

Healthy leaders pay close and careful attention to the health of the people serving in the ministry and the processes practiced or promoted throughout the ministry.

A ministry will be as healthy—and only as healthy—as its people and processes.

Healthy leaders do not ignore or avoid addressing issues.
Avoidance will never appropriately attend to issues.

Attending to issues is normalized in healthy environments.

It takes a commitment on the part of everyone affected to attend to issues. An unwillingness to address an issue cannot be allowed indefinitely.

Issues can be interpersonal but not all are interpersonal.

They can also be the result of a process that is ineffective or inefficient. Such processes are burdensome in ministry. This misalignment weighs a ministry and its people down.

Take 60 seconds to introduce yourself to someone seated around you. Share with one another your name, where you are serving and in what capacity, and what you want to learn from this seminar.

**Succeeding in succession *starts* long before
a change in leadership.**

Leadership succession and succession planning are not the same.

Succession planning is an *ongoing* strategic process that acts to guide ministries toward the advancement of their mission. It is primarily focused on *sustained* organizational health.

What words or phrases come to mind when you think about the health of your ministry right now?

Two precepts too often **OVERLOOKED** in ministry are:

01

Organizational health is essential to advancing mission

and

02

Safeguarding health is *the* task of leadership

Complicating this work is the fact that every leader will eventually transition out of their role. Changes in leadership are inevitable; and they are always disruptive to ministries.

Leadership *matters*. It is the *key determinant* to organizational health—to the advancement of mission in your ministry.

LEADERSHIP IS...

- A **STEWARDSHIP**. Every leader is sovereignly positioned to provide influence for the benefit of another for a period of time. No leader will remain in their role indefinitely.
- Responsible to create an environment whereby others are **ENCOURAGED**, **EQUIPPED**, and **RELEASED** to be significant partners in the advancement of mission in your ministry.
- Exercised within an **EXISTING ENVIRONMENT**. Every ministry is unique in its context. No two ministries are exactly the same.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINISTRIES THAT SUSTAIN ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH:

The **PRIMARY** characteristic is an **INTENTIONAL** mindset with a culture of trust.

- Active approach to leadership
- Primarily concerned with advancing mission
- Affirm and appreciate leadership
- High degree of trust in leadership
- Clarity in purpose, priorities, and leadership roles

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINISTRIES THAT SUSTAIN ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH:

The **SUPPORTING** characteristic is a missional mindset with a culture of mutual submission and prayerful dependence on God.

- Attentiveness to God's direction
- Actively prepare for change
- Adapt to advance mission
- Open communication
- Take time to work through discernment process together

What stands out to you in this ministry orientation?

CHARACTERISTICS OF LEADERSHIP THAT HELPS SUSTAIN ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH:

The leadership of those who help sustain organizational health is characterized by a **STRONG BIAS** to actively influence *specific groups of God's people toward God's purposes*.

- Understand the role of leadership in advancing mission
- Appropriately and actively exercise leadership
- Responsive posture (individually and organizationally)

01

An acceptance of God's call. There is no such thing as a self-made leader.

02

A prayerful dependence on God. Committed to relying on God.

03

Servant leadership. Selflessly exercising influence in the lives of others.

04

Mentoring leadership. Helping others respond to God's call on their lives.

05

Being a mission agent. Available to help advance the mission of the ministry.

06

Being a strategic agent. Charting a course to pursue purpose and priorities.

07

Being a culture agent. Shaping values, convictions, and commitments.

08

Being a communication agent. Communicating the right things.

Where do you see these practices being applied in your ministry?

BEST PRACTICES IN SUCCESSION PLANNING:

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1. Develop a leadership pipeline in the ministry. Do you have a way of identifying the emerging and maturing leaders in your ministry? How can you invest in the leadership development of these leaders? What role can denominational affiliations or associations play in developing these leaders?

BEST PRACTICES IN SUCCESSION PLANNING:

2. Prioritize the advancement of mission throughout the process. Is there sufficient clarity in your ministry surrounding mission, vision, values, convictions, and commitments? Are the key stakeholders in agreement with the mission, vision, values, convictions, and commitments?

BEST PRACTICES IN SUCCESSION PLANNING:

3. Discuss succession openly with your board. Succession discussions must be ongoing discussions. It is not too soon to start talking about succession. Is your relationship with the board healthy enough to start a conversation about the stewardship of leadership? Succession planning requires healthy relationships.

BEST PRACTICES IN SUCCESSION PLANNING:

4. Clarify your role in the process. What are your expectations? What are the board's expectations? How can the board prepare for succession ahead of time? Will you help lead any part of the process? Will you function in any other way, e.g., does the board want you to act as an advisor throughout the process?

BEST PRACTICES IN SUCCESSION PLANNING:

5. Commit to open, honest communication. You and each member of the board need to be aware of how the process is going (each step along the way). Take time to define how will communication happen and who will be responsible to make sure that it is happening.

