
GROWTH POINTS

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The Critical First Year

The initial year of a pastor's tenure is foundational for shaping the future trajectory of the church.

This period is crucial for establishing credibility, setting strategic priorities, building a strong team, and delivering early performance. Here are some key actions for a pastor to focus on during their first year:

1. Establish Trust and Credibility

- **Be Visible and Approachable:**
 - Engage with people at all levels.
 - Actively listen to their concerns and aspirations.
 - Demonstrate genuine interest in their well-being.
- **Communicate Transparently:**
 - Share vision, goals, and plans with clarity.
 - Update employees, stakeholders, and the board on progress and challenges.
- **Lead by Example:**
 - Show integrity, accountability, and commitment in actions.
 - Roll up your sleeves and work alongside your team.

2. Understand the Church Environment

- **Conduct a Comprehensive Assessment:**
 - Evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis).
 - Understand its current position in the community, and growth trends.
- **Engage with Key Stakeholders:**
 - Meet with customers, suppliers, partners, and investors.
 - Gain insights into their perspectives and expectations.
- **Immerse in Church Culture:**
 - Understand existing values, values, and norms.
 - Identify areas that need preservation and those requiring change.

3. Set a Clear Vision and Direction

- **Define a Compelling Vision:**
 - Articulate a clear and inspiring vision aligned with the church's mission.
 - Set specific measurable goals supporting the vision.

- **Create a Roadmap:**

- Develop a strategic plan with key initiatives, milestones, and performance indicators.
- Communicate this roadmap to all levels of leadership.

4. Build and Empower a Leadership Team

- **Evaluate Leadership Talent:**

- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the existing leadership team.
- Identify gaps and opportunities for development.

- **Empower and Delegate:**

- Foster a culture of empowerment, where leaders have the authority and responsibility to make decisions.
- Encourage collaboration and accountability.

5. Determine Early Action Points

- **Focus on Key Priorities:**

- Identify and prioritize critical initiatives to deliver immediate impact (e.g., improving guest welcome.)
- Achieve early wins to build momentum and demonstrate your ability to deliver results.

- **Monitor and Adjust:**

- Continuously track progress against goals.
- Stay agile and responsive to external or internal challenges.

6. Foster a Positive Culture

- **Promote Open Communication:**

- Encourage open, honest, and transparent communication throughout the ministry.
- Create channels for feedback and dialogue.

- **Recognize and Reward:**

- Celebrate successes and recognize the contributions of others.
- Implement a reward system aligned with the mission.

- **Support Development and Growth:**

- Invest in leadership development through training, mentoring, and coaching opportunities.
- Foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

The first year of a pastor's leadership is a critical period requiring a balance of strategic thinking, decisive action, and empathetic leadership. Establishing a strong model of leadership sets the tone for future action and church growth.

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