

POSTINGS

articles for missions mobilizers



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I'd Like to Do That!

**Seven guidelines
for designing attractive
missions leadership roles**

Are you creating leadership opportunities that appeal to the people in your congregation, especially younger generations? How might you construct or reconfigure roles so that someone in your church would think, "Hey, I will do that!"?

In this short *Postings* article, we will highlight seven principles followed by links to some descriptions of group and individual leadership roles that may be helpful templates as you develop or revise your own documents.

SEVEN GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH MISSIONS LEADERSHIP DESIGN

1. **Divide leadership into smaller pieces built around gifts and passion.** Even if your church is small, divide leadership responsibilities into several smaller groups so that you can recruit people to focus on doing what they most enjoy. Begin by separating missions program administration, missionary care, and missions event planning. Each of these attracts people with very different gifts. For example, asking a person who loves to organize missionary hospitality to sit in meetings developing the annual missions budget quickly drains their energy. But asking them to help organize a baby shower for a missionary on home assignment gets an enthusiastic, “Yes!”
2. **Choose group names carefully.** Survey a few younger adults in your church. What is their immediate reaction to the terms, “committee,” “team,” and “task force”? You may also want to measure preferences for “missions” vs. “global outreach.” Ask them to name a job title they would find attractive. Be ready to replace older terms if they sound boring, difficult, or simply unclear to your younger audience.
3. **Build around vision not task.** Remember the story of the three stonemasons? When asked what they were doing, the first said, “I am making a living.” The second said, “I am building a wall.” The third said, “I am creating a cathedral.” Do you describe the job of your missions leaders in terms that point toward life transformation? Adopting visionary language has the added benefit of facilitating the evaluation of your impact. For example, is your missionary development team just tasked with vetting missionary candidates or with seeking to intentionally disciple every believer to fulfill the role God has created them to play in His mission?
4. **Create clear strategy and policy guidelines.** Too many leadership teams are bogged down discussing the same type of problems and decisions in every meeting. No one wants to be part of that kind of a leadership group. The solution is to invest the time to adopt clear priorities and strategies, and then develop policies that predetermine many decisions, eliminating the need for laborious consideration of each individual situation, while acknowledging that there may be occasional exceptions.
5. **Begin with trial size.** When recruiting a new team member, ask them to begin by serving a six-month trial period to determine if the role is a good fit for them. At the end of this time, sit down and discuss honestly how they feel about continuing. Often there are ways to customize the role to be the best possible fit. Job sharing may be a great option, especially for a couple or moms of younger children.
6. **Always include celebration.** Too often missions leadership teams get bogged down in lengthy agendas. Meetings run long and late. Everyone loses if leaders leave a meeting with a sense of frustration or discouragement. Plan ahead in order to end every meeting with celebration. Some ideas: Ahead of time, record a two-minute clip where one of your global workers shares something they appreciate about your church’s support of their family and/or ministry; invite a member of a recent short-term team to come and share how the trip changed them; read a couple of quotes from members of the congregation who loved their involvement in a recent missions project. Remind your leaders how their work made this possible.

7. Publicly commend the team's impact.

Don't let your missions leaders be unsung heroes. Here are some practical ideas: (1) Give your pastor a written list of illustrations of how members of your leadership teams have used specific gifts or passions to impact your missions engagement. Suggest that one or more of these be included as an illustration the next time they preach a sermon on service. (2) When you write your global workers (you do write them, don't you?!) highlight one of your leaders and a specific way they serve, copying the letter to your whole leadership team. (3) Annually, call all of your missions leaders to the platform during a worship service and recommission them for service, briefly noting how their work has transformational impact around the world through long- and short-term ministries.

CLEAR STRUCTURES PAY BIG DIVIDENDS

Do seemingly more urgent missions matters always demand attention, so that updating your leadership structures and job descriptions gets put off? If so, operating in outdated structures with insufficient guidelines is likely robbing you of the leaders you need and the capacity to move forward with greatest impact. Why not take some time in the next month to work on updating the documents that will serve as both recruiting tools and rails to run on efficiently. Here are some samples from both large and small church structures that may be useful starting places.

- [Organizational Structure Samples](#)
- [Overall Leadership Team Responsibilities](#)
- [Complementary Leadership Teams Responsibilities](#)
- [Missions Leader Job Descriptions](#)

If you have developed some structures and job descriptions that have proven useful, please share them with us at info@CatalystServices.org.

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