

# GREAT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHURCHES DO THESE 10 THINGS WELL

*"Insights from helping over 100 large churches develop their strategic framework for leadership development"*

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## Leadership Network®

*Now with updated content and  
a staff discussion guide*



## QUICK SUMMARY

*Want a quick overview of the 10 Things Great Leadership Development Churches Do Well? Here is the 60-second, skimmable version. You can dive into the rest of the content when there's more time. And don't forget, there is a staff discussion guide at the end when you're ready to put these insights into actions!*

**01 EACH CHURCH HAS A VISION SO LARGE THAT IT CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH ITS CURRENT PAID STAFF AND CURRENT VOLUNTEER LEADERS.** A big dream heightens the need, energy and focus on developing enough leaders to accomplish the vision.

**02 SOMEONE ON THE SENIOR TEAM WAKES UP EACH DAY THINKING ABOUT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.** The best Leadership Development churches do have someone on the lead team that is ensuring multiplication of leaders remain a key organizational focus.

**03 EACH CHURCH HAS EMBRACED THE IDEA THAT BUILDING MULTIPLYING LEADERS FOR THE KINGDOM IS A KEY FOCUS OF THEIR KINGDOM WORK.** It's one thing to aspire to value leadership development, and another to really value it.

**04 EACH SENIOR LEADER AND HIS/HER TEAM HAVE AGREED ON A SINGLE DEFINITION OF THE ATTRIBUTES THEY WANT THEIR LEADERS TO POSSESS - AT EACH LEVEL OF THEIR CHURCH LEADERSHIP.** Eighty percent of leadership is possessing the right attributes of a leader. Great churches have crafted what that 80% looks like for them and then develop their leaders in light of the 80%.

**05 EACH CHURCH EVALUATES STAFF AND PROMOTES STAFF NOT ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL ABILITY TO PRODUCE RESULTS BUT ON THEIR ABILITY TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE GREAT LEADERS WHO LEAD GREAT TEAMS.** Great leaders that raise up leaders who can "do what they do", will never be out of a job. They're worth their weight in gold.

**06 EACH GREAT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHURCH FOCUSES ON BUILDING LEADERS FROM WITHIN.** If you believe "everything you need to reach your city is already in your church," you focus on a homegrown strategy.

**07 EACH GREAT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHURCH UNDERSTANDS THAT APPRENTICING THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF MINISTRY IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN SENDING THEM TO A CLASS.** Seventy percent of a leaders development comes from giving people hands-on experience.

**08 GREAT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHURCHES HAVE MADE ONGOING COACHING OTHERS A KEY PART OF THEIR MODEL.** These churches coach their leaders, paid and unpaid, throughout their ministry journey.

**09 EACH OF THESE CHURCHES HAS STRONG COMMITMENT TO THEIR STAFF'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT.** Great churches have leadership development written as one of the key objectives of each staff member and their top leaders focus on this with their teams.

**10 GREAT CHURCHES HAVE METRICS ON THEIR DASHBOARDS THAT TELL THEM IF THEY'RE WINNING IN DEVELOPING LEADERS.** These churches have found a way of measuring what matters.

## 01 EACH CHURCH HAS A VISION SO LARGE THAT IT CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED WITH ITS CURRENT PAID STAFF AND CURRENT VOLUNTEER LEADERS.

Churches with big visions dream about planting other churches or developing multiple locations. Others are looking to broaden and deepen their impact on the city around them—such that their “fingerprints” are all over the community. A big dream heightens the need, energy and focus on developing enough leaders to accomplish the vision. If a senior pastor wants to reach more people, open new locations or plant more churches, they will quickly discover that an increased footprint can only happen if there’s a significant focus on developing leaders.

## SOMEONE ON THE SENIOR TEAM WAKES UP EACH DAY THINKING ABOUT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

02

It’s best if the passion for leadership development resides in the Lead Pastor, who is shaping the overall church culture. The passion could also come from the “second-in-command,” but someone on the lead team needs to assume responsibility for leadership development across the whole church. This person gives energy and passion towards the development of leaders. Without this person, the focus of leadership development tends to get lost in the business of preparing for the weekend and the myriad of ministries that happen throughout the week. Leadership development never screams. It is quick to “fall off the table” in the midst of competing voices. The best leadership development churches have someone on the lead team that is ensuring multiplication of leaders remains a key organizational focus.

## 03 EACH CHURCH HAS EMBRACED THE IDEA THAT BUILDING MULTIPLYING LEADERS FOR THE KINGDOM IS A KEY FOCUS OF THEIR KINGDOM WORK.

“Sundays come along with alarming frequency.” It’s easy to be caught up in preparing and leading services, ministries and running the church. It’s easy to let weekend worship attendance become the key measure for success. The weekend, while important, is one of the easiest distractions from developing leaders. Even during his “ministering to the masses,” Jesus constantly poured into his leaders (disciples), so that those following Him were ready to carry on the ministry after his death. Jesus didn’t lose focus that a cornerstone of his ministry which was reproducing spiritual leaders who would lead the masses. Paul, similarly, was never without an apprentice (the scripture often reads “Paul and...”). In 2 Tim 2:2, Paul commanded Timothy, “What you’ve heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men that they would be able to teach others also.” That’s 4 generations of leaders!

Great churches pay special attention to their culture by what they reward and what they tolerate—both of which shape culture. It’s one thing to aspire to value leadership development, and another to really value it. Teams should ask themselves, “Do we have a value of leadership development? Are we rewarding it? Or is its absence something we are tolerating?” In his recent book, “Empowering Leadership,” Michael Fletcher, Senior Pastor of Manna Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina, states, “Building people and building leaders is the work we’re in.”

## 04 EACH SENIOR LEADER AND HIS/HER TEAM HAVE AGREED ON A SINGLE DEFINITION OF THE ATTRIBUTES THEY WANT THEIR LEADERS TO POSSESS - AT EACH LEVEL OF THEIR CHURCH LEADERSHIP.

Leadership has many different definitions. A list of leadership competencies can be endless. Great leadership development churches have defined for staff what great leaders look like, regardless of where they lead. Staff and lay leaders have reached a consensus of what “great” small group leaders (either Serve Teams or Life Group Teams) look like and what is true about their character, competencies and values. The same thing is true at all levels of responsibility all the way up to ministry directors, campus pastors or lead team members. Everyone is building leaders with the same characteristics in mind. I argue 80% of what a leader looks like is the same, 20% is context. A good friend of mine, Ric Thorpe, now the Bishop of Islington for the Anglican Church in the UK—head of their church planting initiatives nationally—tells the story of being on staff at Holy Trinity Brompton in London. Sandy Miller was building into a leader that could lead any team in the church. For a season, Ric became the worship director of the church, not because he was a great worship leader but because he could build and lead any team across the church. He went in and developed a great team and raised up someone to lead it. He then went on to lead various other teams who needed leaders raised up.

That’s what great leaders do. Eighty percent of leadership is possessing the right attributes of a leader. Great churches have crafted what that 80% looks like for them and then they develop their leaders in light of the 80%.

## EACH CHURCH EVALUATES STAFF AND PROMOTES STAFF NOT ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL ABILITY TO PRODUCE RESULTS BUT ON THEIR ABILITY TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE GREAT LEADERS WHO LEAD GREAT TEAMS.

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We all love great star performers but great churches reward, promote and champion those who have demonstrated they are great at developing leaders. These churches realize the development of new leaders will determine if the church will be able to increase their impact in their communities, regardless of the model of church they run. Great leaders that raise up leaders who can “do what they do,” will never be out of a job. They’re worth their weight in gold.

Great leadership development churches never promote individual contributors. They only promote people that are raising up their successor. At Manna Church in Fayetteville North Carolina, they create what they call an “upward draft.”

Because they’re planting new churches and new campuses, they’re constantly creating new openings for their staff to be considered for. As Michael Fletcher, Senior Pastor states, “No one gets considered for the new opportunities until they’ve raised up their successor.”

## EACH GREAT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHURCH FOCUSES ON BUILDING LEADERS FROM WITHIN.

At one time, large churches operated like the New York Yankees. They preferred to “buy” talent on the free agent market rather than grow their major league roster from their farm system like the St. Louis Cardinals.

Many times, large-church staffs are made up of those who “cut their teeth and made a name for themselves” someplace else. Years ago I heard a senior pastor of a church of over 10,000 say, “We want to look for leaders who’ve performed well at other places. That’s who we want to hire.”

The problem with this strategy is easy to see. As another large church executive pastor said to me, “In an interview, everyone agrees with our vision, our values and our DNA. Its only 6 months after we’ve hired them we find out that’s not true. Now we’re in trouble.”

Just like the Cardinals, churches with great leadership development pride themselves on having staff that are almost entirely built from within. When you take that approach, you know the person, their commitment to your DNA, and their commitment to your vision and values. You know their track record. When you hire from outside, you hope it works out and they buy in and do well.

If you believe “everything you need to reach your city is already in your church,” you focus on a homegrown strategy.

## EACH GREAT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHURCH UNDERSTANDS THAT APPRENTICING THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE CONTEXT OF MINISTRY IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN SENDING THEM TO A CLASS.

Great churches in leadership development realize that formal classroom content plays a small part in developing leaders. I would suggest content should contribute no more than 10% of someone’s development. Seventy percent of a leader’s development comes from giving people hands-on experience. Twenty percent of a leader’s development is learned from being in an apprenticing relationship with an existing leader.

These churches have thought through, “What characteristics are we looking for in leaders we want to apprentice?” and “What’s our apprenticing strategy?” Lastly they ask, “Are all our staff driving apprenticing down through every leadership level of their ministries?” One simple model of apprenticeship is used by Community Christian Church of Naperville, IL. It has five steps:

I do, you watch, we talk.  
I do, you help, we talk.  
You do, I help, we talk.  
You do, I watch, we talk.

You do, and identify an apprentice, repeat the process.

## 08 GREAT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CHURCHES HAVE MADE ONGOING COACHING OTHERS A KEY PART OF THEIR MODEL.

Some churches have described their leadership development processes as, “We throw new leaders in the pool and hope they learn how to swim.” Taking on new levels of leadership can be very stressful. Great churches here prided themselves in helping new leaders be successful rather than “hoping” they make it. These churches coach their leaders, paid and unpaid, throughout their ministry journey. Again, churches that are “winning” in leadership development have everyone singing off the same song sheet in their coaching model. Five simple coaching questions used by Community Christian is one model:

- 1) How are you doing?
- 2) What’s going well?
- 3) What are your challenges?
- 4) What are you going to do about it?
- 5) What can I pray for?

## EACH OF THESE CHURCHES HAS STRONG COMMITMENT TO THEIR STAFF’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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Effective leadership development occurs when there is a culture of leadership development that exists, first, with the staff. Many times, staff feel they are hired primarily to “execute” ministry, but they don’t feel like someone is there to help make them better and reach new levels of competency in their leadership.

Great churches have leadership development written as one of the key objectives for each staff member and their top leaders focus on this with their teams. Developmental reviews are done with every staff reviewing their leadership and their results each year. Gaps are identified of where staff need to be better.

Conversations are held to talk about their next step in leadership and what they need to do to get better. Time and money are invested. Staff are given cross divisional projects to stretch them beyond their existing role. Staff with high capacity gifting are identified early on. Plans are put in place to help them accelerate their development.



## GREAT CHURCHES HAVE METRICS ON THEIR DASHBOARDS THAT TELL THEM IF THEY'RE WINNING IN DEVELOPING LEADERS.

These churches have found a way of measuring what matters. In leadership development, here are several measures churches use:

First, what percent of our staff have been raised up from within? This is a lagging measure telling the church how well they've been doing.

Second, what percent of our leaders, paid and unpaid, currently are apprenticing someone else, getting them ready to lead like they do? This is a leading indicator. It tells the church how many key leaders they will have in the next two years. It also indicates the ministries within the church that have effectively embraced leadership development. Effective churches audit and track this number on their "church dashboards."

A third measure is looking at a church's strategic plan asking the question, "How many leaders will we need at each level of our pipeline or pathway to accomplish our strategic plan and how many do we have now?" This gap analysis is tracked to see overall progress. Often this is broken down by department, so each ministry area knows what they're contributing to the plan and how they're doing in the process.

Innovative churches are now giving data "a seat at the table" when making decisions on leadership selection. For example, most churches are using assessments such as Birkman, Colby, or StrengthFinders in the hiring process. Churches are now looking at the common traits in those assessments among their high performing leaders. Some are also using 3rd party data in association with the Christian data company gloo to assess commonly shared executive profiles. These churches are now able to identify common executive characteristics and then compare their current, younger staff as an indicator of future potential.



# STAFF DISCUSSION GUIDE

Use this guide to get the most out of this resource and uncover some actionable insights and next steps for your church. Four simple steps:

**STEP 1** Read through the 10 Things PDF and capture your key ideas and insights.

**STEP 2** Give your church a grade for each of the 10 Things and include your reasoning for each.

**STEP 3** Gather with your team to discuss key ideas from the resource and compare report cards. What are the similarities? Differences? Why?

**STEP 4** Sketch out potential next steps to improve your grade in one key area. Then identify action steps to move you forward in that area over the next 30-60 days.

## KEY IDEAS & INSIGHTS

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT REPORT CARD

10 THINGS	GRADE	WHY?
1. Vision		
2. Leadership		
3. Focus		
4. Definition		
5. Promotion		
6. Build from within		
7. Apprenticing		
8. Coaching		
9. Staff Development		
10. Metrics		

## ACTION STEPS