

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

The Best Practices of Multisite - Episode 238

The Future of Multisite (Part 3)

How a church launches new campuses is critical to their long-term strategic success, but we know that many churches feel the pressure to launch before they're ready. Launching too fast, or without the proper systems and structures in place, can quickly lead to becoming **multi-stuck**. So, before you jump into your launch, consider these key questions and best practices...

Key Questions for Launching a Multisite Location

We often say that cracks become gaps during an expansion—so it's important to have answers and alignment around these questions **before** launching a new location:

1. What's the ministry model we intend to replicate at every location?
2. Which teaching model will we use (video vs. live teaching)?
3. Who will have decision rights?
4. How will central ministry teams and operations support the campuses?
5. What locations should we be considering?
6. What's the optimal schedule for launching a new campus?
Tip: Pastors tend to be overly optimistic around this. In our experience, 18-24 months is typical for launching your first campus.
7. Who should we hire to be the campus pastor?
8. What's the structure of the remaining staff and volunteer team that we need to build?
9. What will success look like for the new campus?
10. What do we need to include in our launch plan to make sure the right people are doing the right things to launch by the targeted time?
11. Should we also be thinking about launching future locations?
12. How does multisite impact our overall staffing structure going forward?

Best Practices: Decision Rights

1. Clarify your matrix structure.

If you commit to multisite, you are also committing to a matrix structure. One of the keys to a healthy matrix structure is making sure that everyone understands who has **authority** and who

has **influence**. Many people on your multisite team will have dual roles; some of them will have a campus ministry role along with central ministry responsibilities. In other words, in some instances they will have authority, and in other instances they will only have influence. We have to have clarity around this for every team member.

2. Define your ministry playbook.

A ministry playbook takes every core ministry of the church and tries to define in advance for the central teams and campus teams to know: When do I get to make the decision? Defining this ahead of time will bring more unity and more alignment, and help to make sure your multisite strategy is healthy and thriving—allowing you to accomplish the mission God has for your church.

Best Practices: Selecting a Location

1. Your ideal campus is 20-30 minutes from your central location.

This distance is far enough that people won't be tempted to go back to the central location, but close enough that you won't lose your core.

2. You need a core of people from your church who *live, work, and play* in the campus community.

Your core should ideally be 10% of your congregation, with 100 at a minimum. If these 100 people are engaged in the community, you can probably expect that number to double to 200 at launch. However, if you're a large church, it's important to contextualize this to your size. If people are coming from a large central location, they're going to expect the "large church" feel and experience they're used to. They likely won't want to attend a campus that doesn't reflect who you are.

Best Practices: Multisite Structure

1. It's not unusual for a church with only two locations to remain structured as if they are still a single-location church. But when you add your third location, you'll need to start to **clarify central and campus ministry roles**. This is when you are really forced to establish a matrix structure.

Tip: We typically don't recommend that churches hire a campus pastor for the original, sending location until the third or fourth campus is established. Any sooner than that tends to create confusion around the role of the senior pastor at that location.

2. While dual roles between the central location and the campus are common in the early stages of multisite, do not create this duality haphazardly. It's always important to

minimize complexity as much as you can.

3. **Hire leaders, not doers.** Many churches fall into the trap of using their staffing dollars on part-time doers to fill in the gaps early in their multisite process. This is a mistake, because **the greatest barrier to expansion in multisite is lack of leaders, not a lack of resources.** If you invest in part-time doer roles, you are going to end up with a leadership deficit in the years to come.
4. We've said this before, but it's worth repeating: an ideal campus pastor should have the personality and giftings of a managerial leader, not an entrepreneurial leader.

Find more multisite content and best practices [here](#).

Free Webinar: “To Multisite or Un-Multisite: Clarify a Path Forward”

Whether you're currently leading a multisite church or simply considering the strategy for the future, join Tony Morgan and the Unstuck team on **March 31** for this [free multisite webinar](#).

We'll walk through the predictable outcomes of popular multisite models, define the role of the campus pastor, share what strategies are working (and aren't) for multisite churches across the country, and more. [Register today to secure your seat.](#)

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode238.