

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Signs You Need to Restructure: Lack of Alignment & Span of Care - Episode 255

Signs You Need to Restructure Your Staff (Part 4)

After working with hundreds of churches through the years on the issue of structure, it's become clear that some staffing and structure strategies help churches accomplish their mission... and some do not.

This week, we're wrapping up our conversation around Signs You Need to Restructure with three final warning signs related to span of care issues and lack of team/ministry alignment.

3 More Signs You Need to Restructure

SIGN #1: Your leadership structure is designed to foster division rather than alignment.

Healthy churches begin by building a senior leadership team. By doing so, they model a team-based approach to leadership from the top of the organization. This also helps with streamlining strategic decision-making. This senior leadership team, when it's designed correctly, also aligns the rest of the staff and volunteer team in a way that eliminates ministry silos.

Stuck churches, on the other hand, build a flat leadership structure where every pastor and every staff leader is added to the team and reports directly to the senior pastor. Over time, this leads to an unmanageable span of care for the senior pastor and fosters competition rather than alignment among ministries.

When we talk about senior leadership teams in churches, we are talking about the senior staff leaders who are responsible for moving the churches mission forward. In every size church, we recommend a team of 3 to 8 leaders made up of people who:

- Love Jesus and the church; meet all the biblical qualifications of leadership
- Are fully-aligned with the church's mission, vision and strategies
- Model the behaviors of the culture you hoping to create
- Are big-picture, strategic thinkers
- Have demonstrated ability to identify, develop and empower other leaders

Healthy churches structure around this team, and by doing so, bring full alignment to the rest of the staff and the various ministries of the church. When this team is too small, too big, or

non-existent, it's not unusual for us to see signs of dysfunction, distrust, unhealthy competition and the formation of ministry silos within churches.

SIGN #2: You have people trying to lead and care for too many people.

Healthy churches maintain an appropriate span of care. They make sure every leader is managing the right number of staff and volunteers to accomplish their part of the mission while also caring for the people on the team.

Stuck churches tend to let span of care become unreasonable to the point that it outpaces the capacity of the leaders. They add too many direct reporting relationships—which either compromises the mission or the care and development of the team members.

The ideal span of care will look different across different leaders, though research has shown that engagement drops off with more than 8 direct reports. Generally, Senior Pastors need a span of care that's smaller, rather than larger. Many large churches have moved to a model that incorporates an Executive Pastor role to help reduce the Senior Pastor's span of care.

SIGN #3: You have people and ministries operating in silos and disconnected to the team.

In other words, you have staff or volunteers who are either individually or as a ministry team living on their own islands.

Healthy churches make sure *every* ministry and *every* person is linked to the senior leadership team. There are no silo ministries that aren't connected and aligned to the rest of the team and, more importantly, every ministry is connected to the mission and strategic direction of the church.

Stuck churches, on the other hand, allow ministries to operate independently without a connection to the senior leadership team. This leads to silo ministries and people who eventually compete with the rest of the church for resources and people's time and attention.

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode255.