

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

Mistakes to Avoid When Launching a New Campus - Episode 289

4 Steps for Clarifying Your Multisite Strategy (Part 3)

As churches consider adding new campuses, they need to establish a process for identifying new locations, hiring staff and building teams, and launching at the right time.

Launching strong is vital, because the first few weeks of a new campus opening are when most new people will come. If you're not ready, and it's not the experience they were hoping for, your opportunity with the people you're trying to reach is compromised.

In this episode, Tony and Amy will identify several common mistakes and best practices for churches who are considering launching a new campus in the coming months.

Mistake #1: Launching Too Close or Too Far

Common Mistakes:

1. **Launching too close.** Launching too close to the sending location often makes it difficult for a new campus to build momentum—because it's too easy for people to go back to the original location.
2. **Launching too far.** When churches launch too far, they often struggle due to a lack of core leaders, volunteers, and attenders. They also may struggle with a lack of brand identity in the new community.

Best Practices:

1. Make sure there's at least a 20-30 minute drive time between a new location and your current location(s).
2. Look for areas where you already have the most people connected to your church. *(This is one of the key distinctions between a multisite strategy and a church planting strategy.)*
3. Focus on the geographical location of the facility over finding the “perfect” facility.

Mistake #2: Launching Too Fast

Common Mistakes:

1. Churches tend to schedule their launch around the time required to get a facility ready, rather than considering other factors (like building teams and financial resources).
2. Churches tend to focus on the one-time costs of a campus launch (acquiring equipment, a facility, hiring new staff, etc.) rather than the ongoing operating expenses.

Best Practices:

1. If this is your first multisite location, we recommend planning a minimum of 18 months in advance for the launch of that new site.
 - a. If it's not your first location, we recommend a minimum of 12 months.
2. Allow enough time to build your core team, including the location pastor, staff team, volunteer leaders, and volunteers for ministry teams. *(Note that there's time involved to backfill these key roles at the original location, as well.)*
3. Many times, it takes 2-3 years before a new location is self-sustaining. Even if your church has the funds to cover the up-front, one-time launch costs, we recommend that you consider doing a vision/financial campaign around each new campus to rally the church together and to help cover ongoing operational costs in the future.

Mistake #3: Launching Too Small

Common Mistakes:

1. When churches launch too small, the new campus can quickly become more insider-focused, making it harder for new people that are visiting or trying to connect with that location to fit in.
2. When churches launch too small, there are often not enough staff leaders, volunteer leaders, or people volunteering on teams to carry the core ministries that the church expects to have in place.

Best Practices:

1. We recommend that you launch a new campus with a minimum of 200 people *(but the more you launch with, the better the odds are for long-term sustainability of that location.)*
2. We recommend that churches reach 1,000 people in average attendance at the original location before considering adding a new campus. If you send 10% of your church to the new location, and this number doubles, you will reach 200 people in attendance.

- a. For a church of 2,000, you should send out a core of 200 people and expect 400 people in attendance, etc.
3. Focus on building up your volunteer teams. It's easy to find a building and hire staff... The hard work, and the work that takes the most time investment, is raising up the team of leaders and volunteers who will do all the ministry at the new location.
4. Be careful not to overstaff, as overstaffing can drain resources from the original sending location and lead to financial issues in the future.

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode289.

Free Webinar: “Multisite Better” on March 30

In our 100+ years of combined multisite experience, we've found that despite the uniqueness of every church, there are predictable outcomes to each of the expansion approaches that churches take. **Want to avoid multisite misery?** In this [free webinar](#), Tony Morgan and Amy Anderson will teach you proven strategies for better multisite results and help clarify your healthiest way forward. [Register now](#).

Special Thanks to Our Sponsor for This Episode:



Planning Center is an all-in-one church management system that gives you the tools you need to organize your ministries and give your congregants a place to engage. Whether you're looking for a secure check-in for families, an effortless way to schedule volunteers, or an easy method to give online, sign up for only what you need. Go to planningcenter.com and start your 30-day free trial today.