

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

9 Principles for Going Multisite Through a Merger - Episode 342

Multisite Madness? (Part 4)

Closed campuses were 40% more likely to have launched as a result of a merger with another church. That's why we believe you need a clear multisite strategy *before* you can make good decisions about merger opportunities.

To wrap up our series on "Multisite Madness?," Tony and Amy unpack the nine predictable outcomes of multisite through the lens of going multisite by a merger.

Multisite or Merger?

If you are a large, healthy, monosite church, chances are you've been approached with the opportunity to merge with another congregation.

However, if given the choice between going multisite by launching your own location or by going through a merger process, we recommend that you kick off your multisite strategy by launching a brand new campus first.

Mergers bring additional complexity to the multisite process. That's why it's important to know what health looks like for one of your locations *before* you step into merger conversations.

9 Predictable Outcomes of Going Multisite via Merger

1) You Replicate What You Are.

- If your church is not currently growing and considering the need for space on your own, the opportunity to take on a merger is not a good next step.
- In every merger, there's a leading church and a joining church. For this to work, the leading church has to be leading from strength.
- One unhealthy church merging with a healthy one could bring unhealth to the new church.

2) Launch Where You Are Already Reaching People.

- The “leading” church needs to be willing to send a core team to the “following” church/new campus to help establish the culture, values, methods, etc. of the leading church.
- Launching where you already are in merger-related expansion means having a large core team to lead ministry and a large core team to transfer DNA.

3) Plan to Launch at Twice the Size of Your Core Team.

- The leading church has to send a core of their staff and volunteer leadership large enough to create a core team that will allow for that location to launch at twice its size.
- You're going to have to send a lot of people to the new location in order to provide ministry the way your church provides ministry.

4) The Location Is More Important Than the Facility.

- When deciding whether or not to adopt a church through a merger to become a multisite campus, the same considerations for location apply: 15-30 minutes from the sending campus in a “drive-to” area.
- Just because a church reaches out to you doesn't necessarily mean that that's the right location for your church to launch.
- What will the new church entity do with any property and/or facilities gained in the merger? Will the property and/or facilities be kept or sold, and a new location found?

5) Leadership Is More Important Than Location.

- If there are two lead pastors involved, will the lead pastor of the joining church be re-deployed in another staff position within the church, or be given a severance package?
- Will the existing boards and committees be integrated, re-calibrated or eliminated? Will the board members stay the same? Will all, some, or none remain?
- What staff will remain in their current position, be redeployed to another area in the church, downsized, or released?
- The day after the merger is approved, it has to be clear to everyone in the church—staff, lay leaders, church members, and attendees— who’s in charge here and where do I fit on the church organizational chart?

6) Video Really Works.

- How similar or different are the worship styles of our church from the other church? Are you contemporary, traditional or blended? Does our church have choirs or worship bands, drums or organs, pews or theater-seats, stained-glass or video screens?
- A new campus created through a merger will need to reimagine its weekend services to mimic the leading church.

- Who will be bringing the weekend messages to the congregation? Will the sermons be delivered in-person or by video?
 - Especially in a merger setting, establishing the lead pastor as the primary voice and vision-caster of the church is essential, and the weekly Sunday message is the most obvious way to do so.

7) Central/Campus Clarity Is Key & 8) Start Higher Control, Loosen Later (if Desired).

- Once it's determined who will remain on staff, a new structure will need to be created to establish campus and central roles, decision rights, etc.
- Establishing authority through the central team is especially key in a merger setting.
- We tend to drift back towards what we know. If too much leeway is given to the new campus, it's going to be an uphill battle to establish the new vision, voice, and culture of the sending church at the new location, due to the existing history of the merging church.

9) Begin Financial Planning Before Launch.

- What tangible assets do the two churches bring to the table in terms of property, facilities and equipment? Is there an inventory of all property and equipment?
- What debt does either church bring to the merger? How manageable is it? How will it be addressed?

[Learn more](#) about our process for helping monosite churches go multisite for the very first time.

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode342.

[Webinar] Going Multisite:

How to Launch Your First Campus & Avoid Common Pitfalls

The unknowns around going multisite for the first time can create anxiety—after all, if you've never led through this before, you “don't know what you don't know.” At this free webinar, we'll help you get clarity on the *how*, *when*, and *who* of going multisite for the first time. [Register now](#).

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