

How to Organize Anything

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Introduction

Many leaders have an idea of what they want to do but not how to do it. This becomes more of a challenge as your ministry grows and you begin to develop new vision for the future. Not many Bible Schools teach pastors organizational and management skills. As ministries grow and the need for higher levels of organization become apparent, it often creates frustration for leaders because they don't know how to what needs to be done. This is where teams become a necessity. The leader should surround himself with people who are knowledgeable in the areas where he is lacking.

When God gives us a big vision, we must remember the old proverb that says, "The longest journey begins with the first step." It is really important to understand that how you begin will often determine how you end. Sometimes the size of the vision is so overwhelming, it is difficult to know how to take that first step. The principles I will share in this booklet will help you to begin well and accomplish whatever God has given you to do.

I once had a meeting with my father in law and Billy Graham, the world renowned evangelist. My father in law, Ed Steele, was the media chairman for the Billy Graham Crusade in Southern California in 1987. He had asked me to organize a press conference at the Anaheim Stadium where the official announcement of the crusade was to be made. As the three of us were having coffee and waiting for the press conference to begin, I commented to Mr. Graham that this crusade, the largest he had ever held to date, was going to be a huge organizational challenge and asked how he was going to do it. I will never forget his response. He answered with a question. "How do you eat an elephant?" I knew he was not expecting an answer so when I said, "I don't know," he answered by saying, "One bite at a time." From his answer, I understood that whatever you have to organize, do it one bite or one step at a time. This is an important principle in organizing anything.

The need for organization is very important and is taught throughout the Bible. We see the results of organizational planning in Genesis chapter 1, with the logical progression of events. God created our Earth, Sun, Moon and all that would be needed to sustain life before He created animals and man. Look at the sequence of events. God knew what would be needed to sustain life so He created things in an order that would ensure that His creation would thrive. In that same way, we must organize our ministry so that it will not only live but will actually grow and thrive in accomplishing the goals God has set for us.

If your organization is thinking BIG but planning small, you will not be able to handle significant growth. This is something you know in life but need to hear it in regard to ministry.

Sometimes we think that God will supernaturally intervene and make it happen. Sometimes He does in the beginning but what He ultimately wants is for us to mature and learn how to plan and do things that will produce the desired results, then teach others. See Ephesians 4:11&12. The purpose of the Five-Fold Ministry is to bring the saints into maturity so they can do the work of the ministry. It is not for the leader to do it all.

The principles in this booklet will help you begin to think more clearly and plan step by step how to prepare for the growth and success you are looking for. God will not answer your prayer for significant growth if you are not doing your part to be prepared to handle it. God's Word says, "Faith without works is dead." That means that your faith is empty and dead when your actions do not line up with what you say with your mouth. It will produce nothing but failure.

The Bible is full of examples of planning and preparation for the future. Just consider, the greatest administrator of the Bible, Joseph, who is credited with saving Israel and is a type of Jesus, the Messiah. Like Joseph, you need to hear from God to make plans and preparation for what you really believe God has told you to do for Him. He does not believe in wasting His resources and precious souls on leaders who speak boastful words about what they are going to do some day but never actually does anything significant. If you want God's blessings, stretch yourself and begin to prepare for what you REALLY believe God has for you. This lesson will help you to learn how to organize your ministry and your people for significant and sustained growth.

You will discover that some things are repeated within this lesson as well as principles from other booklets I have written on Organizational Management. Remember, "Repetition is the motor of learning." Some things need to be repeated again and again until they become so much of a part of us that it influences our thinking and actions. Sometimes the same thing is said in a different context that will open your understanding for a new application. The progression of all things usually follows this pattern: We think it, we talk about it and then we do it.

Setting Goals

Using S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Setting goals is fundamental to all organization. The term "SMART Goals" were first formulated in the early 1980's as an acronym for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-based. Each of these elements are important when you plan your project and set goals.

S - Specific - Your goal must not be vague but very specific. Remember what Yogi Berra said, "If you don't know where you are going, you may end up somewhere else." How will you know you have reached your goal if you don't have it clearly defined? Too many people settle for second best or something inferior simply because they quit before they reach their ultimate goal. In the timeless Christian classic entitled, "Pilgrim's Progress" Pilgrim is seeking Celestial City.

He had never been there before but he knew he would recognize it when he saw it. He was tempted to give up at Hallelujah Land, which was wonderful, but he did not want to settle for second best. Know where you want to go and don't give up and settle for something less than your destiny.

M - Measurable - Measurements can be made both in quality and quantity. Your goal should also be measurable in that way. You must be specific in setting your goals by being able to measure them. How many do you want to come to your outreach program? That will determine how many chairs to set out or how much food you prepare if a meal is being served. You must be realistic in setting your goals so that you can be prepared but you also need to stretch yourself so that you will be prepared. I often ask pastors who are attending a church growth seminar this question. "Can you handle (or assimilate) five new believers coming into your church next week?" They always answer, "Yes." Then I ask, "Can you handle five more the next week and five more the following week, then ten?" Usually, they begin to say, "Wait a minute. We can't handle bringing that many new believers into the church." I then ask, "Then why are you praying for 'Great Revival' if you are not also preparing. "Faith without works (corresponding actions) is dead" (James 2:20). You must set measurable goals that will let you know when you have achieved what you wanted to accomplish.

A - Achievable - Your goals, as stated above, must be measurable otherwise you will not know when you have achieved them. Don't try to do too much if you are lacking in experience. Start small and build but always keep in mind that you need to stretch yourself to go a bit beyond what you think you can achieve or comfortable with. It is easy for people to set low goals that they know that they can achieve. That makes them feel good but if you are not stretching yourself to grow to the next level, you will not ultimately accomplish your greater goal. The danger in goal setting is twofold. First, it is to attempt more than you can achieve and thus fail. When you fail, it is difficult to motivate yourself and others to keep trying, especially if you fail in a big way. Failure is not necessarily bad if you don't let it defeat you. Joseph had a great vision but lacked understanding and thus failed in the beginning. Moses had a great vision but failed in the beginning. The Apostle Paul had a great vision but failed in the beginning and had to escape by being lowered over the city wall in a basket at night. None of these three men achieved their goal in the first attempt because it was not achievable at that time, which brings us to the next part of SMART Goals.

R - Realistic - Your goals must be realistic, not based on fear of failure but rather based on growing to the next level. This will require some stretching but not attempting to stretch so far that you will fail. You must take a realistic view of where you are in relation to where you want to go. Your experience and resources will help you determine how far you can stretch yourself. You would not expect a young boy to do the work of a full grown man, yet many young leaders want to attempt what often takes years of experience to achieve. I believe that in these last days in which we live, God is promoting people into places of authority and anointing that is beyond their years. Sometimes He does this because those He first called were unwilling to attempt great things for Him. God can use anyone. However, He usually uses people who are willing to

take a realistic look at the task ahead and determine that with God's help, he can accomplish what God asks. There are always exceptions. By that, I mean that God may ask you to do something FAR beyond what you have ever done before. God's ways are usually steady stretching of your spiritual muscles to grow and accomplish Great things for the Kingdom of God. However, don't allow fear to stop you from being obedient to what God asks you to do, realistic or not.

T - Time-based - There are two primary criteria for measuring goals. One is quantity, asking how many, how much, etc., and the other is quality, asking how well you did the job. However, there is another very important factor in measuring any goal and it asks the question, "How long will it take to accomplish." Time is often the most critical element in setting your goals. You must know when your goal is to be accomplished or you will take too much time. I have learned from experience that, "a job will expand to fill the allotted time." That means that if you tell someone that he has five days in which to complete the job, it will take the entire five days. However, if you tell him that it must be completed in four days, he will probably be able to complete it in the four-day time limit you gave him. Therefore, it is important to make an accurate assessment of how long a job should take and assign a definite time limit. Don't say things like, "Get it done as soon as possible" or similar things that do not give a definite time limit. People need to know what you expect of them. If you don't know how long it will take, ask them when they can get the task finished, then determine if it will work with your plan. If it fits with your goal, then tell them that you will expect it to be completed by that time. If it does not fit with your plan, ask them what they will need in order to accomplish the task on time. Remember, part of your job as their leader is to help them succeed by providing the resources needed to accomplish their assignment. (see Leaders Job Description)

Edward Murphy, a mechanical engineer in the US Air Force in the 1950's, formulated what has become known as "Murphy's Law." It says:

1. Everything is more difficult than it appears.
2. Everything takes longer to accomplish than you expect.
3. If anything can go wrong, it will and at the worst possible time.

That is a very pessimistic view of life but unfortunately we often seem to experience this in our everyday life and ministry. Note that the second law states that everything takes longer than you expect. While that is not always the case, we should be aware that time is something that we must use wisely. You can never get it back once it is gone. We tend to measure our work output based on how much time we think we have to accomplish a task. We should not tell our people, "Get this done as soon as possible" but rather set a specific time we want it finished. People can usually reach the time goals if we help them to work a little faster than before. Increased skill levels come with experience and will usually shorten the time needed to accomplish a task. Time is valuable so you must learn to use it wisely.

Principles for Organizing Anything

In order to organize anything, you must have a clear picture of **your ultimate goal** as well as **resources** and **personnel** needed to help you reach that goal. These three items are essential ingredients in setting achievable goals. If you don't have these three things clearly in focus, you won't be able to plan properly. Don't be afraid to stretch yourself when setting goals because you can almost always do more than you think. God usually wants you to do more than you feel that you can achieve and always to do it better and more efficiently. If your goals are so high that they are far beyond your reach, you develop a defeatist attitude and won't put your heart into it. If they are too low, you never really develop your potential for doing great things. The key is to pray and determine specifically what the Lord wants you to accomplish and work from there.

Start with the final goal or product in mind and back up one step at a time until you are at the beginning. This helps you determine what needs to be done first and not get too far ahead of yourself. This is essential for each step or goal and sub-goals of your project. For example, if you want to build a house you must first visualize in your mind what you want the house to look like. How big do you want it to be? How tall, how wide, how many rooms, what will it be made from, bricks or wood or something else? A sub-goal might be how many bricks will you need, what kind of bricks, how much mortar, how much will it cost, etc. Before you put the roof on, you need walls to support it. Before you build the walls, you need a foundation. Before you lay a foundation, you need to determine how big and how strong you need the foundation to be in order to handle the size of the building you want to build. I'm sure you get the idea of what I am talking about. Set your ultimate project goal then begin backing up in your mind visualizing each step of the building process until you get to the beginning. You must keep the final destination in mind but pay attention to the smaller goal along the way. This will help keep you on the path to your ultimate goal.

These are the basic steps that must be taken to insure that you will reach your goal. Remember, these are principles that will apply to any job or project you may encounter.

The **first** thing you must do is "gain a clear understanding of what you want to accomplish." Set your goal and picture it in your mind. The best way to do this is to write the vision, detail by detail so you will know exactly what it is that you want to accomplish. As you begin your journey you will think of things along the way so keep your list close at hand. These details are important because often it is the small things that can keep you from accomplishing your ultimate goal. Let me share a poem from the 14th century that illustrates this principle. It is about a little thing, the loss of a horseshoe nail.

For want of a nail, a shoe is lost.
For want of a shoe, a horse is lost.
For want of a horse, a rider is lost.
For want of a rider, the message was lost.

For want of the message, the battle is lost.
For want of a battle, a kingdom was lost.
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

Habakkuk 2:2 says, "Write it down and make it clear." Remember, "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail." If you don't know exactly where you are going or exactly what you want to accomplish, then how will you know when you reach it?

One of the key ingredients of successful planning is to do as much as you can in advance but don't be afraid to modify the details of your plan as the need arises. However, be careful about changing the major parts of your plan that could affect your ability to reach the goal. Your team will be a great help in assisting you by helping provide plans, ideas and recommendations.

I heard a story about the great sculptor, Michelangelo. It is said that he took a block of stone and pictured what the figure looked like inside the stone. Then he chiseled the stone little by little to set the figure free. We must have a clear picture in our mind as to what we want our project to look like when we are finished. This is very important. The little details will be made clearer as you get closer to your goal.

*Please note that the leader is not expected to do all the planning. However, the leader must be able to recognize and communicate the needs so he can draw the wisdom and knowledge out of his team members as they work together to reach the goal.

Second, "you need to determine what resources you will need to accomplish your vision or project." Write it down with as much detail as possible. You will see the three words, "**Write it down**" often in my writings. Because, "**A vision is only a dream until it is written down.**" There is a three step progression in accomplishing anything. First, you think about it. Second, you talk about it or write it down and third, you actually do it.

Make a list of what you will need to accomplish the project the way the Lord has revealed it to you. This list can include people, money and materials you will need to successfully accomplish the project. I always start with what I call a "Wish List" of things I would like to have if I had unlimited resources. This helps me plan big. Then I look at what I actually have available and begin to formulate a plan to wisely begin with what I have. If you wait until you have all you think you will need to finish the project before you begin, you will never begin. Start with what you have and build from there, acquiring new people and materials along the way. If you only have ideas and not a solid plan, you won't recognize the resources and personnel when they arrive. Besides, you should be praying diligently for these things to come to you. Remember, "you have not because you ask not" and you won't ask for what you don't know you need.

In 1984, I was asked to help organize one of the regions for the Los Angeles Olympic Games Outreach. I had Orange County, the largest of the five regions. The man who was supposed to

be doing the planning and building a network of churches had done nothing for the previous six months. I was recruited to be an emergency fix with less than 90 days before people began arriving for the outreach. I don't think anyone expected me to succeed. Three challenges confronted me. First of all, I had never attempted to organize anything nearly that big before. Second, I had no staff or resources except my wonderful wife (now in Heaven) who was very supportive. Thirdly, I had to plan and organize outreach opportunities, food, housing and transportation for 800 people for 16 days of outreach with a very limited budget. I laughed when John Dawson, the overall director of the Olympic Games Outreach asked me to do the project. I told him that I would pray and to my surprise, the Lord said, "Do it." To make a long story short, we had a very successful outreach and ended up with \$50,000 USD left over to help the other four regions pay off their debt. My philosophy has always been, "Why pay retail if you can get it wholesale and why pay wholesale if you can get it free?"

This story is to illustrate that although you may feel inadequate, if God says, "Do it" then you can know that He will also supply all that you need to accomplish His will. This was my first BIG project to organize and I realized that because God had called me to do it, He would also help me to accomplish it. My life verse is Proverbs, 3:5-6, "Call on Me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things that you do not know." God's word also says, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, we can know that He hears us and if we know that He hears us, then we know that we have the petition that we desire from Him." I John 5:14-15. Don't lose sight of your goal. If it's His will, He wants you to succeed more than you do. Be confident! With His help, you can do anything.

The **Third** step is that "you must act on it." There comes a time when planning and preparation gives way to action. Some people try to perfect their plan before acting on it. I have been guilty of this because I wanted the project to be done perfectly. One time I was so bogged down in a project and the Lord sent a pastor to pray for me. As he prayed, the Lord spoke through him and said, "You have planned enough, it is now time to go out and put your plan into action." The pastor had no idea what it meant but I sure did. I learned that the Lord can perfect a plan while it is in progress if you have laid a good foundational plan. Just don't do so much planning that you wait too long to begin. Finding a balance between planning and action can be delicate. I learned a long time ago that it is easier to direct a moving object than one that is stationary. Do not let fear of failure stop you and don't worry that you don't have all the details worked out yet or know all the steps to take. Inaction is often caused by what is called "Analysis Paralysis." That just means that you spend so long analyzing and perfecting your plans that you become almost paralyzed by inaction so you never finish your plan. Ask God's help, then, "Plan your work and work your plan."

3 Easy Steps on How to Organize Your Vision

Once you have a clear idea of what you want to do, you must then set about answering the question of how to do it. Many people know the “What” part of their vision but not the “How” to organize it.

Most people are either visual learners or auditory learners. That means that they learn primarily by seeing and/or reading something or they learn mostly by hearing something. It is a proven fact that people will remember more if they both see and hear something. Also, “Repetition is the motor of learning.” That means that the more often people hear and see something, the more they will remember it. That’s how advertising works on radio, TV and billboards along the highway. Learn and use these principles of seeing and hearing to help your people remember. I use the principle of repetition in this series of booklets on leadership because some things are so important that they need to be repeated to help you remember. My goal is to help you learn so that you will fulfill your destiny and that the Kingdom of God will be established in every nation, kindred, tribe and language on the earth.

Using Organizational Charts

A simple organizational chart will help people see and remember their job and where they fit into the overall ministry. I always suggest that people learn to use an organizational chart. The idea of division of labor is a concept clearly seen when Jethro, the father in law of Moses, suggested that he become better organized because Moses was burning out and important things were being left undone. Jethro suggested that Moses divide the work by setting people in positions of authority over the tribes and families of Israel who could take care of the less important problems (Exodus 18). Moses was already a great leader but he was still a learner. Don’t ever think that you have learned it all. If Moses, the greatest leader of Israel can humble himself and learn to recognize wisdom when it comes, so can we. Remember, “God gives grace (the enabling ability to do what we cannot normally do) to the humble but resists the proud.”

The **first** thing we can do to help us maintain a clear picture of our overall ministry is to draw a simple organizational chart that has a box for every function or ministry in your church or organization. You will want to write in the Top of the box the name of the position or work to be done. This can be anything from Worship, Sunday School, Greeters or any of several functions in the church or ministry. There should be no more than five or six boxes. The reason for this is that no leader can directly oversee and effectively care for more than that number of ministries. The chart should show you at the top as the leader of the organization.

*** Insert chart diagram**

The **second** thing you should do after you identify the ministries in your church is to put a name in every box below the name of the ministry. This should be the name of the person in charge of this ministry or position. You should not normally have the same name appear twice. One person cannot adequately divide his attention, especially as the ministry begins to grow. We must teach people to be single minded and focused on the one thing they are called to do at that

time. In the beginning, you may need to place one person in two or more positions until someone can be found and trained to do that work. However, the general rule is one person is to lead only one ministry.

The **third** thing you must do is to list a team under every box in the chart. The number one rule for a team ministry is, “Don’t do it alone.” The leader of each ministry is responsible for recruiting and training people to serve under him. The team leader should always be looking for the right people to join his team. He must then train them to do the work the way he wants it done but also look for new ideas from the team members on how to improve the effectiveness of the ministry.

Please note that the **Leader's Job Description** from the booklet with that name is the job description for anyone who is leading anything. While **Methods** may not be applied universally, you should be able to apply **Principles** in any job or situation.

These three simple steps will work for any ministry or organization because they are principles of organization and not mere methods. Remember, a principle will work anywhere but a method is limited to a specific application or way of doing something. Learn principles first and then look for the appropriate method of making the principle work. You must learn to teach these things to your team members at every level. Your job is not just to head or direct a certain ministry but also to train other in the things you have learned (II Timothy 2:2). If we are going to see the Kingdom of God established in the earth, we must reproduce ourselves in the ministries of other people by training them with the knowledge we have acquired from both education and experience. It has been said, “A wise man learns from the mistakes of others. A normal man learns from his own mistakes but a fool learns from no one’s mistakes.” We can also learn from the success of others. We call these "Best Practices." Your priority should be to concentrate on learning principles which will work anywhere and not just on methods which have limited application.

Four Steps to Fill the Organizational Holes in Your Ministry

You should always be looking for people to join your team who are **Faithful, Available and Teachable**. Give opportunity for people to make themselves available to help, especially those who also have a teachable spirit. However, the highest priority you should be looking for is faithfulness. If people are continually faithful to do what they say they will do, you should recruit them for your team. If a man is faithful in that which is small, he will also be faithful in that which is large.

1. **Put your top people on the highest priority.** The pastor or ministry leader needs to have people he can tell, “Make it happen.” You need skilled people on your team to do things that will allow you to use your time doing higher level ministry. It is your responsibility to know the skill level of your people and who you can call on to handle high priority jobs that may arise. If you don’t have that level of people on your team, you must train them and prepare them so you

won't be doing everything yourself. The rule is, "Don't do something yourself that you can delegate to someone else." Too many times we take the short term view that it is easier to just do it myself than to take the time to train others to do the job. This short term thinking will eventually cripple your ministry because you will not have trained others to do their job correctly. Think of a simple task that parents teach children. In the west, it is a time consuming and tiring task to teach small children to tie their shoes. It is much easier to just do it for them because they are not skillful and in a few minutes, they may ask you to show them again. Parents recognize the need to work with them until they master this skill but it is often inconvenient. It takes a bit of time but once they learn this skill, you will never need to do it for them again. As leaders, we must be willing to invest time with our people so they will acquire the skills needed to successfully fulfill their ministry. If we don't invest in them, we will end up doing many low level things ourselves when we should be using our time for higher priorities. Once people have achieved a certain level of ability, use them for that level of work but remember, you should use your most skilled people on the highest priority.

2. Look for people who are under-utilized. Make a list of people who are leading anything in your church. Look at their skill set and determine if they are underutilized. There are people in your congregation who have administrative and ministry skills that you need to get your job done. Often they are just waiting to be asked to help. For example, if you have a businessman who is ushering, you may want to consider getting him to help you in the business management of the church and recruit someone else to do ushering.

3. Look for what is referred to as "High Potential People." These are people who have the ability to do a job if given the opportunity. From time to time, re-evaluate every person doing anything in the church and determine if they are being used to their full potential. God has sent the people you need to help but you must identify them. Provide opportunities for new people to help in some way and determine if they have the potential to become a leader. Look for people who have skills and abilities and use them so they feel that they are benefitting you and the ministry.

4. The Pareto Principle says, "20% of your people are doing 80% of the work." This is true in most organizations. Look at your congregation and you will see that about 80% of your people are only attending meetings and not involved directly in the ministry. Your challenge is to begin to get others involved. The fastest way people learn is to give them responsibility. Don't give untried people important jobs because if they are not already faithful, this won't help. However, it will help you recognize people who have the potential to become a leader at some level. You must spend the majority of your time with the 20% who are doing the majority of the work.

Conclusion

Some people feel that organization keeps the Holy Spirit from being spontaneous and doing new things. This can happen only if you become insensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit within. We have all seen things that are overly organized with no opportunity for the Holy Spirit to do

anything new. We must use Scripture as our guide and not violate its "principles." Remember, John 14:26, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."* He will teach you new things as well as cause you to remember things from the past. However, we must always remember the seven last words of a dying church or ministry. "We - never - did - it - that - way - before." Don't allow yourself to become stuck in only doing things like you have always done it in the past. As time progresses, people and cultures change.

We must be sensitive to the moving of the Holy Spirit when He shows up. It is clear from Scripture that God is organized and does things in a logical pattern. I Corinthians 10:11 says, *"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."* He expects us to follow His example of both being organized but also being spontaneous and moving as the Holy Spirit directs. We are creatures of habit and like to do things the same way all the time. We must recognize that there is a difference between Principles and Methods. Methods change while Principles do not. A Method is only the application of a Principle. Although God's principles never change new methods of application of those principles can be adapted to the current needs of the job, your culture or environment. "I am the Lord God, I (meaning my principles) change not." Malachi 3:6.

If you learn the unchanging Principles of organization and how to apply them to meet the ever changing needs of a growing organization or ministry, you will succeed in fulfilling the destiny of your ministry.