

Develop Leaders from the Inside Out

When ministry leaders start to consider an intentional plan for developing leaders, inevitably they get to this question. The answer to the question will dramatically impact *how* they execute leadership development. Here is the big question about leadership development for church leaders: ***What will be centralized?***

Some churches centralize everything.

They appoint someone to oversee all volunteer recruiting, and that person stewards the process that places new volunteers in different ministries through the church. Leaders of ministry departments, such as groups, kids, and students, don't engage in training their leaders other than inviting those serving in their ministry to training events that the whole church offers. The advantage of this approach is consistency. The disadvantage is training often lacks contextual application and ministry leaders can lose a sense of responsibility for development.

Some churches decentralize everything.

If development happens, it happens at a ministry level and not the church level. The ministry directors are responsible for training the leaders in their specific ministry. One ministry may offer lots of intentional development while another offers nothing. The advantage of this approach is that the training is contextual and ministry leaders are close to the action. The disadvantage is the church can really become several mini-churches with a completely different approach to ministry because people are developed differently.

There is another way, a way that can maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the previous two approaches.

In leadership development: Centralize the approach, decentralize the execution.

A centralized approach means the ministry leaders agree to a common framework for leadership development, such as a leadership pipeline, so that the church is moving in the same direction. A centralized approach includes consistent language and literature, meaning, what people are called (leader, coach, director, etc.) and what people read are consistent. And then execution is decentralized. When execution is decentralized, responsibility and ownership spreads. Ministry leaders embrace responsibility to equip leaders for ministry.

"What will be centralized?" is a question ministry leaders must wrestle with. Consider centralizing the approach and decentralizing the execution.

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