

Problem or Opportunity? The Choice is Yours

When your plans change, how do you respond?

As a leader in your church, you are responsible for the planning and execution of a large number of events or activities on a regular, recurring basis. On some occasions, you may be planning a very large, once-a-year type of event. Hundreds of hours of planning and work by dozens of volunteers lead up to the big day – but things don't go as planned.

What happens next?

Even though all leaders intellectually know that things often don't go as planned, they are typically not ready until that possibility becomes a reality.

Solution - Reframe apparent problems as God-given opportunities

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [Reframe](#), by Mona Patel

Too many people feel stuck when things don't go as planned.

They have ideas that could really disrupt the market and help their companies create beautiful, innovative, game-changing products and services, but a host of reasons hold them back.

Those who are disappointed by the stagnation that plagues companies trying to be innovative will find fun and highly effective ways to remove mental, cultural, and organizational barriers and bring out (and condition) each employee's creative muscle

Reframe offers a technique to help people unlock their creativity and generate brilliant ideas. Motivate Design CEO, Mona Patel, shares her recipe for the first time, along with the compelling story of how she got there, on how to spark innovation and creativity anywhere, anytime.

The goal of *Reframe* is to help you see the difference between facts and beliefs, impossible and possible, and problems and opportunities. The shift in how you see things changes everything.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

When faced with a sticky situation – in spite of planning and preparation – many leaders see only the black and white: the choice must be A or B. It's an easy decision, simpler, and gets things done more quickly.

The problem with this line of thinking is that you are focusing on what you win or lose, instead of coming up with alternative ideas. Focusing on just A or B leads you to ignore the wide range of other options that could be just the one you are looking for.

Why not approach a decision with a creative mindset that encourages you to think in the “gray space” – the space between black and white, choice A or choice B?

The real problem is that you have been seeing problems as problems, not as creative opportunities.

When you feel like you’ve hit a wall, don’t waste your time complaining or trying to turn around. Instead, figure out how to build a door. Designing a new frame around the same circumstances allows new perspectives and ideas to emerge.

The concept of "Reframe-work" consists of a set of eight steps that you can choose from depending on the type of problem you have and the answers you need.

Step 1: The Real Problem – First things first, spend some time on identifying and gaining clarity around the true problem. People often think they are articulating a problem, but really they are just discussing their limiting factors or the baggage they bring to the table.

Step 2: A Different Lens – Great designs start with the user’s problem. Explore all the facets of the user’s world so that you see things from the user’s perspective. It allows you to immerse yourself in what’s known and to understand what the user needs.

Step 3: Ask What If – Ask open questions that inspire ideas to naturally emerge. The only rule in this step is Don’t Judge. Don’t judge others, their ideas, or even yourself. The point is to release your self from the usual rules and belief and to open your mind to think creatively.

Step 4: Funnel Vision – Ideas that make it through a series of activities that help sort out ideas that will solve the problem your organization is facing effectively.

Step 5: Identify the Themes – In looking at the ideas your team has selected as favorites, groups or themes will start to emerge. Bringing the ideas back up into themes helps to focus on the broad ways in which you can solve the problem rather than the specifics of one particular idea.

Step 6: BS Excuse Personas – The next step is to manage the fear that often prevents your ideas from taking shape. The goal is to help each person address and talk out their tension points and beliefs before moving forward.

Step 7: Rapid Refine – Once the excuses are handled, go back to each theme and give you team a constructive opportunity to voices their concerns about the idea that has emerged for each them. This step forces you to think through what you would add, what you would take away, and how you would pivot if asked to do so.

Step 8: Execute – Ideas are nothing without execution. Begin the execution part of the process by helping people figure out one next step to move from idea to implementation.

Mona Patel, [Reframe](#)

A NEXT STEP

When things don't go exactly as you planned, your immediate reaction is usually to make another choice without thinking it through. Instead of reacting, why not spend time exploring, ideating, and creating options to help you move forward?

Dedicate time at your next leadership team meeting to walking through the eight steps listed above. Copy and distribute this SUMS Remix to your team.

Identify a recent situation in which an action or activity that your team planned did not go off as you intended. Write it on a chart tablet or whiteboard.

Lead your team through each of the eight steps, reframing the original problem in terms of the steps. Write key words or phrases on the tablet.

After you have completed the steps, review your work. Discuss which of the steps are most helpful in producing creative, alternative plans to your original problem.

As a closing exercise, project this process forward to the planning of future events. Discuss how seeing things with a new frame allows all problems to feel solvable and become opportunities for creative problem solving.

When your plans change and you are looking for help in dealing with the need for a sudden shift in direction, consider reframe apparent problems as God-given opportunities.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

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