How Technology Can Ease Your Small Group Ministry's Growing Pains

As a church grows bigger, it must also grow smaller. This is a common rule of thumb shared among church leaders. People actively involved in small groups ministry are more likely to be financially generous, willing to volunteer, and generally more consistent in participation than those who aren't actively participating in a small group.

The value of small groups is uncontested in most ministry circles. In fact, some leaders suggest the health of a church hinges upon the health of its small groups ministry. Whatever role small groups play, it is certainly one which affects many other dimensions of local church ministry.

So how can church leaders promote the growth, health and vitality of their small groups to ensure that they, too, can grow bigger by growing smaller? Here are five ways to equip your small groups to do just that.

Evaluate your current small group strategy beyond the numbers.

Before you start planning for how you're going to launch a whole new set of groups this fall, make sure you take the time to evaluate the health of your current strategy. Here are three key areas that will help you determine exactly how healthy your small group ministry is beyond looking at the overall numbers.

Make sure the back door of your small group ministry is shut before you start.
You shouldn't launch new small groups without a plan in place to make sure the people who join are going to stick. Whatever strategies your church uses to encourage people to join a small group, here are three ways technology can secure the back door of your groups before you launch this fall.

Make small groups more than 'a place to connect.'

It's not easy to keep tabs on how each small group in the church is doing. However, this is precisely where technology can help. Rather than simply being a place for people to connect, your small groups can actually be a catalyst for growth and genuine disciple-making. Here are four proven ways technology can support you in this goal.

Prove that you value faces more than numbers.

Most small group leaders have a goal for the number of new small group members they want to reach. However, if you're not careful, it can seem as if you value the numbers more than the

actual lives that will be changed through your small group ministry. Technology can help you track who actually shows up every week so that everyone is clear that the real goal is life change, not a number.

Find new small group leaders by mining your church management software.

Your church management software can become a vital tool for identifying new small group leaders in your church. Not only can it help you identify potential leaders based on their passions and spiritual gifts, it can also help you identify potential leaders based on personal growth, not just participation.

And we know – we talk a lot about how church management systems like Church Community Builder can help churches close the back door. Because while closing the back door of your church is essential for getting to know people and making sure they're connected, there are other doors your church needs to close – the back door of the 'houses' that host a small group ministry each week.

And technology can have a huge impact on closing that back door. Because whatever strategies your church uses to engage small group members on a weekly basis, here are three ways technology can secure the back door of your church, even when the storms of life roll by:

Technology ensures that your small group strategy is working.

Rather than simply being a place for people to connect, your small groups can actually be a catalyst for growth and genuine disciple-making. Here are four proven ways technology can support you in this goal and close the back door that people tend to walk out when they're not experiencing life change within their small group.

Technology keeps you from missing people who walk out the back door.

Each church member is a valuable asset in that small group. But the primary reason people leave a small group is because they don't feel valued. Is your church helping them realize their value? If you want to prevent people from walking out the back door because they don't feel valued, here is the first thing you should do.

Technology helps you prevent small groups from bursting at the seams.

Most churches have a target number of people for each small group. Without utilizing technology, how can your church record how many members a group has and project when it's time to start a new group? Sometimes closing the back door of your small group ministry means opening new homes and new doors. It's part of the paradox that every healthy church understands. Technology helps you know when to open those doors.

As one could reasonably expect, there will, of course, be a period of transition that takes place after implementing a church management software, though the length of the transition period will be driven by two primary factors: how established and documented church systems and processes were surrounding small groups ministry and ongoing training for new and existing small groups leaders.

When church leaders can leverage technology to grow and strengthen their small groups ministry, the concurrently foster the ability of their church to grow, too. Your church management software's small groups management functionality should not only serve you as you serve your church by supporting your small groups ministry, but it should also serve as a viable and effective means of building lasting community among your members and regular attendees for the greater good of the Kingdom for years to come.

> Read more from Church Community Builder.