

TWELVE KEYS TO AN EFFECTIVE CHURCH  
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KEY PRINCIPLE: WORK SMARTER, NOT HARDER.

The myth in churches is "If people were only more committed and would work harder, things would get better." The truth is when people work harder they get tired; things don't necessarily get better. If a person digging a hole works harder, the result is simply a deeper hole. And a church that is headed in the wrong direction that works harder simply goes in the wrong direction faster.

KEY PRINCIPLE: PLAN LESS TO ACHIEVE MORE.

Churches often make the mistake of focusing too much on planning, and as a result they achieve less. Those churches that plan to do too many things end up doing hardly anything - they spend all their time in planning. The art here is to decide the few key things it is important to do. "Planning expands to fill the time available." Limit the amount of time you invest in planning. 20% of the objectives will deliver 80% of the results. Plan less to achieve more.

ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS IN LIGHT OF THE 12 CENTRAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE CHURCH. The 6 relational characteristics are of primary importance in establishing an effective church.

1. SPECIFIC, CONCRETE MISSIONAL OBJECTIVES. Our outreach should be focused on particular human hurts, and it should offer help and hope.

A. List up to three present major missional objectives that we are accomplishing in the community:

B. List up to three major missional objectives planned for the coming five years as we seek to reach out in the community:

C. List any possible major missional objectives being considered for future implementation:

2. PASTORAL AND LAY VISITATION. There is a solid, well-balanced program of pastoral and lay visitation to members, constituents, the unchurched, first-time visitors, newcomers, those who are homebound or in hospitals and nursing homes.

3. CORPORATE, DYNAMIC WORSHIP. Worship services and congregation express a high level of warmth and winsomeness; the music is dynamic and inspirational; the character of the gospel and the quality of compassion is expressed in the preaching; there is a strong progression of power and movement in the worship service; the sanctuary has adequate seating and is comfortably filled at the level of our current average worship attendance.



4. SIGNIFICANT RELATIONAL GROUPS. People are searching for community, a place to belong. What are the major significant relational groups in our church? Which are less than five years old? Seven to ten groups should be provided for each one hundred people in average worship attendance.

5. STRONG LEADERSHIP RESOURCES. We have a key group of strong leaders, a set of strategic objectives for these leaders to accomplish, and excellent cooperation between leaders and staff. We focus on accomplishments rather than activities. Our leaders receive positive recognition and rewards for excellent work.

6. STREAMLINED STRUCTURE AND SOLID, PARTICIPATORY DECISION MAKING. Our leaders make wise, thoughtful decisions developed in relation to important priorities and key objectives. Our congregation has a strong sense of ownership and openness in the decision-making process. We have a streamlined organizational structure.

\*WHILE THE FOLLOWING SIX FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE PREVIOUS SIX, THEY SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED.

7. SEVERAL COMPETENT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES. Most churches try to offer too many programs rather than provide a few programs that are highly respected by the community as a whole. Which of our programs fit this description?

8. OPEN ACCESSIBILITY. We have a good geographical location, and there is easy access to both facilities and key people.

9. HIGH VISIBILITY. We have a visible location and facilities; the church and its key leaders are visible on the community grapevine and in the media.

10. ADEQUATE PARKING, LAND, AND LANDSCAPING. Parking is adequate, there is enough land for present needs and future growth, and the landscaping contributes to a first impression of warmth, welcome and caring.

11. ADEQUATE SPACE AND FACILITIES. Our facilities contribute to our church's mission and program and to maximum utilization. The facilities are maintained in good condition and improvements are planned at regular intervals.

12. SOLID FINANCIAL RESOURCES. Our giving compares favorably with other stable and growing or rapidly growing area churches. We effectively utilize all the potential financial resources in it. We have established interest-bearing investments, as well as investments in property, space and facilities used in the church's mission. Any indebtedness is managed advantageously in balance with our mission and outreach.