

12 Disciplines to Help You Recognize Leadership Identity Beyond Your Title

Titles are a great way to organize our world and feel good about one's self.

I am a barista.

At least I like to call myself a barista, since I make coffee every morning. I can even compare the number of mornings I make coffee to the number of mornings a Starbucks employee makes coffee. Or the number of cups made in the last twenty years, as compared to any of those pimply-faced apron-wearers.

By any measure I could make the title fit, yet, *just making a bunch of coffee does not make me a barista*. There are ongoing practices and skills beyond my kitchen counter or church brew-pots that an actual barista demonstrates. I am free to call myself a barista, but **in reality I just drink a lot of coffee**.

The Harvard Institute for Religion Research defines a megachurch as a congregation that sustains an average of 2000 persons or more in its worship services. However, the more I work within local church congregations, the more apparent the disciplines of an actual megachurch become. Without ongoing practices or skills beyond Sunday morning service attendance, a leader is free to call their congregation a megachurch, but **in reality they may just be a large gathering of people in worship**.

And a large gathering of people in worship can be found at most any concert, sporting event or Whole Foods grocery store.

Therefore, it becomes critical to *realize identity beyond title*, through ongoing practices and skills. Here are **12 disciplines of megachurch leadership**:

1. Positioning discipleship beyond attendance of a class or program.
2. Creating a culture of leadership development, supported by process.
3. Consistent building of congregational ownership of the mission.
4. Articulating unique language that becomes viral in every ministry area.
5. Sharing leadership toward vision through an empowered team.
6. Executing intentionally developed processes over time.
7. Resisting the tendency to chase every new idea and possibility.
8. Remaining aware of hubris and the false trappings of competency.
9. Cultivating organizational humility by asking questions of other leaders.
10. Willing to change models of ministry as effectiveness wanes.
11. Leading with courage through decisions that are not easy and obvious.
12. Supporting, not fearing, success in nearby congregations.

No matter your average weekly attendance, growing beyond the Sunday gathering numbers requires **active attention and discipline**.

Whether your church is a hopeful, emerging or former “mega,” take a few minutes at the next staff meeting to challenge yourself and your team. Add “*How are we...*” to each of these disciplines to form questions that reveal practice. Then identify the three disciplines that need the most attention and develop two-to-three **strengthening actions to take for each** in the next six weeks.

Titles are great, but at some point, **the practice must become more important than the label.** If not, your “megachurch” might really just be a large gathering of people in worship, and I might just be making coffee.

> [Read more from Bryan.](#)