

6 Gut-Check Questions to Ask When Your Ministry Seems Stuck

We've all had ministries or programs in our church that aren't going well. They lack critical mass to make the sort of impact we are looking for. They seem just a little stale and past their prime. Your people are "voting with their feet" and not showing up to the ministry like they used to. Rather than get bitter about this reality ... our job as leaders to make things better! Here are some **questions that you could use to evaluate that ministry** you suspect is losing traction:

- **Can you clarify the why? //** People in your church need to have a clear sense of "why" this program or ministry is a vital part of their spiritual journey. When you communicate about it make sure to spend more time talking about the "benefit" of the ministry to them rather than just the "features" of it. Don't just tell people that the student ministry meets on Sunday evenings and includes a great small group experience ... explain to parents and students that your ministry is designed to help students wrestle with the issues of faith, make friends and be influenced by great adult leaders. People won't engage with something if they are unclear how it will benefit them.
- **Do you need to reduce the internal competition? //** Don't make your ministries compete for the time, resources and attention from your community. Make sure that you aren't asking your people to do multiple things at the same time. Cancel everything else where people might be choosing that over the ministry you value. People get to the point of "ask fatigue" ... you can only ask so much from them. Clear the calendar and your people's "head space" to be available for your ministry.
- **How can you listen to your people more? //** Have you taken time to listen to your people about why they aren't attending your ministry? Grab a few "opinion leaders" in the group you are trying to serve and take them out for a meal ... people rarely refuse a "free meal" ... and ask them why people aren't engaging with the ministry. Send out a digital survey to the people you are trying to serve and ask them open ended questions about what they are looking for from your ministry. [Use tools like [SurveyMonkey](#), [Wufoo](#) or [Google Forms](#)] Listen carefully to what people are saying ... try not to prejudice them with your thoughts on the "what and how" of the ministry.
- **Have you used enough channels to communicate with people? //** How many different ways do you communicate to people about the ministry? Chances are you need to increase the messaging to your people. If people aren't complaining that they are hearing too much from you ... you aren't communicating enough. If you are relying on just one or two ways of getting the message to them ... you aren't communicating enough. (Oh yeah ... Sunday morning announcements doesn't count as a communications channel ... it's a terrible way to reach your people.) Usually higher friction forms of communication get better traction. Gather a group of committed volunteers and call people to let them know about the upcoming event. Arm a group of people to "lobby surf" on Sunday to find potential candidates for your ministry. Good ole' fashion snail mail still works ... send them a snappy direct mail piece!
- **Do we have the wrong leadership in place? //** Would you follow the leader who is leading this ministry? Are they trained and equipped to do the role that you're asking them to do? Sometimes in churches we have a tendency to just put in "available"

people rather than the right leaders. You might need to switch the person leading the ministry to gain the traction you are looking for. Every ministry area needs to be lead by people who attract other people. At the most basic level ... if people don't want to be around the leader it's hard for the ministry to gain traction.

- **Is it time for a gut check?** // Would you be a part of this ministry if you weren't in leadership at the church? Do people you really care for "opt out" of the ministry and you're okay that they are missing it? Are you having to generate a bunch of internal energy to convince yourself it's worthwhile? Maybe the best thing to do is just to cut this ministry or program and find a new approach to impacting people?

Great churches are defined more by what they don't do than by what they do. **How have you gone about evaluating ministries in your church and whether they should continue?**

Read more from Rich [here](#).