

## Great Teams Need Great FollowUp Emails

Conducting a successful vision planning retreat takes courage, investment, and trust. First, courage is required to make a conviction-driven ask of your leaders to collaborate and fully engage in a conversation about God's better future for your church. Second, an investment is required, because the commitment of time and financial resources to a visionary plan brings a necessary and natural accountability to the congregation. Last, trust is needed because inviting others into the vision conversation might involve receiving outside perspectives and handling honest input.

However, just conducting a successful retreat is not enough. The real power of a visionary plan like the [Horizon Storyline](#) lies within the successful execution of your initial set of 90-day initiatives. This first-foreground horizon usually provides the momentum toward overall plan accomplishment. Therefore it is of vital importance to communicate progress to your entire leadership team, especially those on the front lines of action and activity.

The following outline provides the general framework of a quick visionary plan progress report. You can see how it also works to affirm the team and even enlist more significant commitment if needed. The flow of a great 90-day initiative follow-up email goes something like this:

1.  
Tell the team how thankful you are for them.
2.  
Affirm the lasting impact of their efforts.
3.  
Share a story in 2-3 sentences that demonstrates impact.
4.  
Give an honest and high-level overview of the current status.
5.  
Summarize progress on each in only one sentence.
6.  
Affirm the staff and/or lay leader for each initiative.
7.  
(A) – Close with another brief, meaningful word of thanks.

-or-

7. (B) – Circle back around to ONE initiative that needs help.

8. Expand on the need with 2-3 sentences of detail.
9. Make a clear ask from your leaders.
10. If there is not something to do, then you should've ended the email at 7(A) above.
11. Encourage engagement by affirming the 5-10 year vision.
12. Close with another brief, but challenging word of thanks.

Here is a great example I recently received that uses many of the elements and the flow. This email was sent from an [Auxano](#) client-pastor (names and core content has been changed for privacy reasons) and illustrates a great 90-day initiative progress report email:

*Greetings visioning team!*

*I'm pleased to report that the Elders have unanimously adopted our work without redaction. Thank you to Vince who worked with me to present the whole as a unified piece. All of your hard work was met with resounding excitement, thanks again for your time and thoughtful engagement.*

*One of the Elders in attendance was able to clearly articulate their excitement about what is next, and apply it to her life and the potential impact on her neighbors. She affirmed this direction and will commit to engaging alongside each of us.*

*Our meeting focus was on the short-range vision proper: the one year horizon and the 90-day initiatives. We broke up into teams to work on those five components, which gave everyone an opportunity to get their hands into activating this vision rather than just talking about it. There was positive energy and we have some momentum. On Tuesday, August 13, the Elders will meet for an extended deep dive into the background "big Ideas" and develop the 90 day pieces. Until then they will be chewing on our work and they may ask you some questions.*

*We still have some next step assignments to do from our Auxano Vision Framing sessions. Please make sure to get to work on these and feel free to invite current elders and others on the visioning team into your conversations. Our first round of 90-day initiative work is due by the end of September. Please see the below list for particulars on the assignments before us, as well as who is doing what.*

***Cindy is the point leader for "Create a Stop Doing list" – This needs immediate***

*attention and must be handled carefully as some ministries with great impact years ago need to be phased out.*

***Gordon is the point leader for “First Neighborhood Connection Event” – This will happen by the end of the month in my neighborhood.***

***Joseph is the point leader for “Fall Vision Frame Roll-Out Plan” – We have carved out 5 Sundays from late September into early October to communicate in worship and small groups.***

***Mary is the point leader for “Celebrate Children & Youth” – We are coming off a strong summer and have been collecting stories at Bible School, Youth Camp and Children’s Camp, look for more here soon.***

*I’ll be working most closely with Joseph, but please keep me in the loop on the others and I’ll check in with you. We need a couple more of you to weigh in on the “Stop Doing List” – **who can jump on a call with Cindy next Monday during lunch?***

*To keep our work in one place, and so we can check in with each other easily (hopefully), I’ve sent each of you an invitation to the communication tool we use at the church office: SLACK. This allows us to chat, and load and work on documents collaboratively. If this does not work, please let me know!*

*Thanks to each of you for the work you’ve put in thus far. Once we’ve completed this next phase, likely we’ll be in a good place to appoint a new visioning team and to give the congregation an opportunity to celebrate what each of you have put into this. I’m so grateful for each of you, and have appreciated getting to know you more through this process.*

*Grace and Peace,*

*Pastor*

PS – This progress report email flow is not restricted to just the [Horizon Storyline](#) follow-up. Anytime as a pastor, you have asked leaders to work toward a common goal – and they have responded – excellent communication is critical. ***Where can you apply this flow in the next 2 weeks to communicate success and appreciate your leaders?***

> [Read more from Bryan.](#)

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