



## **Leading from the Sandbox: How to Develop, Empower and Release High-Impact Ministry Teams**

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Leading from the Sandbox helps you develop high-impact teams focused on results, not activity. To do this leaders must have maximum clarity on the 4 sides of the sandbox:

1. Mission (Our goal)
2. Guiding principals
3. Central ministry focus (What we must do each day)
4. Preferred culture

Good leaders model the life they promote. They set the sandbox, which is the parameters the team can minister within. Then they develop, empower (not control) and release the teams to minister in the sandbox. High impact teams are made up of the right people, doing the right thing, not the most people doing the most activity.

This book will help you:

- Lead from personal health
- Hire healthy team members
- Deal with unhealthy team members
- Lead with maximum clarity
- Determine your central ministry focus
- Keep everyone aligned around mission
- Develop Annual Ministry Plans
- Lead with a mentor/coach mentality
- Help people undergoing leadership transitions
- Foster a culture of empowerment and accountability
- Use the sandbox as a leadership tool
- Define the culture of your organization

- Become more missional
- Focus your team on results rather than activity
- Overcome the five dysfunctions of ministry organizations
- Help people minister out of their sweet spots
- Demolish silos in your ministry

### **1. Fallacies and Practices of High-Impact Teams**

Leading from the Sandbox has the goal of developing high-impact teams. “A high-impact team is a group of missionally aligned and healthy individuals working strategically together under good leadership toward common objectives, with accountability for results.”

### **2. The Power of Clarity:**

To lead a high impact team, a leader must have clarity. “The single most important thing a leader does is provide maximum clarity to those they lead about what is important to the organization and how the organization is going to accomplish its mission. Achieving clarity is the most powerful accelerator toward ministry results and organizational alignment.”

### **3. Defining your Culture**

All organizations have their own culture which is the “unspoken ethos of a group of people, including its beliefs, social behaviors, practices, attitudes, values, and traditions — all of which contribute to a collective way of thinking and practice”. To change a culture, you must 1. know the existing culture, 2. “define the culture you want to develop”, and 3. “systematically move in that direction”. Leaders must faithfully model the preferred culture.

As we try to change our organization’s culture, we must be aware that “many suffer from one or more of the five dysfunctions of ministry organizations: 1. Control 2. Bureaucracy 3. Ambiguity 4. Professional ministry 5. Mistrust”.

### **4. Building your Sandbox**

The 4 areas that leaders need maximum clarity in make up the 4 sides to the sandbox.

“The sandbox helps you visualize and communicate the most important aspects of your organization. The process of “building” your sandbox involves defining the ministry philosophy and culture you are intentionally creating.”

The four sides:

1. “The mission side represents the reason for your existence. It clarifies what you want to accomplish.
2. The guiding-principles side defines the core commitments you want everyone to live by and clarifies those things that are nonnegotiable.
3. The central-ministry-focus side answers the question, “What is the most important thing we must do, day in and day out, to fulfill our mission?”
4. The preferred-culture side is the culture you must create if you are going to realize the potential of your organization and accomplish your mission.

The sandbox becomes your key clarifying tool for leaders, volunteers, and members of your organization. The goal is for everyone to use his or her gifts and wiring in creative ways for the kingdom of God, but to stay inside the sandbox.”

(For maximum effectiveness it is essential to be able to “visualize the key components of your ministry in one picture”.)

## **5. Healthy Team Leaders**

To have healthy teams, we must be healthy leaders. “Teams will only be as good as the leaders who lead them.”

“Good leaders have made the transition from being an independent producer to leading through a team. They have an attitude that “it is no longer about me but about us.” They have made the shift from “How I would do things” to empowering good people to do things as they would — in line with their gifting and skills. They have transitioned from “hands-on” in the details to helping define the large issues and allowing others to take care of the details. Healthy leaders intentionally take a servant role and prioritize the health and results of the team, not their own status or power. This allows them to hire or recruit people who are even better than they.”

“Healthy leaders pay attention to the five priorities of every leader:

1. Personal development — Ensuring they live intentionally in their spiritual, emotional, relational, and professional life.
2. Strategic leadership — Providing strategic leadership to the organization or the part of the organization they lead.
3. Strong team — Building a healthy, unified, aligned, strategic, and results-oriented team.
4. Leadership development — Developing current and future leader
5. Mobilizing resources — Mobilizing resources necessary for the team’s ministry to flourish.

...And, they manage their dark sides”

## **6. Building a Healthy Team**

To build a high-impact team takes planning and time, “not all people are right for your team.”

“Potential or current team members can be categorized as A-team, B-team, or C-team players. This is not about being a good or bad person but about the ability to play well on your team. C-team players do not belong on your team no matter how nice they are or how long they have been with the organization. They have a fatal flaw that will compromise the work of the team.”

“In choosing team members, leaders never negotiate the crucial issues of character and good EQ.”

“High-impact teams are built deliberately — over time. The process is not easy and takes time and attention. But the payoff is huge! Finding people who fit your team and getting them into the right places is one of your most important tasks as a leader. Nobody will get it right all the time, but if you can get it right most of the time your happiness factor will be high.”

## **7. The Power of Intentional Living**

“The key distinction of high-impact teams is the intentionality with which leaders and individuals live their lives and pursue their ministries. People who see significant results of their work...focus on results, not activity. They have chosen intentional living over accidental living. Key Result Areas (KRAs) help us determine the desired results of our work. They answer the question, “What is success?” They allow us to focus on the critical rather than being driven by the urgent. They help us prioritize and say no to good but noncrucial activities. Annual Ministry Plans (AMPs) are the specific steps we are going to take to fulfill Key Result Areas. They give us a paradigm for thoughtfully and prayerfully considering what needs to be done and how we will do it. They help us stay on task and measure our progress. Connecting our Key Result Areas and Annual Ministry Plans to our calendars is “connecting the compass to the clock.” It is the linchpin between good planning and good execution. The key distinction between high-impact teams and other teams is the intentionality with which leaders and individuals live and pursue ministry. We live in a day of huge needs, multiplied demands, out-of-control schedules, and the tendency to be driven by the urgent. Over time, our effectiveness is eroded and our hearts grow tired. We know deep down that there must be a better way to live life and pursue ministry. Three observations ought to give us pause. First, we

are all busy. When people describe to me how busy they are and how fast they run in ministry, I am not impressed; we're all busy. Second, we are all busy, but not everyone sees the same results. Some people are exceedingly productive while others accomplish little. Third, activity does not equal results. This is a critical distinction...The question is not how much activity we are involved in, but what the results are. Activity that is not strategic yields little for the energy expended and leaks away opportunity for kingdom results. People who see significant results of their work think differently from others. Rather than focusing on activity, they focus on results. They have identified the results they want to see for their lives and then strategically focused their activity toward those results. They are highly discriminating in what they do, the obligations they agree to, and how they schedule their days. Before they say yes to new opportunities they think and pray, determine whether the activity will contribute to what they understand to be the critical issues of their lives, and practice the power of saying no."

### **8. Becoming a Mentor/Coach**

"Good team members do not want to be "managed" or controlled, but released to become the best they can be. Great leaders desire the same for their teams and take an intentional posture of mentor/coach."

"Coaches love to release the gifting and potential in others by making meaningful time for the people who report to them. They probe, ask questions, and help their people think well and come to healthy conclusions. They care about their people as a whole, help them find their sweet spots for maximum joy and effectiveness, and hold them with an open hand. They want the very best for those they coach. Mentors give honest and direct feedback so their people are clear on areas where their performance is great and where it is problematic. They practice a "no surprises" policy and provide help when performance or EQ are substandard."

"Good leaders use the mentor/coach paradigm to build great teams, develop their people, and keep them aligned. They make the tough calls to remove ineffective people when necessary so the mission is never compromised. Great leaders love to develop great people, and they make it a priority!"

“Coaches release people’s gifting and potential. Coaching is not about helping others become like us! Or having them do things the way we would.”

“Coaches don’t tell; they ask...lots of questions, questions that make others think and come to good conclusions. This is a challenge for many leaders who are ready to tell others what to do (and that’s necessary on occasion). Releasing people, however, means helping them decide how to proceed.”

### **9. Dangerous Transitions**

“Organizational leadership transitions are dangerous moments, regardless of the level at which they take place...not everyone is wired to be a leader.” In order for these transitions to succeed, it is crucial that transitioning leaders are closely mentored and actively coached throughout the process. Part of this transition is helping them give up the values and requirements of the prior level and take on the values and requirements of the new level.”