



“Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page”
By Larry Osborne

Part One: Landmines and Roadblocks - Osborne recommends trying to resolve these issues to help with unity: “Meeting in the wrong place, Ignoring relationships, Not meeting often enough, Constant turnover & Too many members” (pg. 37). Addressing each of these can dramatically effect how the team functions together. He also challenges pastors to guard the gate by being part of the leadership team selection process and carefully scrutinizing how new members will fit. Teams must remember that “growth changes everything” (pg. 62). “Growth produces predictable changes in the way leaders and leadership teams relate and carry out their functions, changes that are remarkably parallel to the changes an athlete must go through to transition from running track to playing golf, basketball, or football” (pg. 64).

In order to help guide teams through decisions, Osborne has 6 things he wants leaders to remember: “Ignore your weaknesses, Surveys are a waste of time, Seek permission, not buy-in, Let squeaky wheels squeak, Let dying programs die, Plan in pencil” (pg. 74). He has also set boundaries for himself that help him operate better with his team. I’ve committed myself to follow three key guidelines: “Present first drafts, not final proposals, Keep no secrets from the board, Follow the board’s advice” (pg. 95-96).

Part Two: Equipped for Ministry - “Getting everyone on the same page is one of the most difficult and important roles of leadership (pg. 126)”. Early on in his ministry he learned the difference between lobbying and training. Because of this, he recommends training be done at separate times when no decisions are being made. This is because “when information is presented too close to a decision-making process, most people will view it as a lobbying effort, not as a training exercise (pg. 128).” Also, by having separate times of training it is more memorable and special, and gives people time to reflect on the subject. Of extreme value is remembering that “the Process is more important than the curriculum (pg. 134)”. This means that the discussion and wrestling with different topics are the important part, not simply having a perfect curriculum. When something has been taught, it doesn’t mean that it has been caught. There are “three stages of learning: exposure, familiarity, and understanding (pg. 135).” Bringing people to understanding takes time. “We need to think of ministry training as something to be dripped into people’s lives rather than poured in all at once. We need to approach it more like a glacier than an avalanche... Avalanches make a ruckus. Glaciers change the world (pg. 136).” To help with this process he has extra meetings that focus on team building, training and prayer, but not voting. They also develop a set of plumb lines that reflect their values and help guide their decision making process.

Part Three: Communication - "Keeping everyone on the same page" (pg. 170). An old farmer once reminded a new pastor: "Go slow, son," he said. "Churches are a lot like horses. They don't like to be startled or surprised. It causes deviant behavior (pg. 172)." Resistance to change is a human problem, not a church problem. These specific steps can be helpful to navigate change: "Test the Waters" (pg. 173), "Listen and Respond to Resisters" (pg. 174), "Sell Your Idea to Individuals before Groups" (pg. 177) and "Lead Boldly" (pg. 178).