



Why Use a Consultant for Strategic Planning?

Some object to using a consultant to help them accomplish strategic planning because of the cost. They ask one of two questions. First, can we afford it? You would be wise to review how your church is doing. Is it growing, plateaued, or declining? If it's stuck or struggling in some way, then perhaps the question becomes can we afford not to work with such a person? The second question is who's the cheapest? The answer is those who are brand new to church consulting and those that are just beginning to learn the field. Let's face it, the old maxim "you get what you pay for" also applies to the church world in general and ministry consulting in particular.

Some churches recruit a person "in house." However, if the project doesn't go well or even fails, you need to be aware that you won't get a second chance. If you bring it up again in the future, people will be quick to remind you, "We already tried that once and it didn't work!" It's wise to bring the best, most experienced resources to the process, because there likely won't be a second chance should it go poorly.

If the person that leads this planning project is a staff person, does he have the time that it requires over and above his normal load? Is it fair to ask him to take on this responsibility in addition to his normal staff duties that already fill his day? In addition, does he have the expertise in strategic planning and theology that he would need to do a credible, Christ honoring job?

If the person that leads you is a church member (possibly with some work in corporate strategic planning), does he have the time that it requires over and above his job? More important, does he or she have a good knowledge of the Bible and theology (strategic planning is deeply theological) as well as expertise in the specialized field of strategic church planning? (Strategic planning in the corporate world is most different from that in the church world.) If not, where and when will this person get this biblical knowledge and necessary expertise?

Most would agree that using a theologically trained, proven specialist in strategic church planning is the best way to go. Therefore, are you willing to settle for second or third best? Should the church of Jesus Christ ever settle for second best? The

church is the only hope of a lost and dying world. Therefore, isn't your church worthy of your best efforts?

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