

Solving Your Leadership Shortage

Bob Adams

The United States generates more energy than any other country in the world – and wastes more than half of it. Rather than focusing on inventing new sources of energy, there is a growing trend to concentrate on a vast source of existing energy – by increasing the efficiency of current operations.

Church leader, sit up and take notice: what works in the business world can provide help in your world too. Your “leadership engine” is probably not working as well as you would like. If your church is like most churches, you are always looking for more leaders. How about looking right under your nose: your next, and best, leaders are probably already working in a ministry at your church. All you need to do is become more “efficient” at discovering and then transitioning these individuals into ministry leaders.

Transitioning a Volunteer into a Leader

The word “leader” and any derivative of it are sure to capture the attention of those responsible for the vision, direction, and operation of the church. Pastors especially are always looking for the latest help in providing more resources to help guide the ministries of their churches. Even the smallest church needs many leaders to effectively minister to their members and the community.

How does a leader go about developing other leaders? There is certainly no shortage of books, conferences, and courses on the subject. Web resources also provide a wealth of information for the leader interested in setting up such a program.

In over 30 years in church leadership experience (as a volunteer, leader, staff member, and consultant) I would suggest three starting points:

1. Not everyone on your team will, or should be a leader
2. Develop resources from your own experience to begin to develop others
3. Always look to the Scriptures for guidance

What is a Leader, Anyway?

The answer to that question would fill the pages of this magazine – and many more! Noted church leaders from John Maxwell to Andy Stanley to Bill Hybels all have their definition of leadership. They are all good, and should be a part of your understanding on this journey. But to me, leadership is simple: If no one is following, you are not leading! While you may find that simplistic, it illustrates the foundational truth of leadership: you have to have those qualities, skills, and influence for others to believe in you and the direction you are going. Under this definition, I believe that many, but not all, people on your team could become a leader in their own right.

Huntersville Office
704.488.7225
badams@jhbatten.com

JH Batten, Inc.
PO Box 879 Walkertown, NC 27051
336.595.8917
info@jhbatten.com

Goldsboro Office
919.736.7508
goldsboro.office@jhbatten.com

www.jhbatten.com

Developing Leaders

My leadership library consists of hundreds of books accumulated over the years. I use them on a regular basis, but one in particular seems appropriate for highlighting here. Warren Blank's *The 108 Skills of Natural Born Leaders* provides some very solid leadership principles that you can readily adapt to your own situation. Here are some excerpts from his chapter on leadership development.

Attract Rising Stars – identify those who have attracted your attention as “rising stars” by using questions like these:

- Who has already demonstrated a desire to grow?
- Who typically steps up and tries to lead?
- Who has directly indicated an aspiration to improve their leadership capacity?

Focus on attracting those with potential as opposed to only focusing on those with experience. Use a personal touch in talking with them about becoming a leader.

Use “World Class” as the Standard – the average leader is, by definition, average. Consider your leader development task as a challenge to get people to perform at a world-class level. Define what that level means for your organization, and then continually compare current levels of action with that level.

Coach and Train – coaching refers primarily to one-on-one, face-to-face, day-to-day developmental activities. Coaching improves, extends, refines, or redirects behavior where a person already has some knowledge and skill. Training refers primarily to individual or group learning activities to teach or instruct people in knowledge and skill they do not already have. Exceptional leaders use a combination of the two approaches to develop others as leaders.

Polish the Whole Diamond – your ultimate success in developing others as leaders demands that you cultivate the full range of a person's potential. You must polish all facets of people's potential to prepare them for any leadership possibility.

Appraise Continuously – wise leaders recognize that constant appraisal of the full range of performance includes the outcomes achieved and the process involved in getting the results. Appraise continuously by making assessment and evaluation ongoing.

Empower for Results – empower people by giving them the opportunity to demonstrate they have the ability to identify, define, and implement solutions to solve problems.

Teach Situational Wisdom in the Action Continuum – exceptional leaders develop others to recognize the action continuum.

- Proactive responses – situations requiring assertive, outward-focused action
- Reactive responses – situations requiring a “wait and be ready to act” response
- Inactive responses – situations where any action is useless until more information can be known
- Coactive responses – situations involving a combined effort or partnership

Huntersville Office
704.488.7225
badams@jhbatten.com

JH Batten, Inc.
PO Box 879 Walkertown, NC 27051
336.595.8917
info@jhbatten.com

Goldsboro Office
919.736.7508
goldsboro.office@jhbatten.com

www.jhbatten.com

Push Constant Preparation – develop others by focusing them on constant preparation.

Use Diversity as Strength – master leaders know that differences make a difference. Seek out the assets in each person, and focus on how they add value to the team.

Differentiate Between Can't and Don't – recognize that people can doubt themselves, get discouraged, and lose their desire. Clarify where “can't” actually refers to a skill, resource, or belief deficiency and work to improve that deficiency. Demonstrate that “don't” reflects a person's will and help them understand their lack of will.

Be an M&M: Model and Motivate Excellence – model and motivate people every day. Followers look to leaders to set the example. Your overt actions will motivate many people to step forward to accept leadership roles.

Pace the Marathon Race – exceptional leaders pace the marathon race to develop others as leaders. Work with others to not only bring them to the starting line, but encourage and develop them all the way across the finish line.

Be First Follower Ready – practice first follower readiness by looking for opportunities when you can visibly support another person's direction-it offers them concrete evidence of forward movement toward becoming a more effective leader.

Lead Up to Formalize Leader Development – your efforts to develop others as leaders will be greatly enhanced if you can get organizational support for the effort. Influence your organization to make ongoing leadership development a performance standard across the board.

Master leaders know that people in key positions around them are like the DNA in their organization. Their skill level directly affects overall leadership effectiveness. Developing others becomes a form of gene therapy. The best leaders offer nutrients to help the already existing genes emerge into practical skills. They also splice in new genes to develop new skills. Natural born leader status goes to those who skillfully develop others to become master leaders.

Jesus on Leadership Development: No Plan B

Leaders who want to develop other leaders have to look no further than the life of Jesus for a model course in the process. Jesus' bottom line was not just getting the job done, but growing people and getting the job done. One can almost read Jesus' thoughts running through the three years of His ministry: “How am I going to reach all the people with the good news of God's rule? I can only do it as I develop under-shepherd. I want to find the people who see others as I do, who think as I do. I want to leave behind not must a set of principles, but a band of people who will continue to feed my sheep.”

Huntersville Office
704.488.7225
badams@jhbatten.com

JH Batten, Inc.
PO Box 879 Walkertown, NC 27051
336.595.8917
info@jhbatten.com

Goldsboro Office
919.736.7508
goldsboro.office@jhbatten.com

www.jhbatten.com

Jesus had no Plan B. His plan for spreading the Gospel was to pour Himself into his 12 disciples, empowering and transforming them into leaders who developed other leaders...and the rest is His story!

Perhaps no single individual in Scripture can be a model for this type of transformational leadership development than Peter. Simeon Peter was Jesus' own first choice for a disciple. He is mentioned and quoted by name far more than all the rest put together. The Gospel of Mark used Peter's preaching and recounting of Jesus' story as the primary source. After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, Peter emerged as one of the three most prominent leaders of the early church. What then, in Peter's life can be a model for leaders today who want to develop other leaders? Leighton Ford, in his excellent book *Transforming Leaders*, gives us a great outline of the key elements of Jesus' style of transforming leadership development by using the life of Peter.

The Leader as Shepherd Maker: What Peter Would Tell Us

Shared Partnership-Jesus invited Peter into His Life

- He Chose Me
- He Named Me
- He Teamed Us Up

Shared Time-Jesus made time with Peter a priority

- He Included Me
- He Made Me His Friend

Shared Learning-Jesus made learning happen

- He Taught Me
- He Motivated Me
- He Made Me Understand

Shared Risks-Jesus knew the difference between failure and learning

- He Trusted Me
- He Tested Me
- He Gave Me Another Chance

Shared Future-Jesus created a holy dissatisfaction with what was and a longing for what would be

- He Confided in Me
- He Warned Me

That, in a nutshell, is what Jesus did to develop His leaders. He gave them Himself.

I have been very fortunate in my journey of church leadership. As a young teenager, people invested their time and energies in helping me understand what it means to lead. As a young man, I had the privilege of working alongside some great church leaders. As a staff member, I made it a personal goal to always be identifying and developing future leaders. Now, in my interactions with church leaders across the country, my question is simply "How are you working yourself out of a job by developing other leaders?"

Originally published in Church Solutions Magazine, June 2009

Huntersville Office
704.488.7225
badams@jhbatten.com

JH Batten, Inc.
PO Box 879 Walkertown, NC 27051
336.595.8917
info@jhbatten.com

Goldsboro Office
919.736.7508
goldsboro.office@jhbatten.com

www.jhbatten.com