

Why Consulting Makes Sense

◆ A brief explanation of the benefit of consulting for the local church. ◆



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Many church leaders view consulting as an "expense" to be avoided because "we have a staff".

In the 23 years of my ministry, I often called upon consultants because I learned that the best leaders share the exact same trait. Great leaders have embraced THE secret of leadership:

Great leaders don't know everything or do everything. Great leaders know what must be done, what they must do, and delegate the rest to capable people, and pay to get outside perspective to avoid confirmation bias.

This is why the greatest leaders see consultants as a necessary resource and include consulting in the operating budget - they know that **internal eyes have internal biases**.

Great leaders use the "Big Three" (McKinsey, BCG, Bain) and the "Big Four" (Deloitte, PwC, etc.) and individuals like Alan Weiss, Marshall Goldsmith and John Maxwell.

Dr. John C. Maxwell, my mentor, who is now, arguably, the world's greatest authority on leadership, is a former pastor (Skyline Wesleyan San Diego). He now advises Heads of State and major business leaders like the CEO of Delta Airlines. Companies that are traded on the NYSE and NASDAQ understand the value a former pastor can bring to their organization.

If the greatest leaders on earth realize they can't 'self-diagnose' their way to stability, we should afford our church the same professional wisdom. The "smartest people in the room" pay \$300 billion per year to hear what their staff will not and cannot say. The "Titans" understand that outside consultation is the only investment that pays for itself by preventing the massive financial and emotional costs of an unstable organization.

Here is why an outside perspective is essential for your church:

1. The "Observer Effect": Breaking the Bubble

When you are inside the jar, you cannot read the label. Every organization develops "blind spots"—patterns of behavior or shadow power structures that have become so familiar they are invisible.

- **The Benefit:** A consultant provides an objective "view of reality" identifying the structural cracks before they become catastrophic breaks.

2. Homeostasis Management: Overcoming the Pull of the Past

Systems theory teaches us that all organizations have a "set point." When you try to implement change, the system will naturally pull back toward the "Old Normal," even if that normal was dysfunctional.

- **The Benefit:** A consultant acts as an external "crow's nest " providing the consistent counter-pressure needed to ensure new, healthy habits stick until they become the new baseline.

3. The "Third-Party" Authority: Neutralizing Internal Politics

In many churches, the Pastor, staff, or Board cannot suggest certain structural changes (like updating Bylaws or clarifying Authority) without it being perceived as a "power grab."

- **The Benefit:** A consultant can say the "hard things" that a local leader cannot. I am not a stakeholder in your internal politics; I am a stakeholder in your mission. This allows everyone in your leadership team to remain neutral.

4. Cost Avoidance: The ROI of Stability

The cost of a pastoral transition, staff loss or membership decline is real. Search committees, interim salaries, and the inevitable dip in giving during a pastoral or staff vacancy has real economic impact – not to mention the emotional cost. While exact cost estimates vary, it is not unusual for the impact to be often **1x to 2x the annual salary of that pastor or staff member.**

- **The Benefit:** Consulting services that prevents staffing disruption or donation decline is a "Preventative Maintenance" plan. When your church understands the Four Domains, you are saving the church from the financial and spiritual toll of a future staffing vacancy.

5. Specialized Intelligence: Accessing the Experience You Don't Have

Most churches do not have a full-time niche-specific staff like an HR director, a risk-management specialist, or a governance expert.

- **The Benefit:** When you engage Carpenter's Circle, your church isn't hiring a staff person; you are not hoping they "know the lay of the land"; you are not hoping they "can deliver" - you are gaining access to almost **Forty Years of Comprehensive Leadership Experience and Perfected Systems of Success.** Your church gets "Best Practices" in business, Church Development, Church Governance, Insurance, Policy, and HR for a fraction of the cost of one year's salary. The tools I provide would take your existing staff thousands of hours to create from scratch and would derail the reason for which they were hired.

The Bottom Line

Engaging a consultant makes sense because **hope is not a strategy.** Your church cannot hope for stability. You help ensure it, however. My process provides the stability that allows your ministry to be as solid as the message you preach.