

MULTISITE TIP SHEET

9 Ways to Keep Culture Consistent

Culture is an important aspect of every church. It shapes the leadership, drives the ministry, influences member engagement and much more. When going multisite, culture becomes even more influential in each decision you make and should greatly impact your strategy. Whether you're considering launching your first additional campus or you've already established 15 campuses, these 9 tips will aid you in developing and maintaining a consistent culture across each location:

- 1. Customize and Align.** Each campus has a personality, but they're all members of the same family. Determine what should be consistent across each campus and what should be campus-customized. For example, you may have one website and one bulletin that all sites receive, but a few verbal announcements each weekend that are campus-specific, along with campus-specific social media accounts.
- 2. Champion One Church.** In what ways do you communicate the feeling that you are *one* church meeting in different locations? Prioritize celebrating what each location has in common above highlighting the campus-customized elements.
- 3. Forecast the Growing Pains and Challenges.** Build methods and processes that are ready for the predictable challenges. There are challenges that arise when you make the transition from 3 to 4 campuses, 7 to 8 campuses and 15 to 16 campuses. Build a simple system that helps you get a step ahead of the game.
- 4. Remember That Everything Touches Everything.** Culture at one campus affects culture at every campus. Consider every decision through a matrix of contingencies before executing. How will this affect children? How will this affect finance? How will this affect outreach? Sometimes this means a team huddle where the leaders at each campus can consider out loud how a decision will affect their campus or their ministry area.
- 5. Determine Who Makes Decisions.** Make it clear for all team members who makes the final decisions for each campus. The [seven levels of decision-making](#) will be helpful as you decide the best way for decisions to be made at your church. Disregarding this step will result in a lot of frustration down the road.
- 6. Build Systems for Inter-Campus Conversations.** You can't get it all out on paper. Pre-schedule meetings throughout the year with campus leaders, ministry leaders, etc. from each site to come together to discuss developments, challenges, successes, and more. Alignment comes from regular communication amongst all leaders, and the geographic differences can cause this to quickly become an issue if not addressed proactively.

7 Fight the Mother-Ship Perception. Each campus plays a valuable and significant role in the mission of the church. Make sure a staff member from the communication team visits each site regularly and invests in relationships there. This can't be handled on paper alone. If you visit infrequently and are always correcting, you'll be perceived as "corporate."

8 Think in Terms of Replication. When a site makes a request to have a bulletin board, or sign, or other communication piece, ask, "Can we duplicate this?" This helps with what we mentioned in the first tip.

9 Assign a Culture Champion. As mentioned above, the culture at one site affects the others. Choose a staff member who has fewer production responsibilities and have them focus on championing the values and culture of your church as a whole. This becomes increasingly important as the number of campuses increases.

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