**Leading Up – How to Get Your Good Ideas Across**

**By Dan Reiland**

You have good ideas.

You are passionate about them, but they seem to hit brick walls more often than you like.

Ever been there?

When you have what you believe is a good idea; passion alone isn’t enough to get it across.

Leading up is a nuanced art required of all leaders.

Leading up and leading change requires finesse in your leadership.

It’s not an all or nothing process. Leading up requires give and take and keeping your eye on the big picture.

Leading up is not about manipulation or politics but wisdom and discernment that shows respect and fosters a spirit of unity.

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You may be the senior pastor reporting to the board, or the newest member on staff, and it feels like you report to everyone.

No matter what position you play on the team, getting your ideas to become a reality can be layered and complex, especially as the organization gets larger.

Here’s a counterintuitive caution, if you’re in a church where anyone can do anything they want, that is equally problematic. Maybe more so than a church where it’s extremely difficult for most anyone to get their ideas through.

Always check your motives first.

Why do you want your idea to be implemented?

It should always be for the good of the team and the good of the church, not just because it’s good for you. Or, it’s what you want.

I have to check myself too. When I have an idea, especially one that involves change, I ask myself, “Is this best for the church?” And I’m also aware that it’s my opinion that it’s best for the church. It may not be everyone else’s opinion.

That helps me set my perspective in the right place. It doesn’t lower my passion, but it increases my pursuit of unity.

In some environments, it may seem like the ideas and requests of the loudest person with the biggest personality in the room always seems to win, but I can assure you there is an approach that is more effective over the long run.

Here’s a better way to get your idea across:

1) Think it through carefully.

If you want your idea to land, you must know with precision what you want to accomplish or what you need and why.

Always start with why.

Your idea needs to show the value to the whole organization, not just the value to your campus, your team, or you personally.

If it’s a ministry idea, for example, think through all the elements. Be clear on everything, from resources to timelines.

Let’s take financial requirements, for example. Take the time to know the total cost. Don’t just estimate. Do the research it takes to know the real numbers.

Think through the matter of return on investment.

Will the outcome of your idea be worth or greater than the expense of time, energy, and money?

A critical question to ask yourself is – “Is there another way?” There are likely other ways to do this.

Why is your solution the best?

Leading up is not about manipulation or politics, but wisdom and discernment that shows respect and fosters a spirit of unity.

2) Write it clearly.

When leading up, passion is important, but a plan is more powerful.

A written plan represents your refined thinking on paper.

If you want someone to read it, make your proposal one page, two at the most. If asked for more, you can add more later.

It’s ok to attach research, data or photos, etc., but don’t cover that material. The team can look at it later if they need to.

Be sure that your written plan is clear. Remove the fluff. Use bullets over lengthy paragraphs with flowery language or unnecessary words.

Have a friend test read it. If they don’t immediately understand precisely what you are saying, write it again until they do.

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3) Present it well.

Get the right people in the room. You don’t need a lot of time, but you do need the right timing and the right people.

The right timing includes questions like, “Does the agenda already have so many items that yours will be lost in the mix and become an overlooked side issue?”

Or, “Are there other items of much more importance or urgency than yours at that moment?” Be sensitive to that. Wait for the right time.

When leading up, don’t plead your case with passion hoping to “win.” Communicate in a levelheaded manner that demonstrates calm inner confidence about why your idea is genuinely good for the church.

Be sure that your idea or request is not just to make things different. It needs to make things better.

Be clear and concise, hand out your one-pager (or two), and stick to it.

Take a few minutes to answer questions then close it out, asking if more time or info is needed or if a decision can be made.

I realize this may seem very formal for many church staff situations. It would be pretty formal for ours too, but all the elements are still important.

Just make them fit the relational vibe of your culture, and again, these guidelines will be helpful.

4) Lay it down.

Remember, you are on the team to serve, not win, that’s key in leading up.

You are there to find a way, not get your way.

When leading up, it’s key to remember remember you’re on a team to serve, not a contest to win.

You have ideas, and you believe in them. Great! That’s what leaders do. It’s part of our responsibility to solve problems, innovate to make things better, and make progress.

But there is also a sensitive balance between progress and culture. Teamwork, unity, and a spirit of cooperation must remain intact.

Here’s a truth that has helped me over the years.

The person or persons you want approval from face pressures you aren’t aware of. Keep that in mind.

They may like your idea but have conflicting responsibilities, requirements, and pressures you may or may not be aware of.

Even when you lead up well, you will get no’s, we all do. You will gain much more respect and favor in the future if you take a no with genuine maturity.

It’s unrealistic to get a yes every time. Don’t take it personally.

Take it in stride, remain committed to the team, and bring your next idea at the right time. Each time you get a yes, it’s important that you deliver the results you promised!

The above article, “Leading Up – How to Get Your Good Ideas Across,” was written by Dan Reiland.

https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/370838-leading-up-how-to-get-your-good-ideas-across.html#:~:text=Here%E2%80%99s%20a%20better%20way%20for%20leading%20up%20to,you%20need%20and%20why.%20Always%20start%20with%20why.

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This article may not be written by an Apostolic author, but it contains many excellent principles and concepts that can be adapted to most churches. As the old saying goes, “Eat the meat. Throw away the bones.”