

An Analysis of the Application of Project Management  
In Different Ministry Models

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### Abstract

Project management provides guidelines for the implementation of systems to make processes more effective and efficient. One emerging field in which project management application benefits are being discovered is ministry and nonprofits, specifically Christian ministry. Although there are many different denominations in Christianity, they can all essentially be separated into two categories: Seeker Oriented Ministries, and Traditional Ministries. This thesis will attempt to provide a synopsis of the applications of project management in both ministry types, as well as a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between the two styles.

An Analysis of the Application of Project Management  
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Project management is a growing field that has been adopted into many industries in order to make processes more effective and efficient and to manage progress throughout that process. Although the principles are typically used in a business context, project management can be used in a plethora of other areas. One specific area where project management is very well suited is the area of Christian ministry. Project management is a skill that for a professional requires years to fully develop; however, even topical knowledge of the fundamentals can dramatically increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Christian ministry in any context.

**Definition of Ministries**

Within the context of modern ministries, specifically churches, there are two distinct and popular strategies under which most Christian ministries can be described. Before they are named, the term Christian ministry must be defined. “Christian ministry is the activity and responsibility of the local church in the fulfillment of its biblically defined mandate in the world.” (Pascoe, para. 2, n.d.). For the purpose of this thesis, these ministries can be classified as either Seeker Oriented Ministries (SOM) or Traditional Ministries (TM). In order to understand the effect of project management on these dramatically different styles of ministry, they must first be defined.

Seeker Oriented Ministries are just that: focused on someone who is seeking something. The individual may not know what that is yet, or may not even know that they are seeking, but they believe there must be something more to this life than just living. Christian author T.A. McMahon writes that Seeker Oriented churches have a

“reach the lost through whatever-turns-them-on mindset.” (2004, para. 4) He also says that its mission is to “attract the masses.”(2004, para. 3) This statement, along with analysis of the culture of many “megachurches” helps to provide a full understanding of what SOM’s mission and vision is: to reach the masses through whatever means necessary. Ed Stetzer, a church planter and pastor said this in a recent article:

“When I planted in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1994, I utilized many of the methodologies of this model (SOM model). We didn’t try to demean other churches. Rather, we tried to communicate our different approach to church. I also (occasionally) wore a Hawaiian shirt, shoes without socks (I know; don’t judge me), and we had a band that sang contemporary music.” (2016, para. 7)

The SOM model has continually strived to be relevant and relatable to people around them. They desire for their environments to be completely welcoming and nonthreatening.

The idea of a Seeker Oriented Ministry is not one that is new, in fact the first modern SOM was founded on October 16, 1941; it was called Young Life (History of Young Life, n.d.). This high school ministry targeted students that stayed away from the church (Lanker, n.d.). Jim Rayburn, the founder of Young Life, reasoned that the target audience of his ministry, high school students, was being missed simply because of the fact that they did not want to be associated with a church, or because the theological jargon used in church was intimidating and confusing to them. His endeavors revolving around unchurched students created a new form of ministry that has since been adopted by many around the world. A testament to the success of this ministry is the success Young Life has had, as it is now in an astonishing 90 countries around the world (Turner,

n.d.). The simple presentations of the gospel and the atmosphere of welcoming acceptance that Young Life creates effectively supplies seeking high school students with the truths that they search for.

Parachurch organizations are not the only organizations that have adopted this Seeker Oriented mindset. There are churches that are SOMs as well. One such ministry is North Point Ministries. This mega church out of Atlanta, Georgia is outward focused and Seeker Oriented. Their goal is to create environments where unchurched people feel comfortable and are willing to attend, just like Young Life (North Point Ministries, n.d.). A testament to the success of the strategy of this ministry in a modernizing world is the fact that over 30,000 people attend North Point churches weekly. The sheer number of people attending their 6 locations weekly requires a team of people that are devoted to the organization and planning of the ministry.

Many people desiring to share God's word have looked to this style of ministry and acknowledged the dramatic impact it has had. One of the most well-known modern pastors, Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church, has written many books on this style of ministry and how to do ministry in the most effective and efficient ways. Stanley has a unique ability to simplify confusing theological topics in order to reach the unreached and create environments where unchurched people feel welcomed. In his book *7 Practices of Effective Ministry*, Stanley discusses seven practices to make your ministry more effective. They are: "clarify the win, think steps not programs, narrow the focus, teach less for more, listen to outsiders, replace yourself, and work on it." (Stanley, Joiner, & Jones, 2004, p. 10-11) All of these practices have strong

correlation with, and can be made more effective by, the use of project management, however this will be discussed later in the thesis.

Although there has been great success with this style of ministry, there are some who believe that it is causing the church to fall away from its foundation. Udo Middelman, President of the Francis A. Schaeffer Foundation, speaks to this belief very bluntly. He accuses the modern Seeker Oriented church of relying “on slogans rather than the uncompromising Gospel message and its implications to society” (as cited in Snapp, para. 4, n.d.). He goes on to refer to members of these churches as “repeat customers” who return week after week for their own selfish desires, not because they value the word of God. Middelman goes on to call for “churches to return to the historic preaching of God’s Word” saying, “scripture must be seen as a unit, not as a reference book where verses, often taken out of context, become the focus of individuals.” (para. 5) He concludes by stating the idea that due to the Bible’s inerrancy and truth, it will continue to be culturally relevant without the modern touches.

Often times the biggest and loudest critics of SOM’s are part of the second type of ministry, the Traditional Ministry model. This strategy dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the Protestant Reformation and the immigration to America. Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Wesley are all founders of this style of ministry (History of the Christian Church, n.d.). These ministries have been the foundation for several hundred years of American Christian culture. There has been an incredible amount of success with this style of ministry. This can be seen simply by how the religion of Christianity has grown and remained an important part of American culture for centuries. TM’s were founded on strong values and principles that are still acknowledged today within the

Christian community. These ministries often maintain their traditions and find a sense of pride in the fact that they continue to do ministry the same way as they have done it for several hundred years. Much of their focus is on their own church, and a majority of the growth in the church comes from the procreation of members who grew up in the church.

Ed Stetzer comments on this type of ministry as well:

“What about the strengths, weaknesses, and reproducibility of the traditional model? The strength tends to lie in its evangelistic zeal. Its growth is often supported by a homogeneous focus. These two strengths become the factors that lead to many church plant successes. However, its strengths can become weaknesses since the traditional model tends toward a homogenous group resulting in a narrow vision.” (Stetzer, 2015, para. 13)

As a result of this narrowing of vision, newcomers can easily feel unwelcome or are intimidated by the close-knit feel of these ministries. In addition to the narrowing focus of traditional ministries, “Few traditional churches have transformed (with the culture) and instead became functional poststructuralists. The majority of churches remain stuck in their structuralist paradigms and have capitulated into pathological systems and praxes. These ecclesiologies cannot adequately address the plural and multifaceted challenges of the 21st century.” (Dames, 2010, Institutional Methodologies Engaging Contextual Challenges, para. 1)

There is no reason to believe that this is intentional however, but rather a misunderstanding of the congregation on how to interact with newcomers. In an excerpt from Christianity Today, Amy Julia Becker wrote:



“I think many churches open the door and then expect people to walk in and make themselves at home. This attempt at openness and inclusion actually leaves the responsibility on “the other”. I have always understood the Gospel as being Good News for everyone, and that our role as believers and members of the Church is to welcome strangers, newcomers, and outsiders. How can we do that if all we do is prop open the door and never consider that perhaps what is inside isn’t a welcome but more of an unspoken audition? Can the newcomer make her own way? Can he follow along with the order of service or does she already have to know how to “pass the peace” or guess which version of The Lord’s Prayer will be used? Are we merely opening the door or are we doing everything we can to extend hospitality and welcome?” (Becker, 2014, para. 2)

These are questions that TM’s must ask. It is easy to fall into that temptation when a routine is created and in turn, preconceptions and normalcy become prevalent. Often times, the messages that are communicated during a Sunday morning sermon are filled with theological jargon that can be confusing to a new or non-Christian, but “veteran” Christians might find compelling. This could also be a potential deterrent turn off for a newcomer.

Traditional ministries strive for their members to know God’s word and desire to create a community that reflects the values the Bible teaches. Their model of ministry is modeled after that of the early American church, as previously discussed. The emphasis of these ministries is often focused inwardly on the spiritual growth of their members and ensuring the actions of those in the congregation align with what that specific church denomination stands for. The interesting observation then, is that while these churches

believe that they are doing church in the way that God intended it to be done, they are potentially hurting themselves due to their desire to remain comfortable in their spirituality.

Duke University (2007) conducted a study on congregational tendencies called the National Congregations Study that attempted to statistically reflect the culture of different church types. In this study, they found that an astonishing 42.7% of churches in the United States have less than 50 members attend on a weekly basis. The Duke study also that 44.3% of churches do not have a website on the Internet. One cannot confidently argue then that these statistics have any correlation to one another, or specifically align with one particular ministry model. This study does help form an appropriate view of the percentage of churches in America in which the implementation of a project management position would be beneficial.

It is clear however, that the two main categories of ministries are drastically different. That being said, they are similar due to the fact that they are trying to achieve the same goal, which is to introduce people to Jesus and mentor them into a growing relationship with Him. Because of these similarities, there are specific ways in which project management can contribute to the growth and organization of both types of ministries.

### **Project Management Fundamentals**

Project management can provide invaluable information, stability, and organization to any task or project. Through a regimented and developed system laid out by the PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge), projects are typically completed effectively and efficiently (PMBOK, 2013). The project manager (PM)

position is the application of knowledge, skills, tools, and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements (What is Project Management, n.d.). A vast majority of the organization of project management comes from the planning support that the PMBOK provides. For any project, PM's are required to formulate multiple planning documents with the key stakeholders in the project. These include stakeholder analysis to determine which stakeholders need the most communication and are the most valuable to the project. Project managers must also formulate a work package document to determine how the work will be broken down into manageable tasks, a timeline to estimate the time of completion and to help monitor the progress of the project, and budget to ensure the project is completed with the organization's best financial interest in mind (Manchester Metropolitan University, n.d.). The ability of the PM to analyze the project situation and to plan accordingly is what sets him or her apart from other positions within an organization. Finally, the PM must also exhibit exceptional communication skills in order to manage and guide a project effectively (Meredith & Mantel, 2011). This will help to ensure the project will be completed with efficiency. Although there are many similarities in the way project management is used in SOM and TM, there are some differences as well.

### **Seeker Oriented Ministries Correlation with Project Management**

The reason that ministry and project management work well together is that all ministries do project management already, although they probably do not realize it or do it as efficiently and effectively as they could. For example, if a student pastor puts on an event that he has planned for a week, and he then executes that event, he has carried out a project because "a project is temporary in that it has a defined beginning and end in time,

and therefore defined scope and resources.” (What is Project Management, para. 1, n.d.) Likewise, if the president of a non-profit ministry decides to throw a fundraising gala, and a team of managers plans the event, it is budgeted, and put into place, then project management has been done. The difference comes from the experience, efficiency, effectiveness, and organization of the event. Therefore, the implication of project management is easily seen within ministries. That being said, it might look a bit different between the two distinct types of ministry mentioned earlier, SOM and TM’s. The reason the project management roles will most likely be different is because of the differentiations in ministry models and the priorities of each ministry.

In a Seeker Oriented Ministry there is a tremendous need for a project manager. Since most SOM’s are fairly large or have the tendency to rapidly grow, it is imperative to have somebody in place to manage the large amount of people the ministry could grow to. Due to the flexible skill set that PM’s have, there are many applications possible for them. Possibly the most effective project managers for ministry are the PM’s acting as director for the ministry and the IT PM.

SOM directors typically act as the project managers and manage day-to-day activities of the ministry. They help to guide each area of the organization as well as the more formal projects of the ministry. In a hierarchical SOM management system, the position of PM is almost a necessity. For example, the student ministry of North Point Ministries has almost 5,000 students that attend their weekly high school service. Every summer, the church takes all of the students 8 hours away for a camp in Panama City Beach, Florida over a three week, three-session period. That means that somebody must coordinate the logistics of transporting 5,000 students, on three different trips, to and

from Florida, manage the booking of the rooms, the turnover of the rooms that are used three weeks in a row, supply food and drinks 3 times a day, as well as countless other things. Not only does someone need to coordinate that, but eight weeks later they also must coordinate a fall retreat, which, due to the smaller scale of the sleeping accommodations, creates a total of 7 different camps that must be coordinated and planned in the same manner as the summer retreat. The final a large-scale event for this specific ministry is a local event that still requires a tremendous amount of scheduling and planning as it has the highest attendance out of all of the large-scale events the ministry does.

Because of the scale of this student ministry, North Point Ministries have a team of project managers that all manage a different aspect of these retreats. In this example, they have two PM's managing the production, music, sermon content, and sound equipment. They have one project manager that is solely devoted to photography and videography of the events and the advertisements of said events. They have one PM who is solely dedicated to managing the logistics of taking that many students on those trips and managing and mitigating the risks involved such as broken down buses, rooms that aren't ready, rowdy students that make efficient distribution of materials virtually impossible, and broken and damaged items that were transported to the location. Not only are they a team of project managers, but they have one project manager who manages all of them, their progress on their tasks, and holds them accountable for their work. In a recent interview, the lead pastor of North Point Ministries, Andy Stanley, said, "Project management is an integral part of what we do here at North Point Ministries. We place a high value on planning, documenting, and executing events and

project managers allow us to do this well.” (A. Stanley, personal communication, October 12, 2016) It is easy to see then, that this specific ministry would not run without the involvement of every one of these project managers.

In some SOM cases, and depending on the model of ministry ones organization pursues, it may be necessary to have an IT PM (information technology project manager). The need for this results from the modern technology used in the day-to-day functions of this ministry, and their desire to bring people into the ministry through the production of a typical ministry event. Often times SO ministries lean more heavily on this as they are always pushing themselves to stay relevant in the eyes of the local community, again by creating environments that unchurched people want to attend.

IT project managers have an important job within SO ministries, as a majority of them are run on a foundation of production and media. This foundational element of the ministry strengthens the argument for IT PM’s needed position in a ministry. There are a vast number of jobs that an IT PM can do that help forward the ministry from a behind-the-scenes perspective. Some of these are: creating websites for the ministry rather than outsourcing the construction to a third party, creating fund accounts for donations where a user interface creates a more welcoming environment for people who are considering donating, configuring e-giving where tithes are set on a scheduled donation system that automatically takes a specified amount of money out of one’s checking account on a specified schedule, and writing computer programs that could be created that can run in other countries with partnering organizations are just a few of these applications.

Ministries often participate in international mission trips and these small-scale international projects must be taken into consideration when discussing project

management in ministry. Arnuphaptrairong (2011) compiled research on the Top Ten Lists of Software Project Risks from Literature Survey. This list was created for engineers and IT workers and therefore has been tailored to that specific job description; however, the ideas behind every point on this list are transferable to any other international application as well. He concluded that when all ten lists were compiled, there were really only eight risks that were truly applicable to every international project. They were: misunderstanding of requirements, lack of management commitment and support, lack of adequate user involvement, failure to gain user commitment, failure to manage end user expectations, changes to requirements, and lack of effective project management methodology.

For example, if a ministry is planning a mission trip to another country, their biggest risk is that the requirements of people in the other country are misunderstood. If the communication and details of the mission trip are misunderstood, then the effectiveness of the trip will be severely decreased. Likewise, if the leaders going on the trip lose their desire to go on the trip, or they feel as though they are not being supported by the ministry well, this will also severely decrease the effectiveness of the trip. The third and fourth risks begin to blend, and are more likely to be seen in student ministry missions trips. This is because lack of commitment from mission trip participants could hinder the effectiveness of the trip. If a ministry were to undertake a cross-cultural, international project, a mission trip for example, they would face the same difficulties that international businesses face. International projects bring to the surface, some of the risks and problems that project managers face, in a much more exaggerated way due to the isolation that leaders and staff face when they are out of the United States. Some of

these are planning, and putting processes into place, to work through or around the obvious time differences between the two countries, as well as the language and cultural differences.

Another risk for an international missions trip is that of failing to manage end user expectations. For example, if a ministry sends a team to a foreign country and their goal is to help build a building, the native people of the country might assume that those on the mission trip are going to complete the construction of the building, when realistically the ministry had no intention of fully completing the construction. In this case, the end users expectations were not managed well. The seventh risk of changes in the requirements, often occur on a missions trips due to the nature of the trip and the attitude of servitude that the participants most likely have. The final risk, “lack of effective project management methodology” (Arnuphaptrairong, 2011, p. 2) is certainly a risk for ministries. Project managers are educated in the best practices of managing and planning projects. If these best practices are not adhered to, then by default, the methodology behind the planning of the project is not as effective and efficient as it could be.

As one can see, there is an incredible need for people with a project management background in SOM's. Due to the nature of these ministries and the requirements of excellence that must be met, project management positions have great potential within SOM's and are also a growing field. If the position of PM was implemented into an SOM, the results could quite possibly be an almost immediate increase in management effectiveness. If leaders of SO ministries did not have to worry about planning their own events, contracting IT work, and having to spend countless hours forming financial spreadsheets and budgets for their events, then they could spend more time developing



ministry outreach strategies, their lessons, and their own spiritual lives so they could be used more effectively for the kingdom of Christ. The implementation of a project management position alleviates an extraordinary amount of stress from the directors and leaders of the ministry, which causes a more focused and effective ministry staff. In this way Matthew 28:19 is fulfilled as it says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (NIV) When project management is implemented correctly, those guiding the organization have more freedom to accomplish what they need to accomplish without feeling overwhelmed by the circumstances.

### **Traditional Ministries Correlation with Project Management**

The need for project management in traditional ministries is very prevalent as well, due to the fact that there are many systems within any ministry that can be made better with the implementation of a project management position. Simply because a church is not heavily focused on bringing outsiders into their church, does not discredit them from the need of project management within their ministry; in fact it, would also benefit them greatly.

Take for example the Church of the Brethren. It is a denomination of Christianity that prides itself in tradition and, “Nurturing Brethren identity. Educating and discipling church members. Promoting unity. Challenging Brethren to embrace a practical faith.” (Church of the Brethren, para. 1, n.d.). This denomination is clearly Traditional denomination due to the fact that they desire to be set apart by a culturally recognized identity instead of changing with the culture in order to attract more people. Even though these ministries are certainly inward focused, putting their energy towards the members

of their congregation, project management would help them be more efficient and effective in their ministry. Generally, churches that pride themselves in their tradition have been using the same system to complete tasks for decades, thus warranting an in-depth look at their systems to analyze the effectiveness and efficiency they are creating.

Church of the Brethren churches are highly involved with natural disaster relief and other humanitarian efforts. Their involvement in such efforts could potentially be streamlined and made safer if outdated systems were replaced with new systems. For example, a project manager would run a risk assessment and formally document all potential risks, and a mitigation plan to avoid them. This documentation is something that a project manager practices and learns throughout their formal education and is an invaluable resource in business, and also to a TM. Having a plan to mitigate risk in any situation, whether providing humanitarian relief, or planning the annual strawberry festival in the church parking lot, is always beneficial and a project manager provides that service. This is an example of how the implementation of project management can make systems in place more effective. The same example could also be used to provide evidence for those projects becoming more efficient as well. Due to the documentation gathered by project managers regarding an event, the execution of the event can be analyzed to see if all of the processes within the event were completed in a logical and systematic way thereby making the ministry more efficient next time they wish to complete the same project.

The United Methodist Church denomination, a Traditional Ministry model, is moving toward the implementation of project managers within their ministries. Schleicher (n.d.) wrote an article entitled “5 Benefits of Project Management for the

Work of the Church” and it was posted on the United Methodist website. In the article, he begins by defining project management as, “the process of coordinating knowledge, skills and resources to build a unique service, product or outcome.” (para. 1) He then goes on to explain the top 5 reasons why project management should be implemented into any ministry, all of which are applicable to Traditional Ministries. His reasons were, Documentation brings excellence, planning ahead provides time to brainstorm ideas, schedule and budget keep you on track, proper delegation leads to a balanced team, and regular communication leads to excitement and readiness. (Schleicher, n.d.)

Documentation is obviously a large part of a project manager’s role in any organization, however one skill that a project manager provides that can often be forgotten is their contribution to a team.

Bruce Tuckman proposed the idea in the mid 1900’s that a team’s life cycle has 5 different stages. He said that they are, forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning (as cited in Stein). During the forming stage, members of a team are getting to know each other on a surface level, coming together for the first time and not knowing what to expect. From there, the team moves into the storming phase where a variety of work habits, ideals, morals, and a plethora of other factors are acknowledged and worked through. The team then eases into the norming phase where there becomes a mutual understanding between everyone in the group of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable within the setting of that group. Then begins the performing phase, where team members work together to complete a project, or an event, or a task. After their project is completed, the team breaks apart because their purpose for being together has come to a close.

Project managers are taught how to manage people through all 5 of these team phases. This is often forgotten when thinking about project management and its benefits because it is not a tangible asset. It is difficult to tangibly measure relationships of members of a team, however it is completely necessary to manage those relationships to ensure they are healthy and benefit the project team. TM's could use the understanding of the team stages in their day-to-day activities, as elders work together to determine the direction of the ministry, or as teams are formed for humanitarian efforts.

The role or actual job title of a project manager may not specifically be needed in a ministry, especially one of the 40% of churches that have less than 50 members. That being said, those in charge of the ministry (i.e. deacons and elders) should have some type of formal training in project management. Part of living life as a Christian is continuing to strive to be like Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation has come: the old has gone and the new is here!" This means making a conscious effort to be more Christ-like every day is something that all Christians are called to do. In the same way, ministries should always be looking for ways to better themselves in areas where they may not have ventured before. In many TM's, project management might just be the path they need to take, in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their ministry.

A TM that desires to implement a project management position or even a PMO (project management office), must consider several things. The first is to ask themselves if it is worth it. Do they desire efficiency and effectiveness enough to invest in formal training or a full time position? The biggest thing that sets project managers apart from simply a coordinator of the ministry is the style, experience, and efficiency at which

PM's conduct their projects. The second question that a TM must ask, is will enough responsibility and tasks be given up to supply the PM with work? Part of the reason for hiring a PM is to relieve the project and planning related items off of others' agendas. The question then stems from the fact that most TM's are comprised of people that haven't changed with the modernization of the church and are rooted in a mindset where the position of project management might seem like a waste of resources. Typically they already have a system that they consider to have worked for decades. The work is easily separated and has already been divided. The ministry then must be able to be willing to change and provide work for the PM so that their position would be worth the time and money they are putting into it. One risk TM's run if they do not relinquish their work to a PM, is that the PM might become lackadaisical in his or her approaches. If this happened it would increase the condescending view that some in the congregation have, therefore causing the project manager more adversity in proving the worth of their position. Another thing that should be considered by any PM considering a role in a TM is the question of: does this style of ministry match my personality? Most TM's run a slower, one person at a time, approach to ministry (Kujawa-Holbrook, n.d.). This is due to the traditional nature of these ministries, and it may be difficult for a project manager to prove their worth in that setting because there will not be as much to do to get noticed for as there would be in an SOM or in the business world.

### **Similarities in Project Management Application Between SOM's and TM's**

There are many similarities regarding the application of project management in Seeker Oriented Ministries and Traditional Ministries. Although there are many particular similarities, there are essentially two major similarities. They are the need for

project management implementation in the ministry type and the processes that are applied within the ministry type.

The need is similar in both ministry types because each ministry type should be trying to get better. Through documentation, planning, risk management, and communication, project managers push organizations to be better. The natural result when project management practices are applied then is for organizations and ministries to become more effective and efficient. A project manager documents the activities the respective ministries are involved in, so that they can make those activities better and more effective. They plan with the end in mind, always questioning whether a step could be taken out or done differently, cheaper, or more effectively and efficiently. They manage risk and mitigate it, so that risks that are of critical nature to an event's success are prepared for. This makes the elders, board of directors, or team aware of what risks they are facing in the event and what to do in the case that one of them becomes a reality.

The other similarity in the application of project management in the two ministries is the processes that will be used. The processes used to document events, manage risks, communicate, make decisions, and plan will be the same in TM and SOM organizations. Risk assessments will be completed in the same way as to remain true to best practices, as well as other documentation such as statement of work, project charter, and budget. These processes will all be conducted in the same manner and within the same parameters, because there are clear guidelines on the documentation that needs to be filed with each section of the project.

### **Differences in Project Management Application Between TM and SOMs**

Although there are many similarities between project management in Seeker Oriented Ministries and Traditional Ministries, there are also many differences. These differences cause the role of a project manager to be dramatically different depending on what type of ministry they are involved in. These differences are the need, implementation, application, and vision.

Where the two ministry styles begin to split in their likeness in project management roles are their needs. This change does not necessarily impact the need for project management or the application guidelines. What it does change is the frequency at which these needs warrant the use of project management and the types of needs (i.e. how technical the application must be). SOM's need for project managers rise from their rapid growth, and need for clear and defined organization within their ministry to separate departments and their varying roles. They also need project management because of the type of outreach they do. For example, an SOM might take 40 students to Africa for a missions trip during the summer. If this were the case, they would need people planning the trip, making sure the students had places to stay, the trip members were safe, and had appropriate supervision while there. This is not to say that TM's do not go on mission trips, however the amount of students they take will be much smaller due to the expected size of the ministry. Also, an SOM typically will reach out to their community on a much more frequent basis than TM's (A Strategic Approach to God's Plan for Outreach, Law 2, n.d.). This requires that more events and community interactions are planned. A PM within an SOM would have the job of preparing, budgeting, and planning the events as they come. Not only that, but there would be a team leader who would practice the soft skills of a project manager and make sure

everyone on the trip was working well together and noticing and documenting potential interpersonal problems and addressing those issues before they grow into something that takes away from the meaning of the trip.

Traditional Ministries need project managers to organize events and activities of a different scale and purpose than a Seeker Oriented Ministry. They need project managers to plan activities such as church socials, and the Christmas play. They would use project managers as organizers primarily, and while it would make events and activities run more smoothly, the role might not be appreciated by everyone in the congregation because it is not traditionally a role in the church. A project manager in a TM would also plan the humanitarian efforts that TM churches often participate in. They would manage food drives and emergency relief trips to be more effective and efficient in the way they serve their target community.

The second thing that differs due to the difference in the need, is the vision for what project management will look like in the different types of organizations. In a Seeker Oriented Ministry, the vision for project management is that its implementation will cause the ministry to be more efficient and effective at reaching people, growing the church and ministry, and sharing the Gospel with more people. The vision is also that this position would take the stress and logistical tasks off of the people who are guiding the ministry. Once those people no longer have to worry about the logistical side of running a ministry, they are made available to push the ministry to new heights and pursue their vision for the ministry as a whole.

The vision for project management in Traditional Ministries is different because of the need from which the position or general knowledge arises. The vision of project



management in TM's also allows the leaders of the ministry freedom from responsibilities of logistical planning and event preparation. While the vision of the TM might sound very similar to the vision of SOM, there is a distinct difference. Seeker Oriented Ministries decide upon the need for the role of a project manager based upon their desire to grow and to reach more. Traditional Ministries decide upon the need for the role of the project manager based upon the church leadership's decision that they can more successfully lead their congregation's spiritual lives if they were able to relieve some of their responsibilities from the lead pastor. The vision for project managers in a Traditional Ministry then is to manage people and events. Preparing for events is an obvious use of a project manager, however managing people might be a bit more difficult to recognize. Project managers would be put in charge of events and trips and would help to handle conflict and manage risk throughout their assigned tasks.

The third difference between the use of project management in ministry types is the technicality of implementation. Typically, due to the larger number of crowds that SOM's bring, there is a larger amount of disposable income. They will have much more money, human capital, and other resources available in order to push their ministries to success. "With the traditional model, the financial costs are lower than some of the other models. The reason being is they simply do not need all the "bells and whistles" like some of the other models (SOM)." (Stetzer, 2015, para. 12) The result of more income, is the ability for project managers to provide more intricacies to their projects. This does not necessarily mean that the better-funded projects will be more efficient or effective, however it is a difference that must be noted

The implementation is also different because of the number of direct reports and volunteers they are surrounded by. Naturally, with a larger team one project manager can put out much more work effectively and efficiently, provided that they continually keep their people and tasks organized. Also due to the resources that project managers are given in SOMs, they are able to better follow the guidelines laid out by the PMBOK. Money does not necessarily mean that best practices are followed; however being better funded provides the project managers with opportunities to work to the fullest potential.

Traditional Ministry's implementation of project management is much more surface level than that of SOM's due to the nature of their need and vision for the position. As well as these reasons, TM's will not have an overwhelming amount of resources at their disposal. They will be given a specific task and likely smaller budget, and will be expected to manage those resources wisely in order to complete the project to the scale the budget provides. In many Traditional Ministries, the simple act of seeking out education on project management practices will result in a more effective and efficient ministry in whatever aspect the project manager is applied. Even a small amount of project management knowledge in this situation would dramatically benefit the TM.

The final difference between Seeker Oriented Ministries and Traditional Ministries is the application of the practices of project management. This shows itself in the frequency of application and the forms of application. For example, an SOM, such as previously mentioned North Point Ministries, uses project managers every day to organize and direct their areas of ministry. Not only are project managers used within the ministry as a whole, each department within each campus has a project manager that

directs that specific department. Those project managers report to other project managers who help to manage the direction of each department within the ministry as a whole.

These project managers then report to those that guide the organization and manage its health as it continues to grow and change with the culture that surrounds it.

The application of project management in Traditional Ministries is much different than that of Seeker Oriented Ministries because the scale of the ministries is so different. The application frequency can vary but typically will not grow to the extent of an SOM simply because the ministry is typically smaller. One must remember that simply because Traditional Ministries employ less project managers than Seeker Oriented Ministries, that TM's still are completely valid and credible ministries, they just have a different vision.

### **Conclusion**

The value added by project managers to the projects and the people who work with them is immeasurable due to the fact that most of their work is cognitive and soft skilled. Ministries have an opportunity for the first time in history, to take advantage of this situation and obtain employees that will benefit from the effectiveness, efficiency, and countless other areas of their ministry. The demand for PM's in ministry is growing. As large organizations and churches begin to be more common, so does the need for this new form of management. Whether in logistics (Popendieck, 2000) managing people (Project Roles and Responsibilities, n.d.), or leading a team (Bisk, n.d.) PM's could be a valuable asset to ministries all across the globe.

In a Traditional Ministry, the implementation of project management strategies would be different than in a Seeker Oriented Ministry simply because the vision for the

ministry is different, however the need for project management in some capacity in both ministries is certainly present. The need for project management, or a basic knowledge of project management principles, can help to create a ministry that is effective and efficient in the areas where project managers have been implemented. There are several different reasons for this. Project managers document the work of their team better than others who attempt to fill their position because they have been trained how to do it well. They also provide unique insight into potential risks and problems with any project, and they can help to mitigate or relieve the level of the risk by using simple, logical techniques laid out in the PMBOK.

Every ministry should implement project management for three reasons. The first is that project management inherently causes its applied systems to be more effective and efficient. The second is that project management implementation in any organization causes incredible organization and documentation that could lay the foundation for future events and tasks. Lastly, every ministry needs project management implementation because it provides an easy system of accountability for church leadership and creates a leadership group, instead of a single leader. In the words of King Solomon, “plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers, they succeed.” (Proverbs 15:22) The implementation of project management will push organizations further, faster and therefore must be applied in all business models.

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