**From the 23 December 2013 article at ThoughtLeaderZone.com**

<http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/12/church-leader-zone/>

**Church Leader Zone**

As I looked through the hundred or so articles published on this website, I recognized that some of the blog posts applied to a specific type of thought leader – a church change leader.

Click *here* for a document that includes many of those adapted articles that apply to the specific situation of running a church.

Would you like to be a church change leader? Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help!

**#1**

[Church Change Leaders’ Lessons from the Frog Days of Summer](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/09/leadership-lessons-from-the-frog-days-of-summer/)

I decided it was time I wrote a frog blog. All the signs were there. Today I saw a lone frog float drifting around the deserted Bad Allenmoos pool, which was filled with water too cold for all but the hardiest Swiss (and expats).

It reminded me of an article I read online this morning about the worst ways to leave a job, and they mentioned the embarrassment of being [”frog marched”](http://www.word-detective.com/111703.html) out the door, perhaps splayed out like that frog float. Googling the term, I found its usage dated back to the late 1800′s, but it seemed to apply more to drunken sailors than senior executives.



Then on my way home, I was approached by two different sets of school children who were using their lunch break to peddle chocolate ”coins” to support a frog and wildlife charity.

So the signs were there. The end of the summer — the frog days of summer — called for a frog blog. The main question was how to relate frogs to church change leadership. Here’s my approach: offer a riddle and a widely recognized tale and a short poem for explanation.

First, the riddle, [which I recently read online](http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130520005409-36052017-are-you-making-this-mistake-at-the-end-of-your-meetings).

***Question:*** *If five frogs are sitting on a lily pad and four decided to jump off, how many frogs are left?****Answer:*** *The answer to this old riddle is five—because deciding is different* from doing.

As a church change leader, you may find that your ”deciding team” -- whether that's a church council or an administrative board, etc. -- is much more committed to making decisions than to implementing them. It's up to you to find ways to make your thoughts more actionable as decisions. Be sure they know the difference between deciding and doing.

Now for the familiar frog tale. The urban myth persists that if you put a frog in a pot of water and heat it until boiling, the frog will stay in the water and die. But if you throw a frog into boiling water, he will jump out and save its own life.

I’m not sure whether that story is literally true, but I do know that church change leaders can become so acclimated to their comfortable situation that they don’t notice the heat is rising in their church's ''pot.'' They may be insulated (or isolated because of their ”exalted position”) from changes that are occurring around them. Becoming accustomed to the gradually changing environment, they slowly perish, or at least their reputations do.

That insulation may come from complacency or even from being surrounded by well-meaning yay-sayers. Perhaps Emily Dickinson said it best in her famous frog-related poem:

***I’m nobody! Who are you?***

*I’m nobody! Who are you?  
Are you nobody, too?  
Then there’s a pair of us — don’t tell!  
They’d banish — you know!*

*How dreary to be somebody!  
How public like a frog  
To tell one’s name the livelong day  
To an admiring bog!*

As a church change leader, it’s easy to sit back on your lily pad and just talk to or at the admiring bogs during, for example, a congregational meeting or even a media interview. Instead you should be engaging your audiences and stakeholders in challenging dialogue, not just making unchallenged proclamations. A church change leader certainly needs church followers, but not only the admiring ones.

Are you as a church change leader confident enough to jump into the deep end and allow yourself to interact authentically and put your ideas forward for public scrutiny, like a frog being examined under a magnifying glass in biology class? Do you need help just wading in at first and positioning yourself as a church change leader very publicly, like a frog? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

**#2**

[Grammar Matters and Style Rules! Practical Style Guides for Church Change Leaders](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/09/grammar-matters-and-style-rules-practical-style-guides-for-thought-leaders/)

Teaching is on my mind right now as the schools in Zurich have recently opened. That’s because I once was an English teacher—and once an English teacher, always an English teacher.

In fact, when I moved from academia into the business world, I retained my reputation as a Grammar Guru and a Punctuation Policewoman. I plead ”intentionally guilty” to the charge of insisting on high-quality, mistake-free writing in business documents that matter. And they all matter.

Yes, as a church change leader, even your emails should be error free when it comes to grammar and style. Advanced tools help you to spell-check and grammar-check, and there’s even a fail-safe way to ensure you don’t hit send without taking time to confirm its accuracy one last time. ([Contact me if you need instructions on that](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).)

But more critical documents require more thorough editing and proofreading to make sure your messages have the impact you intend. Subtle changes in style and tone and improve the persuasive value of your writing. Grammatical ”guffaws” and ”gaffes” can devalue your discourse.

Several style guides exist to help you polish your writing style; some of these books you’ll remember from your own English classes.

5 Practical Reference Sources for Grammar and Style

[On Writing Well by William Zinsser](http://www.amazon.com/writing-well-30th-anniversary-edition/dp/0060891548)

[The Elements of Style by Strunk and White](http://www.amazon.com/the-elements-style-fourth-edition/dp/020530902x)

[Associated Press Stylebook](http://www.apstylebook.com/)

[Chicago Manual of Style](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html)

[Guardian and Observer Style Guide](http://www.guardian.co.uk/styleguide/a)

Your church's communications team may have a style guide of its own or at least a strong preference about which one to use. The key to raising the quality bar is to demand consistency in style and grammar…Consistently right, that is.

Do you need a brush-up on how “grammar matters and style rules”? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

*Photo Credit:* [Terry Freedman](http://www.flickr.com/photos/terryfreedman/9508786249/in/photostream/)

**#3**

[Who Ya Gonna Call? Ghost Writer!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/08/who-ya-gonna-call-ghost-writer/)

If the only thing holding you back from being a more active church change leader is time to write, Church Leader Zone can offer you an effective solution.

Maybe you need a ghost writer …or a [ghost blogger](http://www.business2community.com/content-marketing/how-a-writing-service-can-move-prospects-through-your-b2b-sales-cycle-0346498) or a ghost tweeter. Managing your online presence can be challenging while you’re also trying to maintain high visibility as a spokesperson or a church conference presenter or an author of church-change-related articles.

During peak times, you may need a writing service to keep up the momentum necessary to maintain your virtual and your real presence as a church change leader. Ghost writers can support you with extra pairs of hands and [ghost thinkers](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/11/management-coach-vs-message-coach/) can help you clarify thought and meaning.

Do you need to multiply the output and the impact of your church change leadership strategy? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

Photo: [Carney Lentz](http://www.flickr.com/photos/carneylentz/)

**#4**

[A 10-Step Starter Kit for Kick-Starting a Church](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/08/a-10-step-starter-kit-for-kick-starting-a-start-up-company/)

If you’re launching a new church, you’ll want to create a church-leadership strategy to cement your reputation. Follow these 10 steps (and see our [companion visual guide](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/startup-thought-leadership-planning.pdf)) to develop a plan that will guide you as you kick-start your start-up:

1. Define Goals and Metrics
2. Create Strategic Communications Plan
3. Clean Up/Archive Content on Company’s Current Websites
4. Review Existing Brand Materials for Consistency of Style and Voice
5. Create a Reservoir of Provocative Blog Posts
6. Finalize Website Content
7. Design Launch Events
8. Design Church Change Leadership Plan for Post Launch
9. Build/Document Internal Communications Processes
10. Develop External Communications/Media/Branding Guidelines

Do you need help implementing any of these steps? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

**#5**

[Five Steps for Rolling out Employee Survey Results](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/08/five-steps-for-rolling-out-employee-survey-results/)



How will you translate aggregated employee survey results into authentic, meaningful communications?

Your employee survey results have just landed on your desk. Remain calm.

Here are five steps to follow when you as a leader communicate the results internally, and even externally:

1. Categorize the results into a four-square grid with ”urgent” on the x axis and ”important” on the y axis.
2. Work with your communications team to develop a message architecture that provides clear context, consistent messages and careful action plans for rolling out the results.
3. In these communications, ask for leaders and employees in different levels or roles inside the organization to volunteer to guide the change program based on the survey results.
4. Set up a ”rapid roundtable” work session with those volunteers to determine the specific issues underlying the worst scores in the urgent/important grid, to identify the impact of those prioritized issues and to offer ideas for amelioration.
5. Ask the volunteer work group to identify interesting, noteworthy results that might attract media attention, if appropriate, and then task the communications team to create an external communications plan.

Internal and external audiences alike demand ”authentic” communication pieces that celebrate the successes revealed by the data but still recognize the shortcomings your church needs to improve.

Do you need help rolling out the results of your latest employee survey? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

**#6**

[What’s in a Name?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/08/whats-in-a-name/)

On Swiss National Day, 1 August, villages put on events with food and drink, music and dancing. Affoltern, our village near Zurich, sponsored a small festival with Alphorns and a local steel drum band. One of their songs, they announced in English and then explained in thick Swiss German, was called ”No Name Song.”

So what’s in a name? More than you might expect, according to Nobel Prize winning economist [Daniel Kahneman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/daniel_kahneman) in his highly respected book, [Thinking Fast and Slow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/thinking,_fast_and_slow). Swiss researchers found that companies with easy to pronounce names, like Emmi or Swissfirst, fare better in the stock market than those with names like Ypsomed.

Another publication, this time [a recent Financial Times article by business humorist Lucy Kellaway](http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/2067d892-d9b8-11e2-98fa-00144feab7de.html), pokes fun at the nomenclature of an organization’s top leaders.

For an example, she points out that the Bank of England no longer has only a governor and deputy governors, but it now has appointed a chief operating officer. She goes on to decry the hyperinflation and ”creativity” of titles in business like chief agility officer or chief visionary officer and calls it a fad.

But what isn’t a fad is the fact that the head of a church organization, whether it's the preacher, the congregational president, the chief administrator, etc., must have a high emotional intelligence and demonstrate mastery of the skills that fall under the umbrella of social capital.

Those core capabilities are often misleadingly labeled as soft skills, but the hard fact is that they are critical to a leader’s success. Despite the sound of their name, they are basic competencies associated with the term ”felt leadership.”

Would you name your church change leadership style ”felt leadership”? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

**#7**

[Wet Babies and Leading the Charge through Change](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/07/wet-babies-and-leading-the-charge-through-change/)

One of my favorite quotations from Mark Twain is “The only one who likes change is a wet baby.”

As a church change leader, you are defining the change you want to see: in your employees, in your church congregation, in your denomination's leadrship…or perhaps even in the world. Making change happen requires determination and rhetorical skill to persuade stakeholders to adopt your viewpoint. You’ll want to apply as many levers of change as you can muster to put those changes into effect and make them “stick.”

[A 2012 piece by Morten Hansen](http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/09/ten_ways_to_get_people_to_chan.html), author of the book *Collaboration*, offers in Harvard Business Review online 10 approaches to get people to accept change. He categorizes these approaches in four buckets:

1. Sharpen the destination
2. Activate social processes
3. Tweak the situation
4. Revamp traditional HR levers

Are you pulling all of the levers and using all of the approaches you can to introduce change? Are you hesitating to do what needs to be done because some are ”crying out” in protest? Are they perhaps crying because they know they need changing? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

Photo credit: [texturl on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/50422669@n00/3243739145/in/photolist-5wd1cz-5xc7g9-5yk32c-67drlt-67i5ge-6ebn4f-6eejhr-6n1ekp-6n1fgk-6n1ghf-6n1hap-6n1hbx-6n1j6t-6n5rn9-6n5skg-6owdwj-6gk9dg-6gpwnr-6gwbug-6kodqi-6kp6zf-6ksmxe-6kvvbp-6sagot-75ly5y-7ctrv4-7ew4o9-7nkdrx-7vkuno-7wyuzh-c5jstj-9k94wa-9kbsfh-a5xcj3-8zpf7x-cqgedo-c2ss7q-byumzo-9g8x11-9lbwfn-cwtd5b-bqfvfz-7bm1ay-dt4ph6-ayomyr-djnch5-7jke9g-7jfist-7jke33-7jfibr-9yxxql)

**#8**

[What’s Happening? Creating your Church’s Future](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/07/whats-happening-creating-your-companys-future/)



To continue the theme over the last few blog entries (read related posts [here](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/07/whats-your-ciq-competitive-intelligence-quotient/) and [here](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/07/what-competitors-are-doing-now-vs-doing-next/)), following are some additional thoughts about the field of competitive intelligence and church change leadership.

Like in business, church change leadership is about being ahead – well ahead – of your ''competitors.'' To be successful as a church change leader, you need to spot trends, pick up even weak signals in the ''marketplace'' of your community and anticipate reactions to changes.

Church change leaders don’t just look at the past and present they shape the future. They don’t just react after something happens or act on something happening now – they create what’s happening.

Are you just reacting and acting or are you actually creating the future for your church and congregants? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

**#9**

[What Competitors Are Doing Now vs. Doing Next](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/07/what-competitors-are-doing-now-vs-doing-next/)



Can you predict what your competitors will do next?

[In an earlier post](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/raising-your-ciq/), I pointed out the differences between competitor and competitive intelligence and information and other combinations of those terms. At the risk of being repetitive, I’ll remind you about some distinctions.

**Competitive information** is the information that is published or in the public domain that focuses on a specific market or product, whereas **competitive intelligence** is what you know but others don’t. Similarly **competitor information** is published or in the public domain and **competitor intelligence** is unpublished but both deal with the actual competitor.

With those terms in mind, let’s apply them more closely to church change leadership. Competitors for your church aren't just other churches in your area. They could be churches online or on the television or on the radio. They could be other Sunday morning activities, like taking part in sports or having brunch or sleeping late or going shopping.

To simplify, I’ll focus only on other churches and use the word “competitive” to include “competitor,” too.

''*Church change leadership means that you’re not only thinking about what your competitors are doing now, but also what they’re doing next.”*

Competitive information is being aware of what has already happened; and in today’s age of instant communication, what “just happened” could have occurred only seconds earlier.

Competitive intelligence is what’s happening now – the analysis you’re making of what only you know. It’s how you’re putting together those unique puzzle pieces about your competitor.

Church change leadership means that you’re not only thinking about what your competitors are doing now, but also what they’re doing next.

Do you know with any level of certainty what your competitors are doing now? What they’re doing next? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

Photo credit: [Asaf antman on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/asafantman/5134136997/)

**#10**

[What’s Your CIQ (Competitive Intelligence Quotient)?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/07/whats-your-ciq-competitive-intelligence-quotient/)



You may understand why buyers buy, but do you have insight on why sellers sell?  
Illustration: *Apple Vendor* by Barbara Stevenson, 1934; via Smithsonian Museum of American Art

Past columns on this Church Leader Zone website have looked at the difference in meaning between competitive intelligence, competitive information and market research (see [here](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/raising-your-ciq/) and  [here](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/07/what-competitors-are-doing-now-vs-doing-next/)) in the business world and then interpret these lessons for church change leaders. On the main site for the official Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals ([www.scip.org](http://www.scip.org/)), you can also find a series of humorous articles that look at the ”lighter side of CI” in a business setting, observations that also apply to church leadership. (Find the links at the end of this post).

As a quick reminder, competitive information includes published or well-known facts; while competitive intelligence includes information, facts, trends, opinions or analysis that nobody else has. That’s what makes it so valuable; and properly utilized, competitive intelligence can give your church a real competitive edge.

Whereas market research helps you better understand why buyers are buying, competitive intelligence and information can give you insights into why sellers are selling. In the case of the church, the buyers are your church members or visitors. The sellers, however, are not just other churches in your area competing for attendees on Sunday morning, but also, more broadly, those offering other activities that draw would-be worshippers away from church.

Do you as a church change leader know why your buyers are buying and why sellers are selling in your community? Do you have a clear view of your marketing landscape? What’s your CIQ? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

SCIP Articles: some articles require a site sign-in to view.

[SCIP Article #1](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1084)

[SCIP article #2](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1121)

[SCIP article #3](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1109)

[SCIP article #4](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1227)

[SCIP article #5](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1244)

[SCIP article #6](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1203)

[SCIP article #7](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1155)

[SCIP article #8](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1186)

[SCIP article #9](http://www.scip.org/publications/cimarticledetail.cfm?itemnumber=1092)

#11

[Does the ROI of Internal Communications in Business Differ from Church?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/06/productivity-profits-and-the-roi-of-internal-communications/)



As a church change leader, how do you measure the impact of your internal communications? Does it differ from the way a business leader measures the impact of internal communications?

On the business side, a group called [People Driven Performance](http://about.pdpsolutions.com/) conducted research on the costs of poor internal communications in 2009 that still has applicability today. They report that good internal communications has a positive impact and poor internal communications has a negative impact on five elements of a company’s ROI:

1. **Engagement**  
   Every employee that crosses over from being disengaged to engaged adds an incremental $13,000 to the bottom line each year
2. **Direct Cost of Miscommunication**  
   $26,041 is the cumulative cost per worker per year due to productivity losses resulting from communications barriers
3. **Opportunity Cost**  
   A business with 100 employees spends an average downtime of 17 hours a week clarifying communication, which translates to an annual cost of $528,443
4. **Safety**  
   The average cost of a safety incident for an engaged employee is $63, compared with $392 average cost of a safety incident for an unengaged employee
5. **Turnover**  
   Employees with the highest level of commitment perform 20% better & are 87% less likely to leave the organization

If you’re in a small or a large church, what is your impression? Does poor internal communication in churches have a similarly negative impact?

Are you a church change leader interested in improving your internal communications impact and your organization’s ROI along with it? Ask, assess then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#12

[Sound Check for Church Change Leaders](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/06/sound-check-for-thought-leaders/)

Sound check! When you take the stage, you want to make sure the microphone is on and emanating the perfect level of sound for the audience and venue.

Do you as a church change leader have the perfect level of sound for the situation you’re in? In general, you as a church change leader should have three sound levels: quiet, normal and loud. Let me explain.

Church change leaders need time built into their schedules for contemplation, a time when they can think deeply and listen to what the silence reveals. They need to be still and quiet, not talking at all but listening to what God has to say to them.

At other times, church change leaders need to join into discussions at a normal pitch, as if they’re just like all other members of the team. They’re equal contributors, so they need to modulate their voice levels and not drown out the others.

The third level of sound for church change leaders is loud, but not necessarily in volume. They don’t need to shout to be the voice of reason in heated exchanges or debates. They just need to be loud as in commanding and authoritative, perhaps even lowering the pitch of their voices to their deeper ranges to get attention.

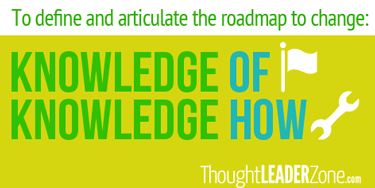
Do you have ”perfect pitch” when you communicate as a church change leader? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#13

[Sharing the Know-How to Know How](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/06/sharing-the-know-how-to-know-how/)

When explaining complex topics, church change leaders make a clear distinction between two key terms: ”knowledge of” and ”knowledge how.”

Let’s say, for example, that you want to shape your church to be more agile and responsive to changing demands of the congregation or the community. You shouldn’t only show your church colleagues what that future will look like so that they have ”knowledge of” that vision. It’s important also to show them the way to reach that goal — to give them ”knowledge how” to get there.

Similarly, if you want to change the culture of your organization, it’s important not only to give them ”knowledge of” what the changes look like and the advantages the new culture will bring. You must impart to them ”knowledge how.” Articulate clearly the steps each person — no matter where in the organization they sit — will need to take to move toward the defined future.

Cultural change is a journey, not a destination. Your team and your congregants need ”knowledge of” the destination and ”knowledge how” to navigate the path ahead.

Do you need help defining and articulating the roadmap to change internally or externally? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#14

[Are You Loco for Logos?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/05/are-you-loco-for-logos/)



Swimming in a sea of logos: it takes more than guidelines and graphic identity to develop effective brand strategies. [Photo credit](http://www.flickr.com/photos/27845211@n02/2662264721/)

My sister and I were enjoying a coffee and a chat about marketing her insurance business when her 5-year-old granddaughter interrupted us to ask what a logo was. I showed her the green logo on our coffee cups and sent her and her brother off on a mission to find other logos in the coffee shop.

They brought back several items with examples of known logos, as well as some random things like a piece of wood being used as a doorstop–things that made me question how clear my explanation actually was.

How do you explain logos and brands to your church team and other church members? Do you define these terms and show them examples like you do with a 5-year-old? Do you present the brand guidelines and templates for presentations, letters and email auto-signatures?

These approaches are good ways to start a dialogue about brand, but a memorable way to reinforce the true meaning of brand is to:

1. Print out a paper copy of the cover of your brand guidelines or some of the rules themselves.
2. Tear the paper into small pieces and throw it in the trash.

That’s a dramatic way to lead into a meaty discussion of how your brand is not just a set of rules about fonts and colors and sizes of your logo. It’s the total marketing proposal that your church is making to congregants, potential worshippers and the community at large. [Business guru Seth Godin defines brand more fully](http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2009/12/define-brand.html) as

***the set of expectations, memories, stories and relationships that, taken together, account for a consumer’s decision to choose one product or service over another.”***

Do you need to communicate your brand better internally and externally? Ask, assess, then ask. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#15

[Three Steps to Becoming an Church Change Leader](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/05/three-steps-to-becoming-an-e-commerce-thought-leader/)

*Your employees are also ”message multipliers” who take your viewpoints into the world.*

Posted by [Constance Ward](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/author/cward/) on May 23, 2013   |   [No Comments](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/05/three-steps-to-becoming-an-e-commerce-thought-leader/)

Becoming a church change leader will require focus on improving the congregation's reputation in three ways. You must, step-by-step, strive to become:

1. The best church **to worship with**
2. The best church **to work with**
3. The best church **to work for**

To be successful at the first two steps, you must make sure that your church employees truly believe that you have achieved the third step. Churches have permeable walls through which such internal messages seep to the outside world. Any mismatch between your internal and external reputation as a church change leader will destroy credibility.

Countless articles on this website address the fact that ”church change leadership begins at home.” If your own team members don’t believe that you and your church arechurch change leaders who excel in a given field, then you certainly won’t be able to convince external stakeholders you are.

Your employees are also ”message multipliers” who take your viewpoints into the world…the virtual or the real world. But you’ll need to remember to simplify the messages so that your staff can amplify the messages you want to deliver.

Does your church-leadership approach need a refresh? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#16

[Resistance and Renaissance: A Metaphor for Managing Change](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/05/resistance-and-renaissance-a-metaphor-for-managing-change/)



Renaissance or resistance? Diverging views on change may stall or stop important initiatives. *Photo: www.westnetz.ch*

In the trendy western part of Zurich is [the Renaissance building](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/zrhbr-renaissance-zurich-tower-hotel/), a tall hotel-apartment complex that has continued since its conception to draw the ire of some vocal Swiss opponents who object to the placement, size and scale of the ”skyscraper” with 15 stories. Local residents have staged a form of permanent protest by attaching a sign to an older, more traditional building in the neighborhood. That sign, in the same font and style as the Renaissance one nearby, declares the owners’ point of view: Resistance.

The juxtaposition of the two buildings presents a metaphor for cultural change in churches. How often do you, as a leader, try to regenerate your church and meet with reluctance to change? Are you looking to promote a rebirth or renewal of your church for the future only to find that some church members are still holding tight to the past?

How can you effectively achieve that Renaissance and mitigate any Resistance you might be facing? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#17

[5 Actions for Church Change Leaders in the Golden Hour of a Crisis](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/05/5-actions-for-leaders-in-the-golden-hour-of-a-crisis/)

[A recent article](http://www.commpro.biz/corporate-communications/crisis-communications-corporate-communications/crisis-communications-the-first-hour/) floating around the blogosphere focused on the “golden hours” of crisis communications. Those are the critical hours immediately following an event when information is incomplete but audiences are continuously seeking additional facts.

The article lists **five steps as the “Grand Crisis Response Strategy”** for covering those first stages of the crisis. Here we'll apply the lessons to a church:

*1. Limit the interviewing of any victims. Continuous victim production is what drives the media coverage, the public interest, the emotionalization, the commentary and criticism from outside sources and the reputation destruction.  
2. Manage any victim dimension. This is what church leaders should be doing rather than hanging around and second-guessing the command center, where your experienced communications team will manage the process.  
3. Communicate directly and frequently with employees, church members and those directly affected by the crisis.  
4. Notify those indirectly affected, those who have a problem now because you have a problem; your regional or national church leaders, your neighbors or others who need to know and who should hear from you very promptly.  
5. Manage the self-appointed and the self-anointed critics, such as the news media and the new media, the gossips or the bellyachers.*

Are you prepared to make good use of that valuable time window? Ask, assess then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

*Photo:* [Paul Harrison](http://www.flickr.com/photos/excogitare/86986951/)

#18

[Three Ways to Electrify Your Organization](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/04/three-ways-to-electrify-your-organization/)

*At the least, communications teams are transistors or transformers. At their best, they are transducers of the energy inside their organization.*



[Benjamin Franklin Drawing Electricity from the Sky](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/57044.html) 1816 – Benjamin West (Public domain) via Wikimedia Commons

As a church change leader, you may find it more difficult to build your reputation internally than externally. Think, for example, about the saying that ”Genius is never recognized on its own soil.” Your communications team can and should help you build your professional brand internally while they work on developing your reputation in the community.

My husband trained as an engineer and uses a great metaphor about electricity when he coaches team leaders. Applied to communications, these message-multiplier teams can help to electrify your organization in three ways. At the least, communications teams are transistors or transformers. At their best, they are transducers of the energy inside their organization.

Transistor teams simply send out messages like radio signals, rather than acting like radar, which also listens for responses. This is the least effective of the three ways to communicate internally.

A transformer communications team takes the same energy inside the organization and boosts it up or steps it down as appropriate to the situation. When false rumors are floating around inside an organization, for instance, a transformer team might communicate hard facts to take the energy out of the watercooler discussions. Or when a new church outreach campaign is launched, the transformer team might energize their employees with an electrifying communications campaign.

The third, most effective way to electrify your organization is by establishing a transducer communications team that will create a different form of energy within your church. Transducers will convert the strategic energy that exists at the top of the organization and the operational energy and dedication of the employees into a new energy source to drive the church.

Do you have transistor, transformer or transducer communications teams to help electrify your church? Ask, assess then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

*See related post:* [Sending the right and wrong signals](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/11/sending-the-right-and-wrong-signals/)

#19

[Social Media Risks – Real or Simply Managed](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/04/social-media-risks-real-or-simply-managed/)

You’ve heard them all before – reasons why not to increase the scope and frequency of your church's social media outreach.



Instead of sitting on the social media sidelines, ride with the crowd, manage the risk and reap the rewards.

The arguments usually include concerns that someone might abuse the channels and thereby put the church's brand at risk. Other perceived threats are a loss of confidential church material as inappropriate news is posted in cyberspace or a drop in productivity among employees who are supposedly just checking the church's social media sites.

Whether these are real or imagined risks, they can be simply managed by a robust, considered, enforceable social media strategy. Does your church have strong social media strategies and policies in place that manage these risks? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

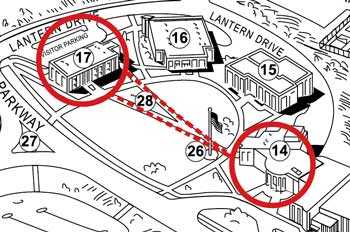
Photo Credit: [Photos by Mavis](http://www.flickr.com/photos/portland_mike/6140660504/)

#20

[Creating Crowd-ed Sidewalks](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/04/creating-crowd-ed-sidewalks/)

As a college student decades ago, I learned an important lesson about crowd-sourcing ideas that still applies to churches today.

Construction was ongoing at the time throughout the campus of my small university in the U.S. Midwest, [Missouri Southern State University](http://www.mssu.edu/) in Joplin, Missouri. Joplin is today best known for the unfortunate reason of being the place where the [deadliest tornado in America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_joplin_tornado) struck on May 22 two years ago.



Well before concrete sidewalks were installed, students found and developed the natural path between buildings.  
([View full map](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/campus-map-sidewalks-full.png))

The part of the university campus I’m referring to here was not badly damaged in the tornado, so this map shows approximately where two buildings (numbers 14 and 17) were built in the 1970s and how the sidewalk connects them.

What happened when the buildings and sidewalk were built shows an early understanding of the value of crowd-sourcing an idea and channeling the wisdom of the masses.

Both of the buildings were built on a horseshoe-shaped commons area on campus. Rather than pouring concrete sidewalks between the facilities, the university let the students first make a footpath across the commons.

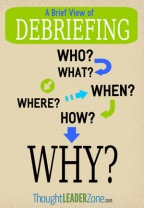
The students naturally found the shortest way to get from one place to another and over time wore a muddy path between the buildings. Then the university paved the sidewalk on top of the route that the students were already using. The unofficial shortcut then became the established direction for foot traffic.

Getting input from the end users of your ideas — by crowd-sourcing or cloud-sourcing the concepts — is an effective way to develop ”sticky” ideas before they are set in hard concrete.

Are you using the wisdom of crowds and clouds and stakeholders to find the best, most effective path forward for your church? Ask, assess, then ask. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#21

[11 Questions and Prompts for Insightful Debriefing Sessions](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/03/11-questions-and-prompts-for-insightful-debriefing-sessions/)

In order to create a powerful “learning organisation,” your church management team needs to be able to share lessons learned among themselves in a systematic way. Structured debrief sessions following major projects or campaigns can help your leaders learn from their successes, as well as the times they could have done better.

Debriefing sessions shouldn’t be viewed as negative finger-pointing exercises but as opportunities to acknowledge successes and challenges and then to empower each leader to help others in the organisation learn from their experiences.

Before the debriefing session begins, a strong discussion leader should be appointed who will encourage everyone to contribute but won’t allow personal attacks to derail the conversation.

Here are 11 prompt questions that can be used to guide the discussion during a debriefing session:

Here are 11 prompt questions that can be used to guide the discussion during a debriefing session:

1. What went well? What didn’t? Why?

*The key to building a thriving learning organisation is to ensure that knowledge is shared, understood, applied and deployed rapidly throughout your church.*

1. What was supposed to happen? What did happen? Why was there a difference between what we expected to happen and what did?
2. What organisational constraints or barriers did we face? How did we overcome them or did we?
3. What existing organisational models or processes enhanced or enabled our performance on this project?
4. Did the team meet sufficiently often and work productively together?
5. Could time pressures have been alleviated by organising the work differently?
6. Did we have enough time to accomplish all of the tasks to make this project a success?
7. Could we have taken another approach to reach our goals more efficiently and effectively?
8. Was the goal always clear?
9. Were the instructions always clear?
10. How can we do better next time?

During the debriefing session, be sure to capture the main points and get agreement on how to circulate the lessons learned outside your team. The key to building a thriving learning organisation is to ensure that knowledge is shared, understood, applied and deployed rapidly throughout your church.

Do you hold structured debrief sessions? Do you systematically capture lessons learned at the conclusion of major projects? Is yours a learning organisation? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#22

[Three Actionable Steps to Make Your AGM a Church Change Leadership Showcase (Part 1)](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/02/three-actionable-steps-to-make-your-agm-a-thought-leadership-showcase/)

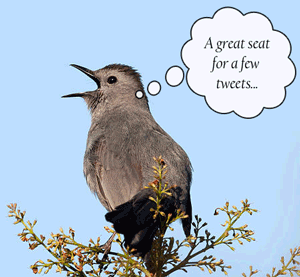
Ahhhh, the [Annual General Meeting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/annual_general_meeting) (AGM). The minister and the congregational leadership team design the meeting. Finance provides the figures. The communications team creates the messages. What could possibly go wrong!

AGMs offer a once-a-year opportunity to display the best thinking your church has to offer its members and other attendees. They’re also the ideal brand showcase for you as a church change leader. Don’t waste this magic moment.

Now is the time to take a close look at what your AGM says about your church and about you as a church change leader. Are you focusing only on past results or are you also presenting at least a snapshot of the present and a glimpse into the future?

#23

[How to Know If You’re Sitting in the Catbird Seat](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/01/how-to-know-if-youre-sitting-in-the-catbird-seat/)

When it comes to church change leadership, are you ”sitting in the catbird seat”? The first question you might ask is, ”Would you want to be sitting there?”

The answer should be yes, but I’ve found that Americans are more familiar with that English phrase than Brits or others as it was the title of a popular short story by U.S. humorist [James Thurber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/james_thurber) called ”The Catbird Seat.”

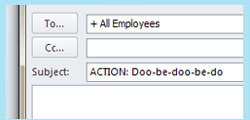
[You can read more](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/catbird_seat) about Thurber’s short story and other uses of the term on Wikipedia. But here I’m using ”sitting in the catbird seat” in its original meaning of ”being in an enviable position.”

What puts a church change leader into the catbird seat in the first place? [It’s all about visibility](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/12/do-you-have-klout/). To be seen as sitting in a catbird seat, you must, first of all, be seen. When your expertise as a church change leader on a particular topic is noticed, your reputation grows and so does your influence.

Do you have a plan for **improving your IQ (your Influence Quotient),** a plan that includes increasing your visibility at conferences or in major publications? How will you ensure you spend your time sitting in the catbird seat? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#24

[Extolling the Virtues of Action-Oriented Email Subject Lines](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/01/extolling-the-virtues-of-action-oriented-email-subject-lines/)

Efficiency and productivity are two watchwords for the busy church change leader. Here is a quick tip for making your emails have more impact and helping you get the results you want from them.

Every word should count when you write an email, and that includes the words in the subject line.

The chorus of the Frank Sinatra song ”Strangers in the Night” goes like this: ”Do, be, do, be, do…” That’s an important phrase to keep in mind when you write your next email. Tell your reader in the subject line what you want them to ”do” or ”be” after reading the email.

Label the email subject line with the word ”Action” followed by a short summary of what’s required and when it’s needed. Lead with a verb. Make it brief.

*Tell your reader in the subject line what you want them to ”do” or ”be” after reading the email.*

 That puts the most important message upfront so that the reader will know what’s expected. It also leaves the action you’re requesting and the deadline visible in the recipient’s inbox.

When all employees in a church use ”Action” subject lines, they can sort their inboxes so that the email requests are clearly separated from the informational ones, which makes it easier to prioritize the emails.

In an interesting [article about effective email subject lines](http://www.mequoda.com/articles/email-marketing/4-email-subject-lines-that-are-proven-to-get-opened/), the author recommends a program called [MailChimp’s subject line suggester](http://blog.mailchimp.com/subject-line-suggester-from-mailchimp/) to generate ideas for clever, attention-grabbing headings to pep up your emails. Another short article recounts [an amusing story of an email subject line ”gone awry.”](http://investmentwriting.com/2012/08/email-subject-line-mistake/) If you have any other examples of funny subject lines, share them in the comments, or [contact us here](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/contact/).

Are you using the most efficient and effective rhetorical approaches in your everyday writing situations? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#25

[Running and Sliding into the New Year](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2013/01/running-and-sliding-into-the-new-year/)

I hope you’re having a good slide into the new year, as the Swiss say. Are you rested and refreshed after your holiday break and ready to start ”the race” again? Have you made any New Year’s resolutions about how you’ll run the race this year?

Before you do, think about the Zambian proverb on the homepage of this Thought Leader Zone site: ”When you run alone, you run fast; but when you run together, you run far.”

Ask yourself, have you been running alone or running together with your team?

I’m reminded of the title of the acclaimed short story and film by Alan Sillitoe that spawned several rock renditions of the same name — [The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the_loneliness_of_the_long_distance_runner). It takes discipline and endurance to run fast alone.

*“When you run alone, you run fast; but when you run together, you run far.”  
— Zambian proverb*

Were you lonely last year because you were running too fast for your team members to run beside you? Did you find time to stop running to think and look at whether you’re running together with others or trying to cover long distances in your business by yourself?

The Old Testament prophet [Jeremiah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/jeremiah) writes (12:5 NIV): ”If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses?”

If ”the pace of the race” threatened to wear you out last year, what changes are you going to make now to ensure you’re able to run far in 2013? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#26

[12 Tips for Effectively Managing Remote Employees and Teams](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/12/12-tips-for-effectively-managing-remote-employees-and-teams/)



In a galaxy far, far away…as a church change leader, you may be traveling extensively so you need to ”manage by mobile” and lead from a distance. Instead of ”eyeball management,” you need to be able to focus on ”results management” and trust that your church employees are capable of achieving the goals you set for them even when you’re not physically present.

Some of the leadership skills remote managers display are similar to those of on-site managers. But multi-site, dispersed, virtual teams can present particular challenges for even the most experienced managers.

What challenges have you faced? How have you handled them? Take a few minutes and [click here](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/contact/) or comment below to share some of your experiences and tips with other church change leaders.

To kick start the conversation, here are **12 general observations and tips**:

*Instead of ”eyeball management,” you need to be able to focus on****“results management.”***

1. Make your expectations concrete and measurable – for example, add structure by clarifying in writing short-term priorities and long-term goals.
2. Check in regularly and spontaneously, formally and informally — for example, ”planned spontaneous interactions” might include virtual coffee chats and lunches or frequent check-ins with instant messaging.
3. Keep it personal – for example, nothing will replace water cooler talks and coffee breaks, but take time to drop a personal note about something happening to the virtual employee – like a house move or a child graduating. Encourage a brief “sharing” time for all team members in regular meetings to help build team spirit.
4. Be aware of the process the team is using and help them break it into manageable pieces with measurable results at key milestones.
5. Don’t judge the process but judge the results.
6. Set rules of engagement based on a consistent mission, purpose and values system.
7. Agree on time boundaries — for example, what are the manager’s and the team’s expectations for sending or returning emails on the weekend, late at night or during the dinner hour.
8. Set and model good communications practices — for example, what are the team’s rules on whom to cc: and what types of subject lines to include on emails.
9. Listen better – for example, it’s much easier to miss subtle verbal clues when corresponding with telecommuters or distributed team members by telephone, video, Skype, etc.
10. Remind on-site employees to listen to others on conference calls – for example, print out a photo of the remote employees and put them on the table or a chair during important meetings.
11. Avoid engendering an ”us and them” mentality – for example, when virtual team members are mixed with co-located teams in headquarters, try overemphasizing the inclusion of voices outside the nucleus so that a “home-based” bias isn’t created inadvertently.
12. Meet whenever possible in person, but particularly at the beginning of the distance employment relationship to minimize the virtual team member’s sense of isolation. Nothing replaces “face time”…nothing.

Do you need help improving communication as you manage remote employees from a galaxy far, far away from them? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#27

[Do you have Klout?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/12/do-you-have-klout/)

On most scales I’d be happy to rate a “10” but not on my [Klout](http://klout.com/home) score. OK, OK, Justin Bieber is the top of that scale with a Klout score of 100 – clearly my influence is much lower. But since I have a very active virtual presence, I expected to rate higher than 10. I was slightly comforted to find out that my favorite columnist Lucy Kellaway, who actually has [20,000 followers on Twitter](https://twitter.com/lucykellaway), also only rated a 10. [In a recent article](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=newssearch&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0ccgqqqioadaa&url=http%253a%252f%252fwww.ft.com%252fcms%252fs%252f0%252fb05f06ee-397e-11e2-8881-00144feabdc0.html&ei=qwdbujntmcfzqqgikogwaw&usg=afqjcngewr6can9lu4-ktu9vy8oisq_pow&sig2=ro9gt3igiio2dcgypjeojg), she claims she’s proud to have no Klout. I, however, would like to have more and here’s why.

Klout is only one of many “influence analyzers” that judge how much impact your opinion has on others and how much you are influenced by others. [Michael Schrage, in another recent article](http://blogs.hbr.org/schrage/2012/11/should-your-boss-care-about-your-klout.html), reports on memes that claim low Klout scores can cost you a job or a job interview.

[According to their website](http://klout.com/how-it-works), your Klout score is measured by more than 400 “signals” on seven social media platforms. The algorithm weights different criteria from your activity on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, FourSquare and even Klout itself.  
You may not agree with that measurement tool. But as a church change leader, it’s important that your influence is measured and that you take steps to improve it – even if it’s not yet a 10 and it will never be a 100.

Do you cite and reference, retweet and scoop? Are *you* cited and referenced, retweeted and scooped? Are you as a church change leader “doing” social media yourself or are you “kloutsourcing” it to your church communication teams? Are they preserving your authentic online voice? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#28

[A Simpler Time](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/11/a-simpler-time/)

In a September New York Times article titled “[Seeking a Simple Respite](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/sunday/2012-09/02/content_15726772.htm)“ writer Anita Patil claims, ”It seems we’re taking a collective deep breath, stepping back and reassessing our complicated lives.”

The latest marketing buzzwords, the article points out, are ”simple,” ”simply,” ”simplicity,” ”easy,” etc.

In the UK, one of the most ubiquitous — and annoying — advertisements on air (see the embedded video below) involves promoting how simple doing business with that particular insurance company can be. The end of the commercial, a meercat stands up and shouts ”Simples!” and clicks its teeth.

So even animals are catching the spirit–the Zeitgeist–of our time. Are you? Are you finding effective ways as a church change leader to simplify your communication, your organizational structure, etc.? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#29

[Management Coach vs. Message Coach](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/11/management-coach-vs-message-coach/)



A communications coach helps leaders clarify their message and focus messaging strategy.  
*Illustration by* [hikingartist.com](http://www.flickr.com/photos/hikingartist/7649483672/in/photostream)

One question I’m asked frequently is how does what I normally do differ from what a traditional management coach does. It’s difficult to explain because a management coach and a communications coach actually are similar.

Both types of coaches help managers lead better, so I would certainly call myself a management coach. We both help senior leaders clarify and then make choices.

But my unique service offering is that of being a so-called message coach. I channel rather than challenge the choices church change leaders make, and then I in turn challenge the leaders’ choices for communicating such decisions.

In other words, a communications coach helps church leaders choose [the right strategies, tactics and approaches](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/category/communications/) for communicating their management choices. These types of message coaches not only help church leaders choreograph their communication choices, they also help craft the best messages for a particular situation and audience.

Communicating well up, down and sideways in an organization, as well as communicating appropriately to a wide range of external audiences, requires making the right choices for the immediate, short-term, medium-term and long-term horizons.

Are you at an inflection point in your career and getting ready to make some management choices? Are you prepared to make the right communications choices at the same time? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#30

[Senior Leaders versus Seasoned Leaders: Which Type are You?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/senior-leaders-versus-seasoned-leaders-which-type-are-you/)



The journey to seasoned leadership: a long,   
sometimes difficult road. [Photo: Jeremy Wilburn](http://www.flickr.com/photos/jeremywilburn/3330435699/)

I recently ran across a candidate who described himself as a “seasoned leader.” What’s the difference between a senior leader and a seasoned leader, I wondered, so I Google-d and Wikipedia-d and Yahoo-d and LinkedIn my way to this definition:

*Seasoned leaders have tenure and clout and gravitas and a broad range of experiences in different industries, geographies and situations. Seasoned leaders are more well rounded because they have perspectives not yet formed in senior leaders. The next stage in the development of a senior leader is to become a seasoned leader. Seasoned leaders and senior leaders alike can certainly be church change leaders.*

Of course, it wasn’t easy to ”define definitively” what a seasoned leader is and does. And the term ”seasoned” itself could be misinterpreted. The problem is that a “seasoned” leader could refer to any season – how confusing is that! If you think about what those seasons represent, you might want to steer clear of describing yourself in that way. I’m not sure all four types of seasoned leaders can be considered complimentary.

For example, the description of a **“Spring” seasoned leader** seems to be contradictory. If church change leaders are fresh and spouting – or sprouting – new ideas, they can’t be seasoned, can they?

**“Summer”** **seasoned leaders**, I would then assume, are in the prime of their lives and careers. They’re sowing in rich, fertile soil in their companies and making hay – or moula – while the sun is shining on their careers.

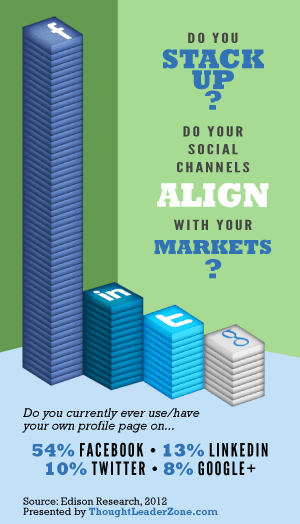
**“Fall”** **seasoned leaders** are clearly not British or they would be “autumn” seasoned leaders, right? But the connotation of that season – fall or autumn – is that things are dying and falling and decaying. It seems to imply that things are ending and winding down as far as the church change leader’s career is concerned.

Finally, the term **“Winter”** **seasoned leaders** would seem to imply that the church change leaders are used up, dormant, hibernating or dead. That’s not a very appealing description of someone with great experience and honed skills of leadership, is it?

Are you a seasoned leader? What season of seasoned leader are you? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#31

[Senior-Level Social Strategy: Building a Virtual ‘Brand You’](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/senior-level-social-strategy-building-a-virtual-brand-you/)

A solid social media strategy can help a church change leader build a reputation within an industry and among a wider public. You can also gain traction for your ideas and get real-time feedback. And if you are skillful, your virtual presence can reinforce a positive image of an up-to-date “brand you.”

But what channels do you need to use to get your message out beyond the walls of your church? Any and all of them…as long as they are used by your target audiences and are appropriate to the messages you want to convey.

There’s no need to limit yourself by anything but time. A wide range of options exist depending on your purpose.

[According to Edison Research’s report “The Social Habit 2012](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/the-social-habit-2012-by-edison-research.pdf),” Facebook is the dominant social media channel, with 54% of respondents saying they have a profile page on it. LinkedIn came in second at 13%, Twitter third at 10% and Google+ at 8%. The telephone survey of 2,020 people in the U.S. was the 20th in the series, begun in 1998.

Nearly 80% of respondents said that Facebook is the networking service or site they use the most to connect with brands and services, with Twitter in a distant second place with 9%. More than half of Facebook users are accessing sites on their mobile devices, and a quarter of respondents are on the site five or more times per day.

Researchers also found that compared with 2011, increases in social networking were greatest among those 45 and older although over half of social media users are still under 34.

Among other interesting findings, about 10% of respondents are Twitter users; but of those people, about a third check it several times every day. About half of social networkers shared YouTube videos in the previous month.

Clearly, you have choices, but what’s best for you as a church change leader? Do you need guidance and advice as you choreograph those communications choices? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

#32

[Watching your Development as a Church Change Leader](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/watching-your-development-as-a-thought-leader/)

In my last entry, I introduced you to two popular videos on [Vimeo](http://vimeo.com/40448182) and [YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=d-4i2zlqlsi) that use time-lapse photography to demonstrate how the subjects grew from babies into teens.*(*[Read the full blog entry here.](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/watching-your-company-develop/)*)*

If someone put together this type of time-lapse video to reflect your development as a church change leader, what would the result look like? Could viewers “read your face” and perceive the maturation of your leadership skills?

Are you the kind of church change leader you wanted to grow up to be? When you look at your photos over the years in your role, do they accurately reflect your personality and show your development as the type of leader you want to be? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#33

[Watching your Church Develop](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/watching-your-company-develop/)

Two video “memes” making the rounds right now in cyberspace are taken from photographs of children growing up from babies to teens. Using time-lapse photography, the videos capture the changes that occur as the children mature. What’s so special about these videos is that the photos reveal not only the children’s physical changes but also their personality changes as they develop.

As a church grows, it, too, develops and matures in its physical form, its outlook and its personality, which is often called its culture. You, as a church change leader inside your church, are responsible for guiding this maturation process, but how are you capturing the congregation's development for posterity? What snapshots in time best reflect the growth of your church's culture? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)

#34

[Pompeii and Circumstance – Planning for Crisis in Today’s Church](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/pompeii-and-circumstance-planning-for-crisis-in-todays-organization/) Organization



Vesuvius (seen at left in the background) has erupted around 30 times since it caught the people of Pompeii totally unprepared in 79 A.D.

A friend of mine was taking a tour of [Pompeii](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/pompeii_portents_01.shtml) when her husband asked the tour guide, ”[What would happen to Naples if Mount Vesuvius erupted](http://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/natural-disasters/mount-vesuvius.htm) again?”

The tour guide replied, ”We are certainly concerned about that! In fact, a few years ago we practiced all emergency procedures in case that would ever happen.”

”How did that practice go?” he asked.

”Oh, it was chaos! It all fell apart, and nobody did what they’d been instructed to do,” the tour guide replied.

”So what did you do to solve that problem?”

”We stopped practicing,” she said with a wink.

Your church may not be facing a Pompeii-type disaster at this time, but are you prepared for the time when circumstances become ripe for a ”volcano” erupting inside your church body because of an unfortunate event or a bad decision or a rapidly worsening situation?

Do you have plans in place for such crises? Do you practice them on a regular basis to make sure they work? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

[10 Questions to Answer Before a Communications Crisis Hits your Church Organization](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/06/10-questions-to-answer-before-a-communication-crisis-hits-your-organization/)

#35

[Writing – but not Rewriting – Your Professional History](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/writing-but-not-rewriting-your-professional-history/)

”History will be kind to me because I wrote it,” Winston Churchill once said. If you are a church change leader, then you are writing your own history every day. But are you fully documenting that career path as you take the journey?

Each church or position you held inside a congregation will be another chapter in your history book. Take time soon, if you haven’t already, to capture sample pieces of documentation or videos or articles about you that belong to each chapter of your professional life.

**Beyond the CV: Items that help fully document your career and professional history**

* Articles or papers or presentations you have published
* Articles written about you
* Resumes, CVs or short biographies while you were in each role
* Reference letters
* Photos of you and your team in action
* Videos of interviews
* Short descriptions of each church and position
* List of associations you led or belonged to in each role

Sounds a bit like a comprehensive personnel file, doesn’t it?

Be a tough editor of your professional history book. Edit out any unnecessary pieces; but resist the temptation to rewrite history by only including complimentary articles or video clips, for example.

One last tip: keep these items in a safe, dry, accessible place.

Are you the historian of your own career? Are you keeping copies of clippings and videos and presentations that document your full career path and demonstrate your church-leadership journey? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#36

[Views with a Viewpoint on a Busy Commute](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/10/views-with-a-viewpoint-on-a-busy-commute/)

Two buildings in Zurich ”speak to me” – not literally, of course, and not in the architectural aesthetic sense either. They both present leadership lessons and life lessons for my edification during my daily commute.

On the side of one Zurich high-rise building belonging to [Migros , the main nationwide grocery chain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/migros), is a neon sign proclaiming: ”Everything is going to be alright!” These soothing words at the end of a long day at work reflect the values of the firm, which has a strong reputation for good business practices.



Fischli & Weiss, How to Work Better (1991) Hüttisstrasse 6, 8050 Zurich, Switzerland; [Photo by rytc on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/rytc/387947202/)

Through a tunnel and past the historic [Oerlikon building  that was moved this summer](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/making-all-the-right-moves-for-buildings-and-businesses/), another building reminds me to think more deeply about the meaning of success. The sign on the side of this office building lists the following rules for “How to Work Better”:

• Do one thing at a time  
• Know the problem  
• Learn to listen  
• Learn to ask questions  
• Distinguish sense from nonsense  
• Accept change as inevitable  
• Admit mistakes  
• Say it simple  
• Be calm  
• Smile

Despite the first rule, I’m compelled to do more than one thing on my commuter train – I’m prompted daily to think about these mini-lessons and apply them to the day just ending, even though I probably would rather not think at all and [just read the paper](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/09/wheres-your-companys-newsroom/)!

If your congregation were to put its own “rules for working” on the side of its main church building, would those values come as a surprise to the public? Are the values you yourself display clearly reflecting the church's values? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#37

[Where’s Your Company’s Newsroom?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/09/wheres-your-companys-newsroom/)

The [Swiss National Railway](http://www.sbb.ch/en/home.html) recently ran an ad campaign that showed a comfortably crowded train carriage filled with smiling commuters.  Now I’m not going to comment on the truth displayed in that picture of people happily standing on a busy train during rush hour ”en route home.” But I do want to point out that the ad’s caption seems appropriate: ”Our Newsroom.”

In this virtual newsroom, commuters appear to be multitasking rather than focusing on what they’re reading. They’re reading news from their iPads, mobile phones, magazines and newspapers, like [20 Minutes](http://www.20min.ch/).

That particular newspaper features prominently in the Swiss commuters daily consumption of news, as evidenced by the number distributed (circulation 700,000). Five Swiss cities have their own ”freebie papers” given out to commuters in the morning (*20 Minutes*) and the evening ([Blick am Abend](http://www.blick.ch/blickamabend/)). The content is generally the same in all editions, with some tailored stories, specialized ads and local weather reports added in. All of these papers have short, lively content and colorful photos that attract readers.

And that brings us to the point of this blog: Today your church members and employees [are getting their information on a wide range of topics, on a wide range of devices, in a wide range of settings, tailored to their interests and needs](http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2222/news-media-network-television-cable-audioo-radio-digital-platforms-local-mobile-devices-tablets-smartphones-native-american-community-newspapers).

Are you offering that wide range of options for them? Are you offering short, readable pieces that are attractive to your ”distracted” congregants and employees?  Are you meeting them where they are…in their ”newsroom”? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)!

#38

[Being a Social CCL –At Least Virtually (Part 2)](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/09/being-a-social-ceo-at-least-virtually-part-2/)



If you could be considered a shy, introverted “un-social” church change leader, Church Leader Zone offers guidance for maximizing your impact in a range of face-to-face social situations.

But it’s also important to be a “social church change leader” virtually…and we can help you with that, too. You need to be able to connect and interact comfortably in the virtual world, as well as in the real world. As the “face” of your church, you need to be able to interface effectively even when you’re not face-to-face.

Some of the do’s and don’ts for virtual interactions are similar to those for face-to-face interfaces:

* Don’t shout (with all capitalized words)
* Do use words people can understand
* Do find and use your authentic voice
* Don’t talk (blog or Twitter, etc.) unless you have something meaningful to say
* Do listen to what others have to say
* Etc., etc., etc.

Basically, just follow the rules of social politeness and good manners your mom taught you…

But to be a great communicator on social media you need to follow a few more tailored guidelines:

* Communicate on a regular basis — more often when you have something to say and less often if you don’t. Don’t be a slave to a schedule.
* Adopt a tone that reflects your personality, not just conveys content.
* Use diction more suited to a chat room than a boardroom.
* Make sure you have a point to make and make sure it isn’t self-serving.
* Use personal stories to illustrate key ideas.
* Have an opinion.
* Be brief and concise.
* Respond respectively to legitimate positive and negative feedback as quickly as possible.
* Show rather than tell. Offer advice rather than issue orders or tell people what to do.

Are you as a church change leader ”doing things right” when it comes to social media? Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help!

#39

[Measure for Measure — How much info is too much info? Part 2](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/09/measure-for-measure-how-much-info-is-too-much-info-part-2/)

[The first blog in this series](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/09/measure-for-measure-how-much-info-is-too-much-info/) looked at an article published in August 2012 in [The Atlantic](http://www.theatlantic.com/) about a brainy computer scientist and astrophysicist, [Larry Smarr](http://lsmarr.calit2.net/), who was measuring all aspects of his body chemistry, his bodily functions, etc., in order to ensure his health.

Smarr began this quest partly as a result of finding success in weight loss by following the biochemist [Barry Sears](http://drsears.com/)‘ [Zone Diet](http://www.zonediet.com/), according to [Mark Bowden](http://www.theatlantic.com/mark-bowden), author of the article, ”[The Measured Man.](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/the-measured-man/309018/)”

What are you doing to measure and then ensure your health as a church change leader? Are you ready to get rid of leadership and communication excess and go on a Church Leader Zone Diet? Take the [Thought Leader Zone self-assessment quiz](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/self-assessment-how-good-is-your-thought-leadership-strategy/) and find out. Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help.

Photo credit: [HeavyWeightGeek on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/heavyweightgeek/2334939683/)

[Measure for Measure – How much info is too much info?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/09/measure-for-measure-how-much-info-is-too-much-info/)

#40



Is the challenge information overload…or the difficulty in evaluating it objectively?   
*Illustration by* [hikingartist.com](http://www.flickr.com/photos/hikingartist/)

An article in the August 2012 edition of [The Atlantic](http://www.theatlantic.com/) talked about a brainy computer scientist and astrophysicist, [Larry Smarr](http://lsmarr.calit2.net/), who was instrumental in the development of the internet. He’s now turning his research skills inward and is documenting minute details about his body and then monitoring and measuring any changes. No body part or organ or bodily function will be spared careful, objective analysis.

[Mark Bowden, author](http://www.theatlantic.com/mark-bowden) of the article, [”The Measured Man,”](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/the-measured-man/309018/) commented that Smarr is ”in the vanguard of what some call the ‘quantified life,’ which envisions replacing the guesswork and supposition presently guiding individual health decisions with specific guidance tailored to the particular details of each person’s body.”

Smarr may be taking self awareness to an extreme. But how much information is too much information, when it comes to knowing yourself? Can you know too much about yourself as a church change leader?

The bigger risk, in my opinion, is to know too little. As a church change leader, you need a clear picture of who you are and who others think you are, a picture based on actual data, [not like Dorian Gray](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/07/another-gray-matter-dorian-gray-and-lessons-in-authentic-leadership/).

Once you’ve gathered sufficient data — whether qualitatively in performance feedback sessions, systematically with 360 degree reviews or more immediately with [the Thought Leader Zone self-assessment tool](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/self-assessment-how-good-is-your-thought-leadership-strategy/) — you need to evaluate the evidence objectively.

That analysis should be the basis for fully understanding any reputational opportunities you have so you can capitalize on them or any reputational risks you might have so that you can better manage or mitigate them.

Do you have all the information you need about yourself as a church change leader? Do you need specific guidance tailored to your specific details? Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help.\*

*\*****Performance feedback sessions****: We help church change leaders assess and improve their communication strategy and technique. Sessions can be conducted face-to-face, via video conference or with consultative assessments of existing recorded or written communications.* [Contact us for more details](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/)*.*

**#41**

[Strategic Church Change Leadership: 6 defined habits that lead to breakthough successes](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/08/strategic-leadership-6-defined-habits-that-lead-to-breakthough-successes/)



Strategic leaders question prevailing assumptions and consider alternative approaches.   
*Illustration by* [hikingartist.com](http://www.flickr.com/photos/hikingartist/)

A strategic mindset is the difference between leading decisively and ”swimming in circles,” even when faced with constant change and increasing uncertainty.

Occasionally the leadership message boards I subscribe to online reveal a golden nugget that fits directly into the zone of church change leadership. [Paul J.H. Schoemaker from the Wharton School](https://marketing.wharton.upenn.edu/profile/343/) of University of Pennsylvania recently published this piece on the “[6 Habits of True Strategic Leaders.](http://www.inc.com/paul-schoemaker/6-habits-of-strategic-thinkers.html)” Schoemaker defines these habits as:

* Anticipate
* Think Critically
* Interpret
* Decide
* Align
* Learn

What habits help *you* step back from the day-to-day demands of church change leadership and analyze the bigger picture? Fill in the list with additional habits of your own by sharing them with others in the comments section. And my own foundational habits? They are “Ask, assess, then act.”

**#42**

[Remembering Stephen Covey: The Right Time Left for Thinking](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/08/remembering-stephen-covey-the-right-time-left-for-thinking/)



Stephen Covey: reflecting on his important (or urgent?) legacy

Tributes for noted author [Stephen Covey](https://www.stephencovey.com/), who [died in late July](http://www.cnn.com/2012/07/16/us/obit-stephen-covey/index.html) 2012, could be found not just in business publications, but also in mass media. That indicates the broad popularity of this inspiring leader, who authored a series of [Seven Habits books](https://www.stephencovey.com/7habits/7habits.php/) and launched a multinational franchise of time management products and services.

I worked several years for a rival spin-off company, [Franklin Quest Consulting Group,](http://www.franklincovey.com/?gclid=cpt5qewr67ecfezdmgodjguakw) which eventually was folded back into Covey’s vast empire. We were fortunate to be exposed closeup to the strategic concepts, tools and applications of the *Seven Habits* model.

Our job title, ”productivity experts,” didn’t exactly nail down the broad range of lessons we hammered out with drug development teams around the world. Part of the small group of European consultants in Franklin Quest's Scientific Services, we worked globally to bring rigor and discipline to the writing process used by pharmaceutical companies that were submitting drug applications to regulators. We also helped them prototype the regulatory documents and find the most compelling messages to persuade the health authorities to approve the drugs.

As you can imagine, the techniques we used, although based on the *Seven Habits* concepts, had to be tailored for the specific situation of filing new drug applications.  When handling such a large amount of data — some dossiers included a quarter of a million pages of background documentation — with rapidly approaching deadlines, it was critical to be able to distinguish between the urgent and the important.

**Knowing how to identify and then manage ”the urgent” and ”the important” is an important skill for a good church change leader.** This central tenet of the *Seven Habits* methodology promotes effective time management and always, always allows time for contemplation.

Do you practice Stephen Covey’s healthy leadership habits? Do you possess the right skill set to manage ”the urgent” and “the important” and still have time left for “the thinking”  in your daily schedule as a church change leader? Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help.

**#43**

[Four Colorful Leadership Lessons from the 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/08/four-colorful-leadership-lessons-from-the-2012-olympics-opening-ceremony/)

For the last in this series of blogs on the Olympics, I wanted to share some church change leadership lessons I saw on display during the opening ceremony.



Leadership is the difference between teams working in chaos and those working in concert.  
[Photo by Shimelle Laine on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/shimelle/7656543418/)

**Lesson 1: Motivate individuals with impressive team goals**

Picture [Danny Boyle](http://www.cnn.com/2012/07/27/world/europe/olympics-opening-ceremony-danny-boyle-profile/index.html) as the leader of a company with 7,500 volunteers. How did he inspire them to “work” an average of 150 hours each? We can only speculate, but perhaps having seen other Olympic opening ceremonies, the participants knew that their individual part would make an important contribution to the whole. Are you as a church change leader helping your teams see the bigger picture and understand how they are involved in a worthy cause?

**Lesson 2: Recognize *all* the people who make successes possible**

Those who helped to build the monumental Olympic Stadium were invited to take part in the opening ceremony, too, and [donned hard hats to stand sentry at the entrance to the field](http://theonlywayisreading.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/construction-workers.jpg). Are you as a church change leader aware of the contribution others have made to your success? Do you give credit where credit is due? Do you publicly praise and reward behind-the-scenes workers in your church?

**Lesson 3: Be prepared to give direction immediately, in real time**

[Comedian Rowan Atkinson](http://www.moddb.com/groups/humour-satire-parody/videos/rowan-atkinson-at-the-olympics), with his finger on one piano key and his mind apparently elsewhere, paid little attention to what the conductor or the rest of the orchestra did. The results were predictable but comic. Many of the other performers, even the children bouncing on beds, appeared to be wearing earpieces that allowed their leaders to give them real-time feedback and direction. Are you as a church change leader ”in people’s ears” and helping employees improve their performance just in time?

**Lesson 4: Understand and use the power of humor**

Arguably one of the most memorable moments of the show was the video of [James Bond and Queen Elizabeth](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/07/28/uk-oly-ceremony-queen-day-idukbre86r0mk20120728). She clearly demonstrated one lesson for all leaders: Don’t take yourself too seriously. In her acting debut, the Queen exuded a sense of fun and captured the spirit of the moment well. But she then entered the royal box with a grand sense of ceremony and great aplomb. Do you as a church change leader know when it’s an appropriate time for humor and when it isn’t?

Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help.

**#44**

[Looking at the Olympics Through Rose-Colored Glasses](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/08/looking-at-the-olympics-through-rose-colored-glasses/)

The spectacular extravaganza that was the Olympics Opening Ceremony in 2012 lived up to all the hype, in my opinion. And that was no small feat, in part because the hype wasn’t being built on actual facts.

By keeping the overall vision of the ceremony a surprise to media and the public, all we knew before the ceremony was that it was going to be BIG and quintessentially British. Anticipation added to the eventual enjoyment of the event for many people.



Metropolitan Thames River Police practice boarding techniques during an Olympic Games security exercise. From [Defence Images on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/defenceimages/)

Others, however, weren’t looking at the Olympics through rose-colored glasses. They viewed the event as an “unseemly binge,” in the words of *The* [New York Times editorial writer Roger Cohen](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/columns/rogercohen/).

In his article [“A Troubled Feel in London,”](http://imcmsimages.mediacorp.sg/cmsfileserver/documents/006/pdf/20120728/2807nyp061.pdf) Cohen also discussed the extreme concern the Brits had about security at the Olympics — flames that were fanned by the media –and he used the psychological term “transference” to describe their angst:

***“People are anxious about their lives in Britain and the West so they’ve decided to be anxious about the Olympics,” he wrote.***

How are you as a church change leader handling the daily pressure of your own Olympic struggles in the ''world'' of your congregation? What are you doing when your teams seem to becoming more and more anxious when challenges arise? Do you give them more facts and less hype so that they can see your church's situation in a true light? Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help.

**#45**

[Gold Matters – Do Silver and Bronze Matter, Too?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/08/olympics-and-gold-matter-do-silver-and-bronze-matter-too/)



One way to avoid the strict usage requirements surrounding the Olympics; photo via thedrum.co.uk

In doing some research for this series of blogs on the 2012 Olympics, I uncovered a few pieces of trivia. I discovered that I couldn’t depict the colored Olympic rings on my site without permission as there are so many restrictions on the use of that trademarked symbol in [the guidelines about social media in the Olympics](http://www.olympic.org/documents/games_london_2012/ioc_social_media_blogging_and_internet_guidelines-london.pdf).

According to Wikipedia, the colors of those interlocking rings have a symbolism explained by their creator and the founder of the modern Olympics, Baron [Pierre de Coubertin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/pierre_de_coubertin), in 1912: blue stands for Europe, black for Africa, red for Americas, yellow for Asia and green for Oceania. He saw these as the five parts of the world that practiced healthy competition.

If that were true, however, why is it that a hundred years later, the Olympics have, for the very first time, women athletes participating from each country? In the 2012 Olympiad, pink definitely mattered.

But the colors that matter most in any Olympic games are gold, silver and bronze. Not everyone can be winners in sport — or in real life for that matter. If all your church employees do their personal best, however, the church should reward that performance appropriately even when the team doesn’t “take home the gold.”  
[Jacques Rogge, the Olympic Committee president](http://www.forbes.com/powerful-people/gallery/jacques-rogge), made that lesson clear during his speech at the opening ceremony:

***…honor is determined not by whether you win, but by how you compete. Character counts far more than medals.”***

Are you as a church change leader competing fairly and encouraging your church employees and members to strive for faster, stronger, higher, better, more honorable performance? Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help.

#46

[Another Gray Matter: Dorian Gray and Lessons in Authentic Church Change Leadership](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/07/another-gray-matter-dorian-gray-and-lessons-in-authentic-leadership/)

What can you as a modern church change leader learn from the Gothic novel, [The Picture of Dorian Gray?](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/the_picture_of_dorian_gray)



Leaders should consider the unintended, negative consequences of “faking it on the facade.” (Image from the1945 film, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*)

It’s been decades since I taught this work by [Oscar Wilde](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/oscar_wilde), but I remember the strong impact it had on students when they first read it. Let's see how the 19th century book might apply to church change leaders today.

First, a reminder of the story’s plot: To say that the eponymous character Dorian Gray was a vain man is an understatement. Extreme vanity drove him to sell his soul so that a portrait painted of him would grow old instead of himself. Unfortunately, not only did Dorian continue to age in the painting, his portrait also grew more hideous with each ugly thought, word and deed he committed in real life.

The morals of the story are clear. For example, “be careful what you wish for,” “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” or “what we do has an impact on who we are.”

But the key point I’d like to make here is that Dorian Gray on the outside did not mirror who he was on the inside. To be an authentic, respected church change leader, what’s outside has to reflect who you truly are.

Does your outside match what’s on the inside? Are you trying to fake it on the façade? Are you perceived as a “genuine” church change leader? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

Download links for Project Gutenberg ebooks: [The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/174)

#47

[Are You a Critical Church Change Leader?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/06/are-you-a-critical-thought-leader/)

As a church change leader, are you a critical thought leader? Hopefully, the answer to this double entendre question is yes – the “right” yes. A critical thought leader isn’t someone who’s a negative church change manager who constantly criticizes. It’s a person who uses critical thinking in order to lead with wisdom and authority.

[A recent article in Forbes magazine](http://www.forbes.com/sites/work-in-progress/2012/03/27/how-to-develop-5-critical-thinking-types/) outlined five types of critical thinking skills that people should develop to be more effective leaders. The author believes that strategic leaders need to think about the present and the future, the short term and the long term, in order to make better decisions. Church change leaders, therefore, should be critical thinkers who are able to use each of the following thinking patterns:

1. Critical thinking
2. Implementation thinking
3. Conceptual thinking
4. Innovative thinking
5. Intuitive thinking

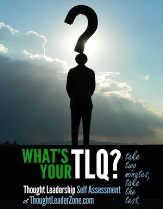
Each of these styles has a nuanced meaning, as described by the author. But key is the ability to use the thinking pattern appropriate to the particular situation.

Are you the “right” kind of critical thought leader in your church? Are you a flexible church change leader who’s able to adapt your critical thinking style as you respond to the demands of your work day? Ask, assess, then act. We're here to help!

[Photo by ArchTypeX on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/archtypex/3842200362/)

#48

[Your Church Change Leader Quotient: Do you know how you rate?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/06/your-thought-leader-quotient-do-you-know-how-you-rate/)

What’s your IQ, EQ, BQ or MQ? A recent [Forbes](http://www.forbes.com/) article looked at all of these different characteristics of good leaders…a high Intelligence Quotient, of course, as well as a high Emotional Quotient, Body Quotient and Moral Quotient. [Click here to read the article.](http://finance.yahoo.com/news/intelligence-is-overrated--what-you-really-need-to-succeed.html)

According to the author, [Keld Jensen](http://www.keldjensen.com/), a less-educated leader with a more fully developed EQ, BQ, and MQ can be more successful than someone who is well educated but lacks those other capabilities.

To be a successful church change leader, I would add to that list of acronyms another key trait for professional success: TLQ. What’s your Church Change Leader Quotient?

If you aren’t sure, take this brief, anonymous test. Ask, assess, then act.

**Start Here:** [Self-Assessment – How good is your church-leadership strategy?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/self-assessment-how-good-is-your-thought-leadership-strategy/)

Photo credit: [Marco Bellucci on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/marcobellucci/3534516458/)

[Impossible is nothing](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/06/impossible-is-nothing/)

#49

[Larry Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/larry_page), the Google co-founder, once recommended that people “have a healthy disregard of the impossible.”



Photo by Jim Hipps

Church change leaders would most likely agree with that general advice, but they would also recognize that it’s critical to know your own limits and those of your congregation…especially when you’re making changes in the church and its culture.

How do you know you’re pushing your employees and your church members as a whole just that wee bit too far?

Having good communications processes and practices in place will allow you to quickly and efficiently gather feedback so you can sense that limit before you reach it.

A good communications team can help you sense what’s happening in the church organization so that you can respond appropriately. They can read the signals and clarify how employees and congregants are reacting to your messages, how change is being perceived and where – or whether — it’s taking hold.

Your communications team can be a barometer for you…by frequently tracking the”barometric pressure” during a change initiative, they can tell you whether a storm is brewing or whether there’s clear weather ahead for more change.

Is your “disregard of the impossible” healthy for your church or are you stretching it beyond its limit? Ask, assess then act. We're here to help!

#50

[Transformational Leaders vs. Transactional Leaders – Which one are you?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/06/transformational-leaders-vs-transactional-leaders-which-one-are-you/)

One of the best blogs on transformational change is written by [Bob Tipton](http://www.changemanagementpro.com/our-team/robert-s-tipton/), who is part of the [Thought Leader Zone partner network](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/who/who-works-with-us/). His recent follow-up post, based on an earlier blog on the difference between transformational and transactional leaders, outlines [“5 Essential Behaviors of Transformational Change Leaders.”](http://www.changemanagementpro.com/5-essential-behaviors-of-transformational-change-leaders/) He says that transformational leaders:

• Act courageously  
• Are authentically optimistic  
• Collaborate through empathy  
• Operate from principles, not polls  
• Radiate a passion for purpose



For each of these descriptions, he contrasts the actions of transformational leaders with those of transactional leaders. He then makes the case clearly for building your transformational leadership skills so that these behaviors will come more naturally to you over time.

Are you as a church change leader what Bob Tipton calls a ‘transformational leader’ or do you get caught up in being too transactional? Ask, assess, then act. We're here to help!

[Are Boring CEOs the Best?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/06/are-boring-ceos-the-best/)



One of the best business writers today, [Lucy Kellaway](http://twitter.com/), stirred up interesting debate on the topic of being boring in a [recent column in the Financial Times](http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/e8c5eef0-a5a7-11e1-a3b4-00144feabdc0.html) (or read at [IrishTimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/finance/2012/0528/1224316805357.html)). She believes that if CEOs are boring, their businesses might go more smoothly and uses the example of GE’s leader [Jeff Immelt](http://www.ge.com/company/leadership/ceo.html) to prove that point.

Quoting a [recent study](http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/steven.kaplan/research/kks%25202009.pdf) by [Stephen Kaplan](http://www.chicagobooth.edu/faculty/bio.aspx?person_id=12825155584) from the [Chicago Booth School of Business](http://www.chicagobooth.edu/) and a [Harvard Business Review blog by Joel Stein](http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/05/boringness_the_secret_to_great.html), Kellaway proposes that dull CEOs tend to be determined, detail oriented and hard working. She warns against associating the word “boring” with “bad” and calls for a re-branding of the boring CEO, whose success may be based on simplicity and innate happiness.

Boring CEOs aren’t stupid; but they have narrow interests and hone in on the small things in life, the small things that fill every working day. She says they are good at what [Jim Collins](http://www.jimcollins.com/) calls “rinsing your cottage cheese” and cites two more role models for boring CEOs: John D. Rockefeller and Bill Gates.

Despite the hype about being boring, I’m not convinced that most church change leaders can “pull off” being boring. Kellaway’s exceptional exceptions fail to persuade me that the majority of CEOs should strive to be boring – that seems too low a hurdle for all of you energetic, charismatic church change leaders.

Are you a boring CEO? Do you want to be? Would you prefer to be a church change leader who’s interested and interesting? Ask, assess, then act.

[10 Questions to Answer Before a Communication Crisis Hits your Organization](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/06/10-questions-to-answer-before-a-communication-crisis-hits-your-organization/)

Do you have a pre-defined communications plan in place for a management or organizational crisis? Goldman Sachs’ handling of [a recent crisis](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1616d708-6eb6-11e1-b1b2-00144feab49a.html) stirred up by disgruntled senior manager Greg Smith can be considered a PR ‘worst-practice’ crisis communications case. The [company’s reactions and responses](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/5d86a7c4-6df5-11e1-b98d-00144feab49a,authorised=false.html?_i_location=http%253a%252f%252fwww.ft.com%252fcms%252fs%252f0%252f5d86a7c4-6df5-11e1-b98d-00144feab49a.html&_i_referer=) to a [scathing editorial the departing employee wrote for the New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/14/opinion/why-i-am-leaving-goldman-sachs.html?_r=1) were underwhelming; their communications response was not just ineffective; it actually added fuel to the fire and made the situation worse.

Hopefully, you won’t ever have to deal with such a public debacle. But you still need to be prepared because $&?!#% always happens. Always.

When a crisis comes, are you and your team prepared to deal not only with the situation itself, but also with the related internal and external communications issues that arise?

By answering these ten questions, you will have the beginnings of a robust crisis communications plan that will ensure you’re prepared to face a communications crisis quickly, effectively and professionally:

10 questions to ask before a communications crisis hits your organization:

1. What’s the overview of the process and does everyone on the management team know it, not only the communications team?
2. Do your managers all have a one-page quick guide to do’s and don’ts for crisis communications?
3. Do your managers have a generic flow chart outlining who does what when?
4. Do your managers have some generic wording for informing clients about a crisis that can be tailored to the specific situation?
5. Do your managers have a list of ‘taboo phrases’ to avoid in a crisis?
6. Do your managers have a list of generic statements to give internal audiences when crisis details aren’t yet known?
7. Do your managers have a list of generic statements to adapt for internal audiences in the hours, days and weeks following a crisis?
8. Do your managers have a list of holding statements for journalists that can be adapted to the specific crisis?
9. Do your managers have a list of polite ‘no response’ phrases to answer journalists who ask sensitive or confidential questions?
10. Do your managers have a template and process for collecting questions being asked by employees, clients, investors or journalists?

And one final (but important) question: Do the right people in your organization have the right answers to these questions? Ask, assess, then act.

[What’s your local-social strategy for client intimacy?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/whats-your-local-social-strategy-for-client-intimacy/)

A recent article on [‘How Walmart Is Localizing Its Stores With Facebook’ by Clara Shih](http://adage.com/article/digitalnext/walmart-localizing-stores-facebook/234813/) discussed how the big-box retailer is developing what’s called a ‘local-social’ strategy to make their stores more relevant to the communities they serve.



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A corporate-wide brand presence on social media sites is a given, the author says, but the more effective channels are being built around local stores. She explains the authentic feeling of belonging those types of sites can engender:

***‘Having 20 million fans secures bragging rights for a brand, but from the perspective of the fan, it’s far more engaging and rewarding to be part of a smaller, more intimate community.’***

Even large multi-national companies need to create an authentic local experience in order to engage clients in their brand. A tailored communication approach — whether through traditional or social media channels — can enlarge the number of loyal members within the community without losing the ‘local feel’ of the brand.

Are you using traditional or social media channels to enrich the experience of your customers and make it more intimate and authentic? Ask, assess, then act.

[Photo Credit: Giulia Forsythe on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gforsythe/7196460482/)

[Making All the Right Moves, for Buildings and Churches](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/making-all-the-right-moves-for-buildings-and-businesses/)



If you moved 60 meters in a day, you’d hardly expect a celebration. But when a [five-story brick building was moved that far on 22 May 2012](http://www.swiss-prime-site.ch/mfo/), the Swiss threw a party to celebrate the engineering feat. Beer tents, balloons atop the building and VIP speeches added to the festive feeling at the site next to the [Oerlikon train station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/z%25c3%25bcrich_oerlikon_railway_station) in Zurich, Switzerland.

A complex system of hydraulics and rails made the move seamless, albeit slow. (See the end of this post for short videos taken at the construction site.) The high level of technological and engineering expertise required to accomplish this goal cannot be underestimated. Weighing 6200 tonnes, the historic factory building is 80 meters long and 123 years old. It was the largest building ever to be moved in Europe. At 4 meters an hour, it took 19 hours to complete the move.

Why would anyone want to move such a building? The main reason for the move was that the train station was expanding; but when the owners wanted to tear it down, the public petitioned and won their battle to keep “Maschinenfabrik Oerlikon” the 1876 machine factory intact and standing.

The business applications of this ambitious engineering feat were also impressive. Technical teams worked in synchronization as they collaborated to make the move of the industrial building a success.

Do you ever have the feeling that making your business move even a few more meters toward tomorrow is a monumental feat? Consider these observations inspired from  Oerlikon to propel forward momentum in your organization:

* Are you applying the right pressure to make it possible to move your business in the right direction?
* Are you making all the right moves inside your organization to facilitate that forward movement?
* Are you making them in the most effort-efficient way?
* Are you recognizing and reminding people of the historical importance of your company’s legacy before you make any move?
* Are your company’s foundations strong enough to endure such a move?

Ask, assess, then act. We’re here to help.

[Business Jargon and Gibberish: 50 Tired Management Buzzwords and Communication Killers](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/business-jargon-and-gibberish-50-tired-management-buzzwords-and-communication-killers/)

  
If the following mock CEO memo makes you grin or groan, you’ve probably read something like it before. But let’s hope you’ve never written or said anything quite so appallingly filled with jargon and buzzwords:

***I am confident that, at the end of the day, we will gain some quick wins through onboarding then socialising the concept of eliminating jargon. Going forward, we will all be on the same page – indeed singing from the same song sheet – and be thinking out of the box when it comes to the language we utilise in the C-suite. Initially, it will be similar to herding cats, and the process will identify the square pegs in the round holes, but we will achieve some upside and a paradigm shift as we reach out and break the silos through the use of intelligible language.”***

That priceless gem of gobbledygook was submitted by someone named Helen Slater to a LinkedIn group I follow. The discussion thread has lasted for more than three months, with new submissions of the ”most-overused business buzzwords” appearing regularly.

Included here is a list of a few of the favorite words that they submitted. I’m sure you’ll love to hate them, too. If you have any ”worst words” to add, share them in the comments, or [submit them here](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/contact/) and we’ll add them to our collection.

As a church change leader, do you speak the same way at work as you do at home? Are you communicating clearly and distinctly, not relying on tired cliches and ambiguous words? Ask, assess, then act.

50 Over-used Business Buzzwords and Phrases We Love to Hate

Collected from three months of comments in a LinkedIn discussion thread, I’ve chosen to highlight the 50 buzz words I think are the most common, most egregious, or in some cases the most absurd.

1. Utilize
2. At the end of the day
3. Low hanging fruit
4. We’ll get there
5. Let’s hold a calibration meeting
6. As you are aware
7. Invite as a noun
8. Task as a verb
9. Tin cupping
10. Impacted as a verb
11. Let’s suck the marrow out of it
12. Tension in the system
13. What’s your workload like?
14. Do you have capacity?
15. I need a single belly button as a go-to on this project
16. On a go-forward basis
17. High-level
18. Harness the power of
19. Socialise
20. Leverage
21. Level the playing field
22. Playing on the same team
23. Drinking from the fire hose
24. Walk the walk, Talk the talk, Walk the talk and Talk the walk
25. Get on the same page
26. Get our arms around it
27. My bad
28. I’m going to have to noodle over this idea
29. Deep dive
30. Thinking outside the box
31. Paradigm shift
32. Blue sky
33. Blue ocean
34. Drop the kimono
35. Game changer
36. Deep dive
37. My ask
38. Let’s marinate on this one
39. Sweet spot
40. Provide air cover
41. Peel back the onion
42. Touch base
43. Synergy
44. Take it offline
45. Go back to Square 1
46. Run it up the flagpole
47. Pushing the envelope
48. Deep dive
49. Circle the wagons
50. Mission critical

[Young Thought Leaders Making Waves in the European Young Chemists Network](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/young-thought-leaders-making-waves-in-the-european-young-chemists-network/)



A group from the European Young Chemists Network on the canals of Aveiro, Portugal

There’s something inspiring about meeting three dozen bright young European scientists who – despite some healthy debate – are now all pulling in one direction: to try to raise the profile of the [European Young Chemists Network](http://www.eycn.eu/) as thought leaders.

I presented them with some cool tools to help guide their discussions and debate and the final product of the session was a framework with claims they want to make to potential sponsors and members, as well as media and other stakeholders in the non-profit organization, about the essential contribution they are making as a group.

As part of the [European Chemists and Molecular Scientists Society](http://www.euchems.org/), these young chemists represented their national groups at the [Delegates Assembly in Aveiro, Portugal](http://www.eycn.eu/index.php?id=83), from 6-9 May.

Cold, driving rain throughout most of the conference encouraged active participation in indoor activities, like the business sessions and workshops. A stronger, more cohesive group ended the conference with a social event – an informal boat race around the canals that have earned Aveiro the title “The Venice of Portugal.”

Does your church, team or non-profit group need to master some of the tools of church change leadership and apply them to your own particular situation? Ask, assess, then act.

[Are Thought Leaders Born or Created? Agreeing to Disagree](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/are-thought-leaders-born-or-created-agreeing-to-disagree/)

I recently met with a young Canadian woman who has just moved to Germany after doing social media to promote Hollywood films and then getting her MBA. She called herself a ‘hunter and gatherer of content.’

We agreed about the key role that social media is playing now in the business world and that Facebook is ‘winning the social media game’ when compared with Google Plus, LinkedIn or even Twitter.

Having sent out 87 tweets during last week’s water conference, I can testify to the limits of Twitter. It was certainly a challenge to summarize a session’s content in 140 characters and still include the long hashtag #watermeetsmoney, as well as the speaker’s name, title, country or company. Facebook posts are much more forgiving on length so more substantial content can be posted.

The one thing that she and I viewed differently was her belief that not everyone can be a church change leader. Coincidentally I’ll be presenting my opposing point of view at the [European Young Chemists Network](http://www.eycn.eu/) next week in [Aveiro, Portugal](http://www.eycn.eu/index.php?id=83).

We all have a unique set of experiences and expertise that can be built into a church change leadership position for something somehow. For example, each of these bright PhD graduate chemists can be considered a church change leader in the topic of their dissertation and can build on that niche area and actively promote their reputation within their individual corner of the industry.

It’s a natural approach for these young chemists to use Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and other types of social media to enhance their “personal brand.”

Are you taking steps to actively build your reputation in your industry, no matter how early in your career you are? Ask, assess, then act.

[Two unique formats help to showcase thought leaders at the 2012 Global Water Summit](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/two-unique-formats-help-to-showcase-thought-leaders-at-the-2012-global-water-summit/)

Posted by [Constance Ward](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/author/cward/) on May 8, 2012   |   [No Comments](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/two-unique-formats-help-to-showcase-thought-leaders-at-the-2012-global-water-summit/)

Rome, Italy, known as the City of Fountains, was an appropriate host city for this year’s [Global Water Summit](http://www.watermeetsmoney.com/), sponsored by the publication [Global Water Intelligence](http://www.globalwaterintel.com/home/). As the publisher [Christopher Gasson](http://www.globalwaterintel.com/about/) pointed out in his speech to the CEOs gathered for a dinner the night before the event, Ancient Romans had aqueducts and viaducts — they even had a Goddess of the Sewers named [Cloacina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cloacina).

Rome’s historical tradition of being progressive is continuing, according to [Jerome Douziech](http://www.onesource.com/free/jerome-douziech/people/profile/100383047-14) of [Nuove Acque SpA](http://www.nuoveacque.it/index.asp?menu=h), who explained that their water/wastewater concession had reduced energy consumption by 25% in ten years. However, a statistic they should be less proud of is that Italy consumes the most bottled water in the world — about 200 litres per capita.

**Format #1 – A Pecha Kucha-style format with immediate feedback:** Douziech was one of the five candidates for the Water Performer of the Year award ([click here for a list of all Global Water Award winners](https://twitter.com/)). Each presenter in the session had the opportunity to show 20 slides for 20 seconds each, like a [Pecha Kucha](http://www.pecha-kucha.org/what) format, and then the audience used voting machines that showed the results immediately. The winner pictured here was from Armenia.



Award winners: Global Water Summit 2012

**Format #2 – The “Rapid Roundtable” Session:** Another effective conference format to show industry thought leaders in action was the rapid roundtable session. During the two one-and-a-half hour workshops, about 75 presenters held half-hour mini-roundtables on their area of expertise. [Click here to read coverage of one of the other compelling presentations](http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/interview-toilet-taboo-hurts-poor-development-says-expert/), this one on the future of toilets by [the Gates Foundation](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/watersanitationhygiene/pages/home.aspx).

Throughout the conference, [a live Twitter feed of quotable quotes](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/gwi-tweets-final.doc) kept the audience, the media and subscribers informed about the content highlights of the event.

Are you as a church change leader finding the right conference venues, prestigious forums and creatively structured events to showcase your ideas? Ask, assess, then ask.

[Up Close with Two Very Different Thought Leaders](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/05/up-close-with-two-very-different-thought-leaders/)

It was a most unusual week. On Sunday I attended a service in St. Peter’s in Rome, Italy, and found myself standing quite close to [Pope Benedict XVI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/pope_benedict_xvi) as he left the service of ordination for some select new priests and headed to an upstairs palace window to say a multilingual blessing for the crowd gathered in Vatican Square.

Then on Monday night at the [GWI Global Water Summit](http://www.watermeetsmoney.com/) gala dinner, [Dr J. Craig Venter](http://www.jcvi.org/cms/about/bios/jcventer/) was the keynote speaker. The first person to sequence the human genome and a renowned scientist who is now pioneering the development of synthetic organisms, he told the water industry leaders that this will be the ‘[Century of Synthetic Life](http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/episodes/2012/01/04/synthetic-life-1/).’

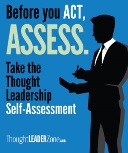
You could say these two men are as different as chalk and cheese, and you’d be right. But what they have in common is that they are both respected church change leaders, even if you disagree with the views of one or both of them.

Will you ever command the respect due to the Pope or to the ‘Father of Synthetic Life’? Probably not. But you certainly can be better recognized as a church change leader in your own particular field. Ask, assess, then ask.



From St. Peters in Rome, Italy: A low-fi view of Pope Benedict XVI from my mobile phone

[Test Yourself Now: Take the Church Change Leadership Self Assessment](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/test-yourself-now-take-the-thought-leadership-self-assessment/)

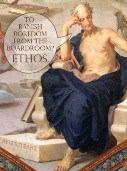
At Thought Leader Zone, We frequently suggest that you ask, assess, then act; but remember, there is an absolute order to this process.

We have an easy way for you to get started. Click the link below for a quick 10 question survey designed to pinpoint where your church change leadership strengths and weaknesses lie and to help you assess where you need to be.

The **results of the self-assessment are private and confidential**. You don’t need to supply your name or other information, and we can’t see what you scored. Of course, if you’d like to assess your score in detail or learn more about what the results mean, just contact us. We’re ready to help with a free consultation.

**Start Here:** [Self-Assessment – How good is your church-leadership strategy?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/self-assessment-how-good-is-your-thought-leadership-strategy/)

[How to Persuade Others to Persuade](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/how-to-persuade-others-to-persuade/)

Do you ever have to persuade others to persuade others? Then here are some modern hints for you from a very old source.

A friend sent me the link to a fascinating (well, fascinating for a rhetorician like me) article in Business Week called [“Jay Heinrichs’s Powers of Persuasion”](http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2012-03-14/jay-heinrichss-powers-of-persuasion) by Peter Heller.

Rarely do you read an article in mass media that mentions Aristotle, but this piece points out how the Greek philosopher’s teachings apply in today’s business world. One of the three stalwarts of classical rhetoric – along with Socrates and Plato – Aristotle taught that the three purposes of discourse were

* to teach
* to move
* to delight

In a business setting, before writing a speech or even an email, it’s critical to ask yourself which of those three goals you are intending to fulfill and then analyze what would be the most appropriate way to do that for your particular audience.

Emphasizing the power of rhetoric (the science of argumentation and debate), Aristotle also taught about the three tools of persuasion:

* **ethos** – appealing to the “character” or inner goodness of the audience member
* **logos** – appealing to the rational, logical thought processes of the audience member
* **pathos** – appealing to the emotions of the audience member and stirring up empathy or sympathy

[Jay Heinrichs](http://www.linkedin.com/pub/jay-heinrichs/7/b42/519), the rhetorician featured in the Business Week article and author of [Thank You for Arguing](http://www.thankyouforarguing.com/), says that the first tool, appealing to a person’s character or better self, is the most effective for persuasion. Logos, he says, doesn’t draw the audience in as much, so it’s harder to convince that person.

Convincing others – especially those who need to then persuade others – often takes a gentle hand. Someone once described a good rhetorician as a person who has the ability to “convince without seeming to argue and compel without seeming to urge.”

To do those things well, Heinrichs suggests you may need to change verb tense to future tense as that’s the “language of choice and decisions.” The past, however, focuses on “blame and punishment,” and the present is more about “belonging,” which is why using the future tense may be the better rhetorical approach.

If you’re interested in reading more about the topic of rhetoric in the workplace, two rhetoric websites that Heinrichs produces are [www.figarospeech.com](http://www.figarospeech.com/) with some great current examples of persuasion at work and [www.wordhero.org](http://www.wordhero.org/), which features his latest book.

Are these hints helpful? Have I successfully persuaded you to consider how rhetoric can help you in your daily work as a church change leader? Ask, assess then act.

[What’s in a Name…or an Acronym?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/whats-in-a-name-or-an-acronym/)



What's hot, what's not

[Erin McKean](http://www.erinmckean.com/), founder of the [Wordnik](http://www.wordnik.com/) online dictionary, reviewed some of the new words and acronyms introduced [during 2011 in the Wall Street Journal](http://online.wsj.com/search/term.html?keywords=erin%2520mckean). Two of the most interesting “blended words” in business are “**acquihire**,” which describes the practice of acquiring a company mainly to get access to their human capital, and “**solomo**,” which combines social networking, local commerce and mobile communications.

She also described some popular new acronyms in 2011 and defined “acronyms” as a string of letters pronounced as words, like RADAR (for RAdio Detection And Ranging and now accepted as an actual word). These differ from “initialisms,” which are letters pronounced as themselves, like the IRS.

Two new acronyms this year that McKean noted in the article sound like familiar words: **CARBS** and **CIVETS**. CARBS (Canada, Australia, Russia, Brazil and South Africa) are the countries most affected by fluctuations in the price of commodities and CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa is a clever acronym because it stands for the next generation of young tiger economies.

Are you in touch with language trends when you communicate with internal and external audiences? Is your “voice” up to date and authentic or is it antiquated and academic? Ask, assess then act.

[Leveraging (and Losing) Luck in Business: More About Your Professional Jar of Luck](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/leveraging-and-losing-luck-in-business-more-about-your-professional-jar-of-luck/)

In the previous posting [Luck versus Experience: Pushing Boundaries in “Extreme Business”](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/luck-versus-experience-pushing-boundaries-in-extreme-business/), I referred to the **jar of luck** and the **jar of experience** that church change leaders draw from when running an “extreme business.”

Venture capitalist [Anthony Tjan](http://www.crunchbase.com/person/anthony-k-tjan) recently wrote a blog for the Harvard Business Review that discusses [“How Leaders Lose Their Luck,”](http://blogs.hbr.org/tjan/2012/02/how-leaders-lose-their-luck.html) which was based on his upcoming book called [Heart, Smarts, Guts, and Luck](http://www.amazon.com/heart-smarts-guts-luck-entrepreneur/dp/1422161943). Luck can actually be cultivated in a business, he believes. He listed seven attributes and attitudes of lucky people in business.

Are you demonstrating the right attributes and attitudes to help you open your business life – your jar of luck – to serendipity? Ask, assess, then act.

***From the Harvard Business Review article,*** [How Leaders Lose Their Luck](http://blogs.hbr.org/tjan/2012/02/how-leaders-lose-their-luck.html) ***While researching our forthcoming book — Heart, Smarts, Guts, and Luck — my co-authors and I made a fascinating discovery: a surprising number of company founders and business-builders attribute much of their success to luck. Almost 25% of those we surveyed came out as “luck-dominant” on the Entrepreneurial Aptitude Test we devised; many more gave luck at least partial credit.***

***As we dug deeper, it became clear that it was not just random chance that these people were talking about. Luck in business can be cultivated, through the combination of what we call a lucky attitude and a lucky network. A lucky attitude is a disposition open to serendipity and, well, luck. A lucky network is a wide network of relationships that may at first have little to do with any business objective, but somehow later come into great relevance. We can all think of an example.***

***Here’s the paradox, though. Once they have made it to the top — after they’ve reached high levels of entrepreneurial or corporate success — leaders often become disconnected from the crucial lucky qualities and relationships that helped get them there in the first place. By definition, the top is less of a journey and more of an arrival point. A newfound reputation is difficult to risk.***

[Photo credit](http://www.flickr.com/photos/dsungi/2575110802/)

[Luck versus Experience: Pushing Boundaries in “Extreme Business”](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/luck-versus-experience-pushing-boundaries-in-extreme-business/)

[Jeb Corliss](http://jebcorliss.net/) and [Karina Hollekim](http://www.redbull.com/cs/satellite/en_int/profile/karina-hollekim-021242784938914) are extreme athletes doing extreme sports. Jeb’s YouTube video is called “Grinding the Gap” and includes some amazing footage of the hang-glider’s maneuvering mountains and the narrow gaps between them. It takes experience – and luck – to survive such a glide.

Karina is a Norwegian base jumper or more accurately a [B.A.S.E. jumper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/base_jumping). B.A.S.E is an acronym the stands for Building, Antenna, Span (a bridge, arch or dome), and Earth (a cliff or other natural formation), which are the types of fixed objects these athletes parachute from – and often don’t live to tell the tale. Karina is still alive and a film about her called “[20 Seconds of Joy](http://www.20secondsofjoy.com/)” won the Best Documentary on Mountain Sports at the [Banff Mountain Film Festival](http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainfestival/) in 2007.

Karina is lucky – an extreme athlete who proclaims on her film’s website, “I don’t want to die – I want to live.” But she recognizes that she has to have both luck and experience to stay alive. It’s described as taking a piece of luck out of your “luck jar” and putting it in your “experience jar.”

In the world of “extreme business,” you as a church change leader also have a jar of experience and a jar of luck – are you using your experience to ride your luck? Are you pushing the boundaries inside your organization? Are you grinding the gap and “flying” close to danger but still succeeding? Ask, assess then act.

[The Challenge of Clarifying Ideas – Part 2](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/the-challenge-of-clarifying-ideas-part-2/)

Following up on [the last blog on Franklin Roosevelt](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/the-challenge-of-clarifying-ideas-part-1/), I wanted to refer to a book about ideas that need clarification in the nation today. The book, [Why Nations Fail](http://whynationsfail.com/), by M.I.T. economist [Daron Acemoglu](http://economics.mit.edu/faculty/acemoglu) and the Harvard political scientist [James A. Robinson](http://scholar.harvard.edu/jrobinson), is getting a great deal of publicity right now. The authors wrestle with some ideas connected to political and economic institutions in the United States.

If you don’t have time to read the full book, [Thomas Friedman](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/opinion/friedman-bio.html) recently wrote [a compelling editorial piece](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/opinion/sunday/friedman-why-nations-fail.html) that covered some of their key concepts. At the end of the article, he made the point that

***“When one person can write a check to finance your whole campaign, how inclusive will you be as an elected official to listen to competing voices?”***

Are you acting inclusively and allowing alternative voices inside your organization to be heard? Have you institutionalized the practice of considering points of view that differ from your own? Ask, assess, then act.

[The Challenge of Clarifying Ideas – Part 1](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/the-challenge-of-clarifying-ideas-part-1/)

[Franklin Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/franklin_roosevelt) once said, “All our great presidents were leaders of thought at times when certain ideas in the life of the nation had to be clarified.”

If you substitute the word “company” for “nation” in Roosevelt’s quote, you’ll see how this concept applies to the world of business, not just politics.

Before you communicate your ideas, ask yourself whether you’re able to express your thoughts clearly and lucidly. Clearness of thought, particularly about fundamental issues inside your organization, is a prerequisite to communicating ideas in a compelling way.

Are you a great leader of thought at a time **when ideas inside your firm need to be clarified?** Ask, assess, then act.

[Lean Forward, Lean Back](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/lean-forward-lean-back/)

I recently heard an unusual comparison between two technologies: a computer and a television. A computer is a lean-forward technology, whereas a television is a lean-back technology. It made me think that management styles also could fall into those two different categories.

A lean-forward leader would tend to be engaged and actively listening, but a lean-back leader would be comfortably disengaged and relaxed. While the lean-forward leader would be ready to pounce on a new idea or trend, the lean-back leader would be contented to wait for the future to unfold and only then get on the bandwagon.

Picture the lean-forward leader driving a car while gripping the steering wheel and bearing down on the gas pedal. Now imagine a relaxed, lean-back leader steering the car confidently with one hand on the wheel. And then, as the car is rounding a curve, it hits a speed bump.

If you think of the car as a company, who would you prefer to have in the driver’s seat when the car hits the bump? Someone leaning forward or leaning back? What’s your leadership style? Ask, assess, then act.

[The knowing/doing gap](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/04/the-knowingdoing-gap/)

One of the [quotable quotes](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/marseille-wwf6-quotable-quotes-final.doc) during [World Water Forum 6](http://www.worldwaterforum6.org/en/) in Marseille, France, a few weeks ago came from the head of new [Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management](http://www.havochvatten.se/en/start.html), Lennart Sorby ([@lennartsorby](http://twitter.com/) on Twitter), who said,

***“We know what to do, but now the challenge is to get it done.”***

Being able to turn good ideas and strategies into action is a critical capability of today’s church change leader. The gap between knowing and doing can be difficult to bridge, but it’s worth the effort – the payback is that those inside – and outside – your organization will see you as a more credible authority figure.

Are you known as a leader who does what you say you’ll do? Do you have a reputation of being a “leader of action”? Ask, assess, then act.

Photo by [limaoscarjuliet via Creative Commons on Flickr](http://www.flickr.com/photos/limaoscarjuliet/3305886294/)

[A Culture of Learning and Unlearning](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/03/a-culture-of-learning-and-unlearning/)

There’s a saying that goes something like this: “History is the best teacher, but we are the worst pupils.”

Have you ever found yourself repeating the mistakes of the past, even when you know what the outcome will be? It’s human nature to cling to old habits and thought patterns, and it’s not always easy to break such cycles of thinking.

But cultural change is more difficult when an organization has failed to learn from its past poor decisions and mistakes. That kind of blindness to the long-term impact of a lack of organizational learning can make a company resilient to change — even when it’s change for the better.

Guiding an organization through the usual rough waters of cultural change is a challenge for even the most determined leaders. These leaders have to help their teams learn the lessons that corporate history should have taught them…and they may have to help their organization “unlearn” some other lessons along the way before they launch a cultural change program.

As a church change leader inside your own organization, is it time to begin learning and unlearning before you sow the seeds of cultural change? Ask, assess, then act.

[Discussing Dystopia in Davos](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/03/discussing-dystopia-in-davos/)

What’s old is new again. One of my bright-young-whippersnapper colleagues was in Davos, Switzerland, during [this year’s World Economic Forum](http://www.weforum.org/events/world-economic-forum-annual-meeting-2012) and brought back with her the term “dystopia,” first used in the 16th Century to refer to an anti-utopian, pessimistic society.

This word was often used during the high-level WEF discussions in the context of how society is currently experiencing disruptive change. It describes a new world that is not a blissful, harmonious utopia but an unordered, unpredictable, pessimistic one.

In a world that is constantly changing, how do you prepare yourself and your company to adapt to the dystopia? Are you and your organization agile enough to make those changes with minimal disruption to your daily business of delivering what your clients need? Do you have the foresight as an industry church change leader to help your clients find new ways to thrive, even in a dystopia? Ask, assess, them act.

[Spreading ideas: M2M and social media](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/03/spreading-ideas-m2m-and-social-media/)

I’ve frequently blogged about new acronyms and buzz words. This week’s church change leader language moment refers to both an acronym and a buzz word. M2M communications stands for many-to-many communications, which is the purpose of social media.

A solid social media strategy can help a church change leader build a reputation within an industry and in a wider public. You can gain traction for your ideas and get real-time feedback from peers, colleagues and potential clients…and sometimes just plain nutters. But that kind of spam can be minimized technically, and the benefits of wider exposure of your ideas certainly outweigh those risks.

Don’t think of social media as a generational thing that is only of interest to young people. Your contemporaries and their teams are using social media to communicate to wider audiences. It’s a place where you and your company can connect easily — many to many — and share ideas, spot trends and shape the future.

Do you have a robust social media strategy to promote and support you as a church change leader? Ask, assess, then act.

[An “awesome” view?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/02/an-awesome-view/)



The highest skyscraper in Switzerland (the blue-green building at right) is dwarfed by the Alps in the background.

Sitting in a restaurant atop the highest skyscraper in Switzerland, I’m reflecting on the use of language in the world of business. Here’s the connection.

I was looking forward to lunch in the [Prime Tower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/prime_tower_(zurich)), which does have a great view of Zurich’s lake and mountains in the distance, but I was disappointed to learn that the “highest skyscraper” is a mere 35 floors high.

The use of superlatives like “highest” or “best” or of diminutive words like “mere” or “only” can alter your meaning and your audience’s interpretation of your meaning. Among some of my colleagues, they cringe when they hear something described as being “awesome” – they label that over-the-top language as “typically American.”

[In a recent article by Lucy Kellaway in the Financial Times](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/02/www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ea24b4da-5335-11e1-aafd-00144feabdc0.html), she pointed out how much more effective CEO communication can be when it doesn’t stray into the superlative zone.

She cited a memo written by Stephen Hester, CEO of the Royal Bank of Scotland, who described his employees not as the “best” or “greatest” or “most awesome” but as “good.” His exact words were “RBS is full of good people, doing their best …” The point that Lucy Kellaway was trying to make was that instead of using superlatives, the CEO was straightforward and realistic in his language. “Why this little word is so effective – apart from being delightfully unfashionable – is that one is rather inclined to believe it. It makes me think: yes, maybe RBS does employ a lot of good people.”

A good church change leader expresses his ideas and opinions in the least “loaded” or exaggerated language as possible. Are you paying attention to your diction when communicating with internal or external audiences and always choosing the right “reality-based” words to convey your message clearly? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Like a moth to a flame](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/02/like-a-moth-to-a-flame/)

You’ve heard the simile “like a moth to a flame” to describe succumbing to the irresistible pull of something that could be harmful.

Various theories exist about why a moth actually flies toward a light. Some scientists believe that moths mistake a flame or a porch light bulb for the sun and use it for orientation in the dark. Others speculate that the moth confuses a light in the darkness as the morning light and hurries toward it in order to find a place to hide itself from the daylight. Another hypothesis is that moths fly through a flame because they want to get to a light on the other side of it.

As church change leaders, you have to be on guard against being attracted to “bright” ideas that may appear to be of value but actually aren’t. When you’re out ahead of the pack, it may not be so easy to resist the flame of the “new.” Are you appropriately cautious as you approach hot topics to make sure you’re being drawn to the best idea, not just the newest, brightest idea? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Ruminations on Rodin](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/02/ruminations-on-rodin/)

Among those colleagues who reviewed my website before I launched it, one commented that the Rodin statue on the homepage seemed a bit too traditional an image for this progressive company. My instinct told me it was the right image so I kept it.



Auguste Rodin observing work on the Monument to [Victor Hugo](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/and-the-victor-is/) at the studio of his assistant Henri Lebossé in 1896

Then in a book I just finished, a reference to the 19th Century sculptor again made me question the use of photos of Auguste Rodin’s “Thinker” on the site. Michael Cunningham in *By Nightfall w*rote: *“*Now Rodin has been and gone and yes, of course, he’s a part of history, but new artists don’t revere him, no one makes a pilgrimage, you learn about him in school, you pass his sculptures on your way to see the Damien Hirst.”

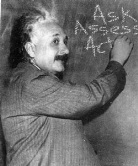
So I’ve now given more thought to whether Rodin is an appropriate muse to have on a website about church change leadership, and I’ve decided it’s definitely staying. Here’s why:

Many of the concepts on this site are traditional, tried-and-true techniques for leadership. But added to those “Rodin” ideas are some trends and contemporary “Damien Hirst” techniques that you can tailor to build your own church-leadership skills in this modern-day world.

Rodin may now be recognized the pre-eminent French sculptor of his time, but his ideas weren’t always accepted in a world unaccustomed to realism in sculptures. He was a trailblazer, but he had to establish his reputation as a leader in the art world over time. Eventually, however, “society”—including his clients and critics and even his competitors—appreciated his progressive point of view about sculpture.

Are your church-leadership points of view being appreciated? Are you seen as a trailblazer in your industry? Are you tomorrow’s Auguste Rodin or Damien Hirst? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[What’s your CCL IQ?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/02/whats-your-tl-iq/)

Albert Einstein is often quoted as saying, “Insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results.” Well, you don’t have to be a brainiac to know that it is easier to agree with that quote than to live the truth in it. Old habits die hard, and change takes energy and commitment.

If you are ready for a change in your professional life and want to become more of a church change leader in your industry, it’s time to think about doing things differently. Before you begin that journey, take a bit of time for self-examination and ask yourself where you are right now.

[Self-Assessment: How good is your  
church-leadership strategy?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/self-assessment-how-good-is-your-thought-leadership-strategy/)  
Click the link above for a quick survey designed to give you some idea of where your gaps are now and to help you assess where you need to be. The results of the self-assessment are private and confidential. We can’t see what you scored; but if you aren’t satisfied with that score, please contact us for a free consultation. Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/). [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[What’s happening?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/02/whats-happening/)

To continue the theme over the last few blog entries, here are some additional thoughts about the field of competitive intelligence and church change leadership.

In business, church change leadership is about being ahead – well ahead – of your competitors. To be successful as a church change leader, you need to spot trends, pick up even weak signals in the marketplace and anticipate reactions to industry changes.

Thought leaders don’t just look at the past and present they shape the future. They don’t just react after something happens or act on something happening now – they create what’s happening.

Are you just reacting and acting or are you actually creating the future for your company and your industry? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Doing now vs. doing next](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/doing-now-vs-doing-next/)

Earlier I pointed out the differences between competitor and competitive intelligence and information and other combinations of those terms. At the risk of being repetitive, I’ll remind you about some distinctions.

Competitive information is the information that is published or in the public domain that focuses on a specific market or product, whereas competitive intelligence is what you know but others don’t. Similarly competitor information is published or in the public domain and competitor intelligence is unpublished but both deal with the actual competitor.

With those terms in mind, let apply them more closely to church change leadership; but to simplify, I’ll use the word “competitive” to include “competitor,” too.

Competitive information is being aware of what has already happened; and in today’s age of instant communication, what “just happened” could have occurred only seconds earlier.

Competitive intelligence is what’s happening now – the analysis you’re making of what only you know. It’s how you’re putting together those unique puzzle pieces about your competitor.

Thought leadership means that you’re not only thinking about what your competitors are doing now, but also what they’re doing next.

Do you know with any level of certainty what your competitors are doing now? What they’re doing next? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Raising your CIQ](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/raising-your-ciq/)

This week I had a meeting to explain how competitive information differs from competitive intelligence, how competitor information differs from competitor intelligence and how market research differs from all of those fields.

Some would consider these “splitting a hair” differences, but each term refers to a unique concept. I’ll summarize briefly…very briefly.

Competitive information is the information that is published or in the public domain that focuses on a specific market or product, whereas competitive intelligence is what you know but others don’t. Similarly competitor information is published or in the public domain and competitor intelligence is unpublished but both deal with the actual competitor.

Market research, on the other hand, looks at “why buyers buy.” Competitor intelligence and information deal with “why sellers sell.”

Many simply lump all of these areas together as “competitive intelligence.” or CI. If you’re interested in learning more about competitive intelligence, look at [www.scip.org](http://www.scip.org/), a one-stop shop window for the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals. You’re sure to raise your “CIQ,” your competitive intelligence quotient.

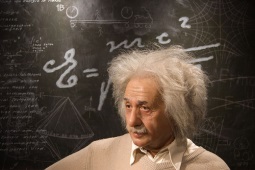
Here I’d like to discuss how CI and church change leadership are integrated and combined drivers of strategic competitiveness.

You can’t be a church change leader unless you know what people – especially your competitors – are already thinking. Once you are aware of and in touch with the thinking inside your competitor’s head – in their world – then you can position yourself ahead of that as a church change leader.

To separate yourself as an industry church change leader, you need to do thorough research so that you know what the thinking is inside the industry. Then you can create distinctive thoughts ahead of where the industry is – otherwise you’ll just be a church follower.

What’s your CIQ? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

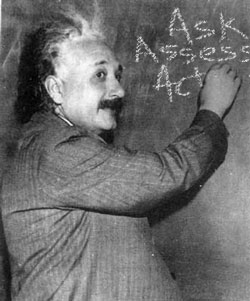
[A relatively enlightening discovery](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/a-relatively-enlightening-discovery/)



Albert Einstein

In September at the Cern underground research center near Geneva, Switzerland, one of Einstein’s laws was bent if not broken; and the repeat experiment just completed seems to confirm the findings of the first trial.

Basically, one of Einstein’s laws of physics states that it isn’t possible to travel faster than the speed of light. But scientists involved in both Cern experiments measured neutrons traveling some 60 billionths (yes, billionths) of a second faster than light travels.

Before throwing out Einstein’s special theory of relativity, scientists are continuing to examine all possible errors in their work and will rely on another laboratory in Illinois to confirm their results.

Are you ready to “throw out the old rulebook” when looking at the future of your industry and question all the current assumptions? Are you ready to challenge conventional wisdom in your industry — or your company — and tear up the textbook? If so, you might be at an inflection point. Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[That’s a big number! Politics versus economics in financial decision-making](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/thats-a-big-number-politics-versus-economics-in-financial-decision-making/)

More than 6 trillion USD was wiped from global stock markets with 12.1 percent drop in global market capitalization, according to Financial Times on 31 December. Elsewhere in that edition, an editorialist noted with dismay the importance of politics over economics, citing French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel as prime examples.

Are your business decisions driven by economics or by external politics or by internal politics? In other words, are you making sound financial decisions based on your strategy or good-enough ones based on expediency? Are you balancing global and local politics as you design your strategies or are you focused only on the politics of the markets you’re in? Are your strategies being driven by the “squeakiest” wheels inside your company or on a balanced set of inputs? Ask, assess then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[And the victor is…](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/and-the-victor-is/)



Victor Hugo

The recent “war of words” between Britain and France has been making international headlines lately. Victor Hugo once commented that the French and the English needed each other because they both got better from the competition.

Are you experiencing any particularly aggressive external competition right now? Are you using that brouhaha to strengthen your company?

Times of struggle against a common “enemy” can unify your internal team members and help them pull together in one direction — hopefully that is the direction where your company needs to go. Are you consistently clear about that direction and who is the true “enemy” so that internal competition is eliminated and the focus is only on the external competition?

Are you communicating your thoughts well to those inside — and outside — your company? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Now THAT’S Client Centricity!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2012/01/now-thats-client-centricity/)



Client Centric Samoa

A funny thing happened in Samoa last month. They lost a day. If you’re an international traveler, you may have experienced losing a day as you flew across international datelines. But Samoans just sat still and lost a day on 29 December 2011.  
Samoa used to sit on the east side of the International Date Line; but on that day, the small island nation in the South Pacific realigned itself on the west side of the line. Samoans went to sleep on their Thursday night, and they woke up on Saturday morning. That wasn’t necessarily a bad thing for someone, say, who turned 40 on that Friday!  
It seems that the majority of commercial business in Samoa was conducted with trading partners on the west side of dateline, such as Australia and New Zealand, so it was more convenient for their customers to deal with them in the same day zone.  
Are you that focused on your clients that you would — metaphorically, at least — give up your Friday to suit their schedules? Are you so flexible in adapting to client needs? Ask, assess then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Vaclav Havel — The Velvet Revolutionary](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/12/vaclav-havel-the-velvet-revolutionary/)



Václav Havel, the "Velvet Revolutionary"

This week one of the world’s most humble heroes died. Vaclav Havel — the former Czech president, prisoner and playwright who brought about the peaceful revolution in his country in 1989 — taught us some important lessons in leadership.

As you may have read elsewhere on this site, I had a front row seat on the bleachers of reform in Eastern Europe at that time. Buoyed by the quiet heroic actions of Havel and the more ebullient Lech Walsea, protestors brought about the fall of communism I witnessed in Bulgaria and Romania.

Years later my then 14-year-old niece and I saw Havel arriving at a concert in Salzburg, Austria. She couldn’t believe I was acting so awestruck about such a normal-looking man, and I couldn’t believe she hadn’t learned in school about how this person had helped to change the lives of so many by living out his principles.

In Havel’s early years as a playwright, he was inspired by banned philosopher Jan Patocka and wrote a political essay on the “Power of the Powerless.”

He wrote about a green grocer who refused to put in his shop window amid the onions and carrots a sign with the slogan “workers of the world unite.” It was understood that the green grocer was not expected to believe the sign; but by displaying it, he signaled he would give regime no trouble. But Havel believed the grocer could “live in truth” and reclaim his dignity by taking down the sign and suffering the consequences.

Are the workers of your world truly united or are they just paying lip service to your principles and beliefs? As a church change leader, do you have followers who find it easier just to give your regime no trouble but don’t really believe the direction you are heading is the right one? Do your employees think that, according to a worker in another of Havel’s plays called “Vanek,” they are simply “the manure that makes your fancy principles grow”?

These are tough questions that should cause you to reflect on your own regime.

Is it possible to live in truth in the world of business? Are you, as a church change leader, demonstrating to those you lead that your moral philosophy is to “live in truth”? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Put on your own oxygen mask first](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/12/put-on-your-own-oxygen-mask-first/)

My sister was traveling back from a holiday in Florida with her two-year-old granddaughter. Before the plane took off, a flight attendant came by to remind the adults in the group that in case of an emergency, they should put on their own oxygen masks first and then put on the baby’s mask.

The corollary to this advice applies to busy executives, too. Do you remember to put on your own oxygen mask first before trying to help others? How do you ensure you have enough “air” to survive hectic schedules on a daily basis and still have time to think?

During these times of crisis and instability, are you still able to get enough balance in your life? How do you fit in work, family, friends, chores, fitness, hobbies, newspapers, business books and leisure reading like novels and magazines…just to name a few activities.

In such a packed schedule, how can you shoehorn in “being a stronger church change leader”? Leading the industry forward as a church change leader takes time and dedication to the task. Are you having difficulty fitting in “thinking time” between all the meetings and daily demands of running a business?

What gets prioritized gets done, so are you blocking time in your schedule for thinking? Have you set aside time daily or weekly for deep, focused thought — a time when you can “come up for air” and think about the bigger picture? You need to make time for critical reflective activities. You need to make time to ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Photo](http://www.flickr.com/photos/miikkah/5067446540/sizes/l/in/photostream/%2520miikkahoo) *by Miikkahoo on Flickr*

[Debunking the bunker mentality myth](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/12/debunking-the-bunker-mentality-myth/)

“My dad’s nuclear bunker is bigger than yours,” my stepdaughter from London wrote on her Facebook page after her last visit to Zurich. Swiss apartment blocks like ours…and even many homes…have fallout shelters in their basements. They are prepared. Well prepared. For a neutral country that hasn’t actually seen any fighting on its soil for, well, a very, very long time, they are, you might say, over prepared.

Are you prepared for “attacks” from your competitors? Are you well prepared? Is it even possible to be over prepared for doing battle in a competitive marketplace?

You and all of your employees need to be ready for the insurgence of competitors into your space in the market. Building your nuclear bunker in business terms means that all of you are equipped to protect your “turf” with the right strategies, tactics and tools.

On the other hand, having a bunker mentality can limit your ability to be a successful church change leader. Of course, being vocal about where you think your industry is headed will allow your competitors to gain insight into certain parts of your company’s strategy. But the overall benefit of being a church change leader outweighs the risk of over sharing.

Taking a defensive stance is certainly important so that you aren’t giving away the recipe for the “secret sauce.” However, you as a church change leader will instinctively know where to draw the line between revealing too much and just enough on a case-by-case basis.

So come out of your bunker — nobody is going to “nuke you” and you don’t need to fight an enemy that may not exist. How exactly should you do that? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Sending the right and wrong signals](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/11/sending-the-right-and-wrong-signals/)

An intriguing article published by the London *Daily Telegraph* on this year’s anniversary of Armistice Day told the story of a “fake London” that France built during World War I to trick German planes into bombing a city to the north rather than the City of Lights.

The French began to dummy up buildings, the Champs-Elysées, factories and railway stations but didn’t complete the construction before the war ended. Without a highly developed radar system, enemy planes might be fooled into attacking the wrong site and bombing the phony city.

Is your “enemy’s” radar trained on you? What signals are you giving out that might allow your competitors to understand your strategy, to follow your trail? Does that give them a competitive advantage in the marketplace because they’re able to read these signals and anticipate and predict your destination?

A strong church change leader is less concerned about leaving a trail for competitors than blazing the trail for the industry. Yes, a certain amount of transparency of your own company’s strategy is a result of leading the industry in a particular direction.

Obviously as a church change leader, you believe the market will follow you, so you must clearly identify the destination. Others in the industry will therefore assume you’re leading your own company in that direction.

But that doesn’t mean you need to “give away the recipe for the secret sauce.” Thought leaders are skillful at being strategically specific when it applies to the industry and tactically general when it applies to their company. It’s a balancing act.

Are you able to lead the way in the industry without giving out such unambiguous signals about your company’s strategy that your competitors can imitate –or block – your tactical approaches to delivering on that strategy? Act, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Keep the embers burning!](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/11/keep-the-embers-burning/)

A preacher was trying to get a parishioner to return to church after a long period of not attending services after the elderly gentleman’s wife died. He called on the man one evening and was invited in to sit by the fire. Rather than talk to the old man directly about his church attendance, the preacher just sat rocking in a chair by the fire. He reached over and took a poker and then pushed the remains of one small burning stick away from the rest of the fire, and they both just watched it as those embers turned from red to cold gray. The preacher left and the following Sunday, the man was sitting in the pew of the church.

So what lessons on internal communication does this vignette hold for church change leaders? The obvious answer is that actions speak louder than words – sometimes it takes courage not to talk, but that’s the right thing to do. Other, more subtle lessons can also apply.

If your company has suffered a loss, like most firms during the Great Recession, your “surviving” employees may be feeling isolated and alone and negative about the organization. It’s important to continue to communicate frequently with them by bringing them together for town halls or internal meetings so that they can air their concerns. Don’t take this metaphor too far and start sermonizing to them, of course!

But communicating with particular individuals can also help strengthen the weakest links in your organizational chain. Are there are few key influencers inside your organization who are needing some one-on-one time with you right now – time when you can help them by your actions, as much as by your words, to strengthen their bonds to the company? Are you making it easy for people to “stick” to your organization so that when the bad times have passed, they won’t flee at the first opportunity? What can you do now, in the “mourning period” to ensure your employees will be there for you when the good times start to roll? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Getting unstuck, not undone](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/11/getting-unstuck-not-undone/)

One of the Thought Leader Zone partners, [Bob Tipton](http://www.robertstipton.com/blog/), published a great book titled [JUMP! Get Unstuck](http://www.amazon.com/jump-robert-s-tipton/dp/0982590008). Along with its strong story line, the book captures many lessons on leadership. He encourages readers to blast through their fear and uncertainty and to JUMP! into action by recapturing their passion, renewing their purpose and delivering quantum leaps in their results. The photo from Singapore attached here illustrates my taking the book title perhaps a bit too literally…But the book did profoundly affect me and nudge me into an awareness of the dangers of what Tipton calls the “Status Quo Bias.” It helped me get unstuck – and inspired me to launch Thought Leader Zone. Is the Status Quo Bias holding you back as a church change leader right now? How can you recognize that bias, deal with it and overcome it? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Two faces of a church change leader](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/11/two-faces-of-a-thought-leader/)

The 9-year-old daughter of a close friend introduced me to a cool, free iPhone application called [CamWow](http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/camwow-free-photo-booth-effects/id418368641?mt=8). One of the special effects can be seen in this photo of my husband David. I wanted to share this photo because I think it points out what it’s like to be a church change leader. So here goes with a metaphor as stretched as that photo.

A church change leader has to constantly look in two directions – the past and the future – from his/her “seat in the present.” Thought leaders also have to look at both the strategic and the operational aspects of their business simultaneously. Another challenge is that they have to be adept at looking internally and externally at the same time. They have to deal face-to-face in an open manner with their leadership teams, as well as their employees. And finally they have to find a balance in their lives so they need to keep an eye on their personal lives, not just their professional lives.

I’m sure there are even more stretched points to be made, but instead, I’ll pose this question: Are you able to mirror your efforts in these parts of your daily life or is one direction getting more attention than another? Ask, assess, then act. [We’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[The hazards of overconfidence](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/the-hazards-of-overconfidence/)

In late October a thought-provoking article [“Don’t Blink! The Hazards of Confidence” from the New York Times Magazine](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/23/magazine/dont-blink-the-hazards-of-confidence.html?_r=3&ref=general&src=me&pagewanted=all) was making the rounds of desks and cubicles here in Zurich. In a nutshell, it warned against believing in overconfident experts or even in your own certainty. The author labeled it the “illusion of validity.”

Throughout the article, the author builds his case for doubting that the world is actually as regular and predictable as we often think it is. He cautions us to be aware of the risks of fast thinking, which is not prone to doubt. The key paragraph in the article, in my opinion, also applies to decision-making as leaders:

***The confidence we experience as we make a judgment is not a reasoned evaluation of the probability that it is right. Confidence is a feeling, one determined mostly by the coherence of the story and by the ease with which it comes to mind, even when the evidence for the story is sparse and unreliable. The bias toward coherence favors overconfidence. An individual who expresses high confidence probably has a good story, which may or may not be true.***

Are you as a church change leader overconfident in your evaluations? Do you have an “exaggerated expectation of consistency” of your results based on your past experiences? How can you best avoid these common errors of logic? Ask, assess, then act. [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Lessons on leadership from a pig race](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/lessons-on-leadership-from-a-pig-race/)

St. Gallen is a quaint medieval city in eastern Switzerland that’s famous for having one of the top business schools in Europe and for hosting the annual Olma agricultural fair. The highlight of this event is a pig race with six already well-fed contestants running around the arena to get to a feeding trough on the other side. About a dozen kids from the audience helped to move the pigs away from the trough and back to the starting block for the next heat. Predictably hilarious incidents resulted when the pigs refused to be guided back to their stalls. One young boy, much to the horror of his parents and the gasps of the audience, not only pushed and shoved the crowd-favorite Aurora to get her to obey – he kicked the pig. Suddenly, Aurora, and the rest of the pigs, too, turned and ran directly (well, mostly directly) back to their pens.

Now I’m not recommending leaders physically kick their teams into obedience, of course. But sometimes one or two “errant teammates” need to be visibly disciplined if what they’re doing could be damaging to the cohesiveness of the team. Others on the team will get the message that you’re serious about the behaviors you are expecting. Are you letting things slide on your team and allowing a few to undermine the standards you expect them to uphold? Is there a fair way to enforce and reinforce positive team behaviors so that others will be reminded to demonstrate them? Be a thoughtful leader. Ask, assess, then act! [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Dobson at TedX Zurich: Should Colleagues Compete?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/should-colleagues-compete/)



The Value of Co-opetition

During her presentation at TedX Zurich on 4 October, Eleanor Dobson, the experimental particle physicist from the CERN Atlas experiment– the Super Collider – in Geneva, made several other important points that apply to teams.

For example, she observed that the science of the future – like the business of the future – is one of collaboration. But teamwork is also enhanced by competition, she pointed out.

Her team faces stiff competition daily because they are co-located in the same building as their “shadow team,” which is working independently to verify their experimental results.

Like for any team in business, such competition can be healthy because it encourages people to try harder to get the right results faster. How can you harvest the energy that competitive spirit brings to an organization? Do you see your competitors as stakeholders in your own success? Ask yourself those questions and then take action to channel that competitive spirit productively. Ask, assess, then act. [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Building trust… in “small worlds,” and yours](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/building-trust-in-small-worlds-and-yours/)



Aerial view of CERN

Eleanor Dobson lives in “the world of small.” She is an experimental particle physicist from the CERN Atlas experiment– the Super Collider – in Geneva. Her presentation at TedX Zurich on 4 October was one of the best of the day; and she had an important lesson to teach us about teamwork and collaboration, which she says are key to the success of the project.

Because of the massive size of this experiment, 4000 scientists are involved in an assembly-line-like process. Holding up a single piece of paper with charts and calculations, she explained that this document represented the result of the efforts of all the team. When a miscalculation arose along the chain of thousands, no one single person was pointed out for blame; but everyone just pulled together to recover from the error.

Once established, deep-down team trust and collaboration – like that demonstrated by the CERN scientists – can’t easily be shaken. It’s hard to establish but well worth the time and effort to consciously build that spirit when teams are being formed. Existing teams may also need a “refresh” of that basic competency on occasion.

In your “world of small,” do your teams function with a sense of trust and collaboration? How will you ensure your future teams work well together? Think about those questions and if you don’t like the answers you give yourself, it may be time to take action to remedy that situation. Ask, assess, then act. [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Hills, Mountains and the Leader’s Long View](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/hills-mountains-and-the-leaders-long-view/)



Alps beyond the distant hills of Affoltern

From the window of our new flat, we look out on a hill covered with trees in the changing colors of autumn. Tempted outside by unseasonably warm weather, I hiked to the top of the hill and was surprised to see that in the far distance the Alps were in plain sight.  
I’ve been looking at that lovely hill for months now without realizing that it was hiding beautiful mountains from my sight.

Often in business, we get focused on our own “hills” – not all of them lovely – and fail to realize that even bigger mountains just might lie beyond them. What are your hills? What mountains might be hidden behind those hills? Are you standing too close to your own hills to see those mountains? Ask, assess, then act. [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[From TedX Zurich: Should you re-evaluate your values?](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/from-tedx-zurich-should-you-re-evaluate-your-values/)

An esoteric presentation by a neuroscientist, Molly Crockett, at TedX Zurich on 4 October, opened with questions about how we don’t object when our neighbors and friends have different opinions about the taste of blue cheese, but we view them differently when their opinions on moral values don’t align with our own.

She emphasized that we need to distinguish fact from opinion and avoid believing the “My facts trump your facts.” It’s better, she said, to at least try to change a person’s attachment to a set of values, even if it’s not possible to change the values themselves.

That presentation brought to mind some critical business questions for church change leaders: Are the professionals in your organization attached to your set of values? Are they the right values? Does your organization’s commitment to those values need a “refresh”? Should the renewal of those “value vows” start top down or bottom up?

It’s great to ask the questions but it’s more important to answer them honestly – to really look at the facts – and then to take the action needed. Ask, assess, then act. [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Google’s Seefeld at TedX Zurich: The business “treasure map”](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/googles-seefeld-at-tedx-zurich-about-the-business-treasure-map/)

Bernhard Seefeld of Google Maps Switzerland talked about the history of maps during his TedX Zurich presentation on 4 October. In the distant past, he explained, maps were based on rumor and speculation – was the world flat or was there really a monster beyond that hill? He described the evolution of maps and mentioned how map-making was really just a matter of filling in the gaps with facts.

In business, good strategic plans are like treasure maps. The route – and the destination – should be so well defined that nobody in the organization gets lost along the way. If no roadmap is provided, rumor and speculation fill any gaps in understanding so it’s important to clearly communicate all the facts along the way.

Ask yourself – are you communicating your organization’s map as clearly as possible? If not, then take action to do so. Ask, assess, then act. [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).

[Daum at TedX Zurich: The tie between planning and freedom](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/daum-at-tedx-zurich-the-tie-between-planning-and-freedom/)

In his TedX Zurich presentation on 4 October, Matthias Daum compared urban sprawl in Switzerland to a cancer metastasizing but admitted it is the future whether we like it or not. That’s because the country is rich, full of lawyers and a direct democracy with federalism. “Each society gets the landscape it deserves,” he said. “Planning gives us freedom.”

Similarly, planning in the business sphere must be rigorous, but it should give the organization the freedom to be agile enough to adapt to a changing environment. How agile is your organization? Ask yourself this question and then take the necessary action to improve that key competency. Ask, assess, then act.

[Getting Underway at TedX Zurich](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/2011/10/getting-underway-at-tedx-zurich/)

On 4 October I took what’s been called an “intellectual vacation day” and attended TedX Zurich. Eclectic and sometimes electric, the event drew about 450 to the SRF television studios and hundreds more to the virtual conference streamed online.

I wouldn’t say the live event drew together people from all walks of life as the audience didn’t appear to be too diverse – most seemed to be young, creative types, or at least folks who were interested enough in creativity and the world of ideas to spend their day at a TedX event.

The diversity of presenters, however, was carefully planned by the legendary Swiss “ideas man” Peter Hogenkamp and his team. A magician, a musician, an experimental particle physicist, a neuroscientist, an asset manager, an anthropologist – oh, and a business consultant – were among the featured speakers.

In typical Swiss fashion, the event started precisely on time – on the hundredth of a second, in fact, someone pointed out. During the 20 sessions, audience-fed Twitter streams (#tedxzh) provided live commentary. Most of that instant feedback was positive but sometimes the Tweets were just clever, like the one sent following a too-brief introduction of one of the presenters: *Worst intro you can get ever anywhere—“Our next speaker is a consultant.”*

Over the next few days, I’ll write about some other quotable quotes and intellectually stimulating ideas from the church change leaders on stage that, I believe, loosely apply to the business world, too. I’ll ask some rhetorical questions for you to think about and then encourage you to assess the necessary actions based on your answers. The thought-leadership model introduced here is “Ask, assess, then act.” [Contact us – we’re here to help](http://thoughtleaderzone.com/request-consultation/).