

5 Ways to Be a More Influential Church Leader

<http://www.ronedmondson.com/2012/01/5-ways-to-be-a-more-influential-church-leader.html>

Februray 27, 2012

This is a guest post by Joel Garfinkle. Joel is recognized as one of the top 50 **executive coaches** in the U.S., having worked with many of the world's leading companies, including Oracle, Google, Amazon, Deloitte and The Ritz-Carlton. He is the author of 7 books, including **Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level**. Book Joel as the **inspirational, motivational keynote speaker** at your next event.

Here are 5 ways to be a more influential church leader:

The economically and spiritually troubling times our society faces today have resulted in significant challenges for many congregations. It is through these difficult times that church leadership is critical. It's easy to lead your congregation when things are going well and people are generally happy; however, when your followers are plagued with social and professional strife, this is when church leaders really need to shine. Here are five tips for managing and improving your reputation as a leader so you can develop your influence within the church and lead your congregation into the next era of prosperity.

Establish a solid reputation – Your congregation needs to have complete faith that they can count on you. This **reputation** isn't built on lip service, but on your history of keeping your word and getting things done. Once you've built this reputation, people will listen to you as an authority. They will look to you for guidance and advice.

Develop an enhanced skill set – This is often the strongest existing area for church leaders. Chances are, you are already highly skilled and proficient at your job. You are the expert they can turn to for all of their religious needs, with an abundance of knowledge in your faith. Your enhanced skill set is demonstrated through actions and a track record of helping congregation members with their spiritual needs. When your congregation has faith in your enhanced skill set, they will seek you out to answer their questions about spiritual matters.

Cultivate an executive presence – Although the term "**executive presence**" often has secular connotations, it is essential to becoming an effective religious leader as well. To improve in this area, you must exude confidence and assurance. Know in your head and your heart that you are guiding your followers down the correct path. If you are second-guessing yourself, your congregation will begin to second-guess you as well.

Never underestimate the power of being well-liked – First and foremost, your congregation has to like you. Unlike a business organization, you are not paying people to **follow your lead**. If you ask people why they chose a specific church when there are several of the faith within a reasonable distance, many will answer that their decision was at least partially based on "liking" the pastor and other church leaders. Superior likeability is needed for you to develop a solid rapport with your congregation. Although charisma is an innate skill, maintaining an optimistic outlook regardless of the circumstances can increase the natural charisma you have. Having superior likeability will result in others being inspired by you and wanting to follow your lead.

Acquire the power to persuade – Church leaders who have honed their power to persuade are able to more effectively and efficiently convince others to support their ideas and points of view. Through the power of persuasion, you can encourage people to work together toward a common purpose. Church leaders with the power to persuade are able to gain agreement and approval from people in a diverse group much more easily. To help facilitate the development of your own power of persuasion, align yourself with influential and powerful people. Aligning yourself with others who are already skilled at persuasion will magnify your own efforts and help you build your skills in this area.

What would you add to Joel's list?

