

Communication, Consultation, Consensus and Change

Effective mission planning and implementation requires clear, ongoing communication with your church members and wider community. This communication will include consultation and consensus building. It might require some knowledge of how cultural change is effected in a community of people. This resource provides some guidance on how you might do this throughout the mission planning process.

Communication

From the beginning to the end of the mission planning process, and at every step along the way, it will be necessary to let church members know what is going on. There is a saying 'what people aren't up on, they may be down on'. When people feel they know what is going on they will feel freer to think, to ask questions and to contribute. In sharing information, it is essential you are clear on what you want to say. Consider how you will share information. If information is shared in Sunday worship, the same information may need to be repeated over a month. Other methods should also be considered including social and print media.

Taking the Temperature

Before embarking on mission planning the temperature of the church for engaging in this kind of process might need to be taken. This might include casual conversations with church members asking about their vision for the future of the church and what they think about making a plan. If there is significant resistance, work may be needed to educate church members on the importance of mission planning.

Consultation

Consultation means drawing on the ideas, thoughts and feelings of your church. It is giving members an opportunity to have input into the mission planning process. A variety of opportunities should be provided. This could be done by holding meetings to enable people to share. It could also include surveys or other non-gathered methods. This might include taking plans and visions back to the church to hear what they think. Consultation does not mean that every idea suggested should be included in the plan. From the outset people should know that the process will involve considering and sifting ideas from the whole church.

Consensus

While not all suggestions need to be included, a consensus and level of support needs to be built around any plan. It is possible that many conversations need to be had to allay concerns people have or to help them understand why a particular direction is being taken. Consensus does not mean that everyone in the church agrees but ideally you may want the majority of people happy to go along with the plan.

Communication, Consultation, Consensus and Change *(continued)*

Managing Change

Mission planning may require some understanding of change management. Resource 7B in the *Manchester Mission Action Planning* resources has some useful information for considering this issue.

<https://www.manchester.anglican.org/documents/mission-action-planning-toolkit/>

Additional Resources

Canoeing in the Mountains — Tod Bolsinger

Advanced Facilitation Strategies — Ingrid Bens

Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making — Lenny Lind and Sam Kaner