

Ministry Matrix Explained

How to use the Ministry Matrix

The Ministry Matrix tool is designed to help you take your vision of ministry and implement a repeatable and sustainable strategy to achieve your stated goals. It is a global tool- meaning that it is to be used for individual components of your church's programs and culture as well as how those individual ministries interact with the overall vision, strategy and culture of your church.

About the tool:

"Everything you do tells someone something about you." Ed Stetzer

As you engage the five questions that are on the top of the ministry matrix, please consider carefully each category. These questions are designed to let you clearly articulate your ministry focus, learn from others, examine your own culture and strategy for ministry and approach your ministry values with confidence and conviction.

Who are we called to reach? *"For He who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles." (Gal. 2:8 ESV)*

Although we would love to believe that we are uniquely gifted and equipped as a church to reach everyone in our area with the Gospel, throughout the Bible and throughout history we see that God calls and gifts people and churches to a particular group. In the passage from Galatians cited above, Paul clearly states that he was called to reach the Gentiles whereas Peter was called to the Jews. While neither would have turned away anyone who was interested in the Gospel, Paul articulates that they were uniquely called, gifted and passionate about a certain type of person. In modern terms, we would say that Paul was called to the "Gentile demographic", whereas Peter was called to the "Jewish demographic." This is the basis for the Ministry Matrix tool.

The first question of the matrix is by far the most important. We cannot overemphasize how critical it is to articulate the emphasis of each aspect of your ministry. While we would all like to think that we are "here to reach everyone," it is not a biblical strategy, nor is it culturally relevant. God has called us, equipped us, gifted us and uniquely placed us in a context to do His work, which He has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10). Thus, answering the first "who" is PRESCRIPTIVE- whereas answering the other four questions of the matrix are DESCRIPTIVE. To articulate the first "Who" is to shape the vision and culture of the ministry. It also directs the allocation of resources and the direction of the ministry to the extent that it clarifies the goals and provides a metric of success. As you approach the first "who," we would encourage fasting and prayer focused on the Isaiah 6:8 question, "Lord, who would you have us to reach?" This question could be a time of commitment to pray over a 40-day season by the session and the leaders and the congregation to earnestly seek the Lord. It may also involve a "vitality" season seeking wisdom and direction for and then casting vision for the next season of ministry. There are great tools to empower this season, such as the GO Clusters offered through ONA with Dr. Ken Priddy. This season should include demographic studies of your area (available through companies like by Percept. com) to get a fuller understanding of who is in your neighborhood and discern their needs in order to build Gospel bridges to them.

The initial question of "Who are we called to reach?" also allows you to ask, "how are we uniquely gifted, poised, called and equipped to minister to the people God has placed on our hearts and in our context?" Again, as you work through the ministry matrix, understanding your own strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) will encourage and direct your ministry focus.

The rest of the story:

Who is reaching them?

As you articulate the ministry focus by answering and OWNING the mission (passionately caring about) those that you are called to reach, the second question of the matrix becomes an invaluable resource. “Who is reaching them?” This question allows you to learn from others, without reinventing the wheel! This question is not a qualitative examination- rather it’s a quantitative analysis of those who are successful in engaging those you are trying to engage. We would encourage you to approach this question on three levels.

First, on a social level: What community (or national) events are consistently attracting those you are called to reach? For example, let’s say you feel compelled to reach young families. In our experience as parents of young kids, a moms’ morning out/play date is a big draw! Using that filter we can answer the questions like this:

- Who are we called to reach? *Young families.*
- Who is reaching them? *The YMCA.*
- How are they reaching them? *By offering a moms morning out/play date for their young children.*
- What are they doing that we can do? *Offer a consistent and safe mom’s morning out/play date for moms with young children.*
- Why are we not offering it now?

So, from a social perspective, we are engaging families with young children in a need that we can meet within the existing resources we have.

The **second** question, “Who is reaching them?” asks the question in a ministry context. Who is reaching those we are called to reach regionally or nationally? As you do your homework in this area, you are looking at those whose ministry is known to connect with your target demographic. Again, you are looking at these ministries in a “half full” mindset- knowing that there are many ways in which your message and your methods will be quite different. However, they are reaching those that you have a passion to reach, so learning how God is using them to influence that group and culture is invaluable study. If time and resources allow, we would suggest a “weekend road trip” to visit one or two of these national or regional ministries or churches. Bring a team to include your ministry leaders, your musicians and your senior pastor to go and “experience success.” Your team will learn more in one visit than in ten seminars! Have each team member filter their experience through their area of responsibility.

The **third** area to consider when asking “who is reaching them” is to engage the question locally. Who is reaching those that are in your context locally? Again, this is a quantitative question- not a qualitative one! In other words, this is not a question of content- what they are teaching- it is about connecting!

How?

As you think through the question, “Who is reaching them?” the next logical question is to ask “how are they accomplishing this? Or, how are they reaching them?” Seek out those that are impacting your target demographic and analyze their methods. We encourage you to ask this with a “half full” mindset. That is, there are many things that you won’t agree with in their message. However, this is not about what we don’t agree with- this is about how they are positioning themselves to the “market.” Again, the best way to find this out is to take your leadership on a road trip- on a Sunday (or Saturday night in some cases) and truly experience what impacts your demographic. As your children’s ministry team and leaders walk

through the halls of a ministry that is impacting those that you feel called to reach, they will absorb the sights, sounds and feel of the ministry. As your worship team or musicians attend a worship service that is impacting the people you are called to reach, they will notice things and experience the ethos that is attractive to your target demographic. Again, the purpose of the visit is to take in the experience, not to critique the content. We suggest at least four different site visits if at all possible, but at least two. We will provide an “experience report” form to allow you to maximize the visits. We will also be available to “consult” with you to suggest some national ministries who are connecting with your demographic.

What?

What are they doing that WE can do (in our own way)? There will be many things that you will see as you experience other churches. Many of those things you will not want to reproduce in your own way. Many of those things you will not be able to recreate. But many of the things you will see you will be able to adapt and incorporate into you own ministry. We caution you to be diligent to understand the “why” behind the “how” so that as you approach the “what”, you will adapt it to your capacities, gifts, passions and heart bearing in mind that in order to reach a demographic that you are not currently reaching. You may not be able to continue to do the things you have been doing, the way you have been doing them. Which leads us to the last question of the matrix.

Why?

Why are we doing the things that we are doing? The only answer that is indefensible is “because we’ve always done it this way!” The goal of this question is to examine what you are doing in regards to the targeted demographic. The purpose is to own the strategy you are currently using and be able to graciously and passionately present it to an age or cultural demographic that may not immediately understand it. However, answering the “why” question may cause you to intentionally adapt your strategies and practices to engage the demographic that you have articulated in your original “who” column. (By “own” we mean to engage, defend and present your strategy and practices with passion, conviction and excellence. As Paul said in Col. 3:23 *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men...”*)

As you work through the matrix and articulate a vision and strategy to achieve it, ONA wants to partner with you to accomplish that vision. Through our Dare to Dream matching grant fund, as well as other resources that we would like to make available to you, our desire is *“that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2 Thess. 1:12)
