

5 THINGS

EXECUTIVE PASTORS NEED
IN A CHURCH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



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Many churches with congregations of 1,000+ weekly attendees have found themselves facing a unique challenge. With so many people to disciple, how do they ensure that no one falls through the cracks? In the midst of a rapidly evolving religious landscape, the Gospel calls believers to minister to the community around them in personal and relevant ways. To keep the church healthy and growing, it's crucial to connect people to real humans who can engage them.

Many churches are tackling these challenges by appointing a new type of senior leader: the Executive Pastor.

What distinguishes an executive pastor from the senior or teaching pastor? The latter two focus on preaching and setting the overall ministry vision of the church. Executive pastors, on the other hand, approach ministry with a more left-brained perspective. They spend their time optimizing the church's processes and people (staff, lay leaders, and volunteers) to achieve macro ministry goals.

Despite the challenges posed by today's religious and social milieu, technology has stepped in to fill the gap. A good church management system will provide the tools and information executive pastors need to make sound ministry decisions.

The following five tools are ones your church management system should include in order to equip your executive pastor.



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1

UNIFIED DATA

The heart of being a data-driven church is using information to understand the needs of your congregation. Too often as church leaders we make decisions based on assumptions or our own biases. Data enables you to fill in blind spots and make better decisions for the spiritual betterment of your members.

Unfortunately, many churches have data spread across a variety of software solutions — tools they've adopted in a piecemeal fashion as different ministry needs arose. It happens to the best of us. But data silos aren't something you should have to tolerate as a church leader.

Your church management system should be the single source of information about your church members. The good news is you don't have to look for a tool that will "do it all," but rather a "best of breed" database that integrates with other top-of-the-market solutions.

You don't have to settle.



2

PERSONALIZATION

It may seem like a bit of a contradiction to call church communication impersonal; after all, the call of discipleship couldn't be *more* personal. But too many ministries are sending out generic newsletters and emails that don't take an individual's unique life stage, interests, and involvement with their church in mind.

Big businesses like Amazon, Google, and Netflix have built platforms that use algorithms to track your behavior and learn what you like and don't like so they can deliver goods and services to you that are personal, timely, and relevant. And, whether we like it or not, this has created a culture today where we have high expectations and short attention spans.

Your church management system should allow you to separate your members into email lists based on all kinds of conditions, such as:

- Life stage (single/married, kids/no kids, etc.)
- Ministries they serve in
- Classes they attend
- Attendance history
- Giving history
- Communication preference (email, text, mail, call)

Having this information at your fingertips allows you to create pathways to move individuals to deeper levels of spiritual growth — in a way that feels personal and relevant.



3

STATUS FLAGS

Executive pastors need a quick way to measure which members are all-in — and who is on their way out. Attendance tracking allows you to measure your church’s performance against your goals, and it also enables you to find the people who are disengaging before it is too late.

One of the features built into the TouchPoint Church Management System is the ability to define individuals as “connected.” If a church member has attended two times in the last month and given once in the last month, they automatically get a “connected” badge on their people record. The badge status is updated dynamically based on their attendance and giving history with no extra work for your staff.

You can also have reports automatically emailed to your small group leaders when their participants have missed two weeks in a row, or generate other reports to track people who were formerly “connected” but are no longer. Using this data can help you proactively re-engage certain members of the congregation and communicate with them before they leave permanently.



4

EXTENSIBILITY

Every church is unique and goes through changes, and so having a system that can flex and evolve with you is really valuable.

Some church management systems out there are extremely flexible, and some offer a rigid off-the-shelf solution that is difficult to modify. And while there are a lot of benefits on either end of the spectrum, there are also downsides.

A highly flexible solution leaves more room for bugs and errors, and requires you to employ on-staff developers who can jump in and make modifications quickly.

As an executive pastor, you need a system that can flex to meet your church's unique needs without being prohibitively costly and time-consuming to maintain.

THE SWEET SPOT

OFF-THE-SHELF

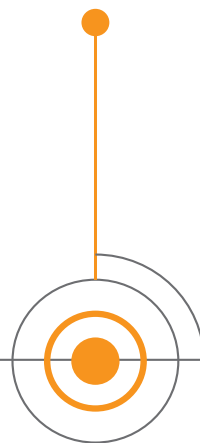
Pros: Hosting, Training, Support

Cons: Lack of flexibility

HIGHLY FLEXIBLE

Pros: Flexibility

Cons: No Hosting, Training, or Support; DIY



5

A MOBILE APP EVERYONE WILL USE

The Gospel of Jesus is as relevant today as it was 2,000 years ago. The call of ministry is to take that message and meet people where they are. Recent studies indicate that more people are attending church less often, which means you must make more use of your church website. That's where the "invisible church member" engages with you. Younger generations that are leaving the church are embedded in digital spaces, so that's where you want to draw them out.

Additionally, your ministry staff and volunteers need to be empowered to do outreach even if they don't have access to a laptop computer. Having a single church mobile app that covers a variety of needs will give you the greatest value out of that investment.

Your church app should include:

- Bi-directional integration with your church management system
- Communication features that can be unlocked based on a user's permissions in your database
- Attendance
- Kids' check-in
- Stream sermon media
- Ministry resources
- Registrations
- Members can update their own record
- Small group finder



Executive pastors must be able to understand the overall vision of where their church is going and lead the staff through the painstaking details of how to make necessary changes a reality. In order to do this, executive pastors must have access to accurate, up-to-date, and complete data. Having the right church management system in place is the first step to equipping this key ministry role for success.

Want to learn more about what's possible in current church management software? [Schedule a discovery call](#) with one of our church technology experts today!



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