

Change Readiness Assessment

The Change Readiness Assessment is designed as a practical tool for church leaders to ascertain how much “pain” they can expect from any improvement plan they intent to implement in a church. This has been field tested in numerous congregations around the country, but is not based on hard research. The goal is primarily to use it as a rough estimate as well as a discussion starter for church leadership teams. Feel free to contact the author for consulting, training, or coaching on this an related leadership and organizational change matters (anelson@group.com).

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$$\frac{\text{Leader Umph} + \text{Influencer Readiness}}{\text{Idea Impact}} \times \text{Time Speed} = \text{Transition Index}$$

Here is an opportunity for you and your team to openly and honestly focus on your church or ministry. During this time, it is our hope and prayer that this assessment and process time will guide your discussions and give you key insights. We trust that you will take away some critical next steps for your team to make the changes that are necessary for your church or ministry to prevail for the long haul.

Instructions

You can complete this worksheet individually or as a leadership team. Consider the emotional health and strength of your group if you choose to do this as a team.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your assessment and if you do this as a group, to direct your discussion and give your team any insights that would help guide you in the change process.
2. Have each team member identify what numbers they estimate each of the four factors, between 1-5 (Leader Umph, Influencer Readiness, Time Speed, & Idea Impact).
3. Tabulate the results through a simple mathematical process as explained:
 - A. Add the Leader Umph factor to Influencer Readiness factor
 - B. Multiply this sum by the Time Speed factor
 - C. Divide this number by the Idea Impact factor (results will range from 0.4 to 50.0)

Leader Umph

Most pastors are smart, talented, dedicated individuals. Unfortunately, traditional pastoral gifts, such as teaching, nurturing, and counseling, do not lend themselves to leadership situations. While studies (Barna) show that most pastors are not wired to lead, leadership is an important factor regarding effective change processes. Sometimes, pastors allow strong staff or lay-leaders to lead, or they create a leadership team that promotes change. You'll have to gently but honestly assess your particular situation. Using the scale below, assign a value from 1-5 to estimate your lead pastor's ability to implement the change.

- 1-Non-leadership ability and orientation.*
- 2- Very little leadership gifting or wiring.*
- 3- Modest leadership presence.*
- 4- Very good leadership presence.*
- 5- Vibrant, healthy leadership ability and experience.*

There are many variables that make up the leader's impact. Following are some questions to consider when estimating this factor. The more "yes" answers, the higher the likelihood of Leader Umph regarding improvement:

1. Has the senior/lead pastor been at the church less than 3 years?
2. Does the pastor plan to invest in the church more than 5 years?
3. Is the pastor willing to risk failure?
4. Does the pastor handle conflict well (vs. avoiding or exploding it)?
5. Does the pastor have a clear idea of what God wants the church to become?
6. Is the Leadership gift represented in the pastor by himself/herself & others?
7. Is the pastor an effective communicator?
8. Are new leaders being intentionally developed (list names of new leaders in the last year)?
9. Has the pastor started new ministries in the last year?
10. Does current pastor have the ability to fulfill the needed changes once made?

_____ **Leader Umph Factor** (will be between 1 and 5)

Influencer Readiness (of the congregation):

Write a confidential list of the top 10-15 influencers in your church (or 5-10% of active adult attendees). While position is not unimportant, emphasize informal influence, the ability to influence beyond formal roles. Staff can be included if they have significant influence.

Beside each influencer’s name, assign a number based on the response scale below

- 1. *Will resist the change/sabotage the new idea*
- 2. *Will discourage the change/not support the new idea*
- 3. *Will allow the change/new idea (neutral)*
- 4. *Will encourage the change/support the new idea*
- 5. *Will drive the change/promote the new idea*

1. _____ *Est. response* _____

2. _____ *Est. response* _____

3. _____ *Est. response* _____

4. _____ *Est. response* _____

5. _____ *Est. response* _____

6. _____ *Est. response* _____

7. _____ *Est. response* _____

8. _____ *Est. response* _____

9. _____ *Est. response* _____

10. _____ *Est. response* _____

11. _____ *Est. response* _____

12. _____ *Est. response* _____

13. _____ *Est. response* _____

14. _____ *Est. response* _____

15. _____ *Est. response* _____

TOTAL: _____

Total of estimated responses _____ **divided by number of influencers** _____

= _____ **Congregational Readiness Factor** (will be between 1 and 5)

Time Speed (number of months or years to implement the change):

1. As a team, determine how long you plan to take to fully implement this change by using the response scale below. You may also find the 2 methods described below helpful in determining your answer.
2. When you have finished document your answer in the space provided below.

Use the following scale to indicate how long you plan to take to fully implement this change:

1. 1-6 months
2. 6-12 months
3. 1-2 years
4. 2-3 years
5. 3-5 years

FAST CHANGE: *Bean Sprout Speed* (1 month-1 year)

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• great if there is a new leader/ripe lay leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the shock can kill the church
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provides visible rewards quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• talent or structure may not be in place
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• helps avoid development of negative coalitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a bad start can render future changes impotent

SLOW CHANGE: *Tree Sapling Speed* (3-5 years)

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• provides more time for people to "get on board"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• you can lose momentum and progressive leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• gives the pastor more time to teach on the subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• opposition to change can organize against you
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• allows incremental experiences to pave the way	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• you can fool yourself into thinking you are changing significantly

Time Speed Factor _____

Idea Impact (how different the church will be, due to this change):

1. Using the scale below, estimate the impact the change could have on your church or ministry with the corresponding number that best describes it.
2. When you are finished, document your answer in the space provided below.

Use the following scale to estimate the impact the change could have on your church or ministry and assign the number beside it:

1. Incremental Impact (You are improving existing ministries and the change will be difficult to observe.)

2. Noticeable but Minor Impact (You are improving existing ministries and adding new elements which may not draw significant attention to themselves. The new changes may be noticed by the congregation, but they are within your church's current values system and methods for ministry.)

3. Significant Impact (You are adding new elements that fit within your existing value system, but that impact will be highly noticed so that you will need to "sell" the change with planning, promotion, and explanation.)

4. Major Impact (This change is not currently within your church's value system and you will have the potential of changing your church culture. You need to assign significant time and resources to design and launch this change or new idea.)

5. Transformational Impact (You will have definite changes to your church culture. This change is far from the current value system and methods from which you are currently operating. When this change is made, you may experience new people coming to your church who will not have come through your former church culture.)

Idea Impact Factor: _____

Change Readiness Index (indicates how ready you are to implement this change):

1. Place the values of the 4 factors (from the previous pages) into the formula in order to determine a single Change Readiness Index.
2. When you are finished, use the scale below to determine how ready your church or ministry is to adopt your new idea and change.

$$(\text{Leader Umph} \text{ ______} + \text{Influencer Readiness} \text{ ______}) \times \text{Time Speed} \text{ ______}$$

$$\text{Idea Impact} \text{ ______} = \text{ ______}$$

“Doing the math”: Add the Leader Umph factor to the Influencer Readiness factor. Multiply this sum by the Time Speed factor. Divide this by the Idea Impact factor. The numerical result is your *Transition Index*. You’ll come up with a number, between 0.4 and 50.

Use this index to determine what level of difficulty you can expect, given the estimated factors per your transition plan. This will help a transition team develop an appropriate strategy as it represents how ready your church or ministry may be for change. None of the categories below are reasons to abort your current strategy. Rather, they are intended to help you in planning the transition phase. Much like a physician observes a patient who is about to deliver a baby, birthing new ideas and change is a delicate procedure. Effective leaders tend not to under estimate or over estimate the factors in the crucial transition phase, which will affect the life of a new idea and the health of an organization.

Use the following key to determine how ready your church or ministry may be to change. Circle the level your church or ministry is at:

Level 1: (0.4-1.5) **High risk.** If you are at this level, elaborate care will be needed in the transition process. You can expect tension and you may want to reconsider the advantages of implementing this change. To improve your church or ministry’s readiness to change, you may want to reassess the time factor you have chosen, providing for a longer transition. You may also want to reassess the new idea impact factor to see if you can or should reduce its impact.

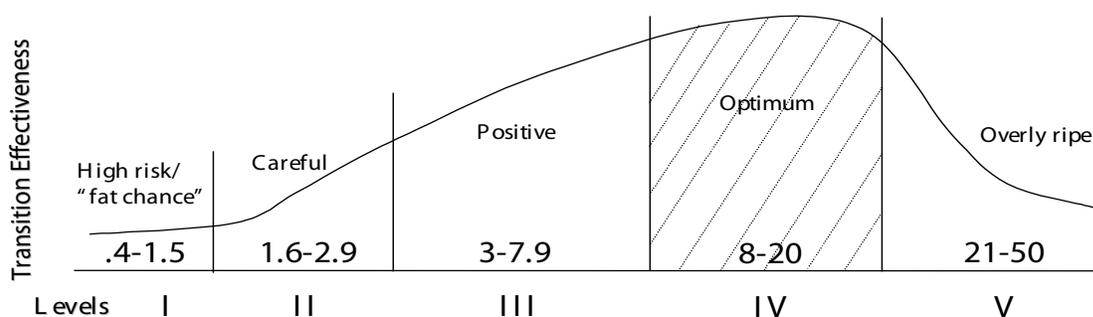
Level 2: (1.6-2.9) **Careful.** If you are at this level, significant planning and strategic thought need to go into the transition process, to reduce the pain your church or ministry could experience. At this level, realize there will be some in your church or ministry who may choose not make the transition. Be sure that God is in the idea. To improve your church or ministry’s readiness to change, you may want to reassess the recommended speed and take more effort to prepare your congregation.

Level 3: (3.0-7.9) **Positive.** If you are at this level, you will want to make sure your transition team does a thorough job in the transition phase. The change still has the potential to go well or go sour depending on the amount of positive momentum created by the change. To improve your church or ministry’s readiness, you may want to heighten communication and increase your leadership team’s personal social networking regarding the change. Take special care to encourage those in your church who are less positive toward the change.

Level 4: (8-20) Optimum: If you are at this level, then thumbs up to you and your team. To enhance the transition process, you will want to be enthusiastic yet gentle, in order to avoid carelessness during the phase. Continue to emphasize the positives regarding the improvement and cover the necessary bases of communication with your key influencers.

Level 5: (21-50) Overly ripe: If you are at this level, less care is needed above the normal communication and planning to implement the improvement. Unfortunately, when conditions are overly ripe, chances are you have waited too long and as a result, have lost some progressive people as well as potential ministry opportunities that have rotted on the vine.

Transition Index



Summary/Solutions:

The bottom line is that the wrong solution, effectively implemented, is still the wrong solution. At the same time, the right solution, inappropriately implemented will not benefit your church or ministry either. A transition team needs to be honest in assessing and estimating these four factors and then thoroughly consider the implications of modifying or not modifying them. Most failed church change processes are due to ignorance of transition issues.

PROCESS QUESTIONS: As a team, take a few minutes to discuss the following questions.

- 1. Are there any key insights or comments that you have as a result of working through this assessment?**
- 2. What have we possibly overlooked?**
- 3. What are our next steps?**