

James Lawrence

fixing wheels on the dream



Implementation

Execution, The Discipline of Getting Things Done, Larry Bossidy, Ram Charan, (Random House).

No, this is not King Henry VIII's guide to management. It's a business book, exploring the essential work of taking action. For a flavour, start with 'Letter to a new leader' towards the end of the book. Bossidy and Charan identify three 'building blocks' of execution. The first focuses on the leader's behaviours, the second on how to create a framework for cultural change and the third is about placing the right people in the right places. They outline three processes (people, strategy, operations) that help turn theory into reality. Admittedly, some aspects of this business handbook aren't appropriate to a church context. But much of it is! Highly recommended.

Further resources

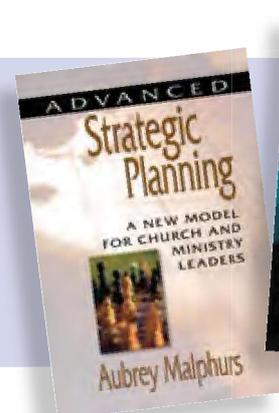
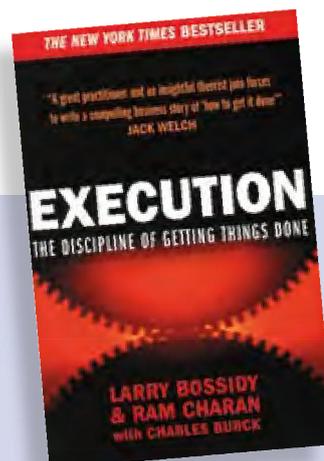
Advanced Strategic Planning, Aubrey Malphurs, (Baker).

Malphurs offers a very programmatic approach, backed by great insights and useful questionnaires. Reading this book calls for perseverance, but it repays the effort – don't miss the gems that it contains.

Courageous Leadership,

(Chapter 3) Bill Hybels, (Zondervan). Hybels (of Chicago's Willow Creek Community Church) is passionately in favour of gaining and implementing vision. I prefer this book to *Holy Discontent*, his exploration of the importance of dissatisfaction in the vision-finding process. There are some thoughtful insights on how to communicate a vision. Chapter 3 is particularly relevant: 'Getting-it-done leadership – Turning vision into action'.

Practicality is the key to making the journey from dream to reality. Here James Lawrence lists 'essential' resources for enabling action in the local church, listed under three helpful headings, supplemented by 'and if you have time' suggestions. Please note that there's some inevitable overlap with some of the resources recommended in CL69 for the area of 'discerning direction'.





Change

Leading Change in a Congregation,

Gilbert Rendle, (The Alban Institute).

This is an excellent book on the intricacies of change in a faith community. Using a series of intriguing metaphors (journey, wilderness, rollercoaster, spinning wheel), Rendle considers change from a variety of perspectives. The opening chapter on leadership and change is particularly strong. His analysis of the 'two fears' of congregations with regard to change is very helpful. Full of insight and wisdom, each chapter also includes exercises for leaders to help turn theory into reality.

Further resources

The Challenge of Change,

Phil Potter, (CPAS/BRF).

Here's a home-grown product, written from a UK parish perspective. Reflecting on his own experience of leading change in the congregations he has served, Phil tells real-life stories, integrating models and concepts throughout. Again, each chapter ends with questions for reflection.

Leading Change,

John Kotter, (Harvard Business Press).

Reprinted and updated, Kotter's book offers a wealth of insight on change management from a secular business-textbook perspective.

Who Moved My Cheese?

Spencer Johnson, (Vermillion).

This massively successful bestseller is short (94 pages), entertaining (it's a parable about mice) and comes from the author of *The One Minute Manager*. Intrigued? So was I. This is a great fable on change that many church leaders have bought in multiple copies for their congregations.



Conflict

Making Peace with Conflict,

Carolyn Schrock-Shenk and Lawrence Ressler, (Herald Press).

This excellent primer addresses conflict in a variety of settings, including the church. The authors come from the Mennonite tradition, with many years of experience in mediation and conflict resolution. After an initial section on the principles of conflict, the book focuses on practical skills: communication, problem solving, dealing with violence, forgiveness and healing. This is followed by a helpful section on power in conflict (systemic, race and gender) before the final section on conflict-transformation in the family, congregation and on the global scene. The Mennonites lead the field in conflict transformation, and this book is an excellent synthesis of years of experience and learning.

Further resources

How to Learn Through Conflict,

Colin Patterson, (Grove Books, Pastoral Series 96).

This booklet starts from the assumption that conflict cannot be avoided, but that it can become something positive through which all parties can learn. With stories, exercises and practical reflection, it offers a short and practical introduction to this important topic.

Difficult Conversations,

Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen, (Penguin).

Don't be put off by the fact that all three authors are Harvard professors. This is definitely not an academic treatise. It is a wonderfully thoughtful, practical guide on how to have 'difficult' conversations. I wish I had read this years ago.



Training and advice

The London Mennonite Centre's Bridge Builders programme provides excellent training on conflict resolution, as well as a mediation service for those in conflict. Check www.menno.org.uk/bridgebuilders.

Check the Forgiveness Project (www.theforgivenessproject.com).

For a particular focus on 'healing harm within the church' visit www.matt5-9.co.uk.

The members of the CPAS Regional Leadership Development Advisers' team are available to act as external facilitators in helping churches turn vision into action. Call **01926 458454**.

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