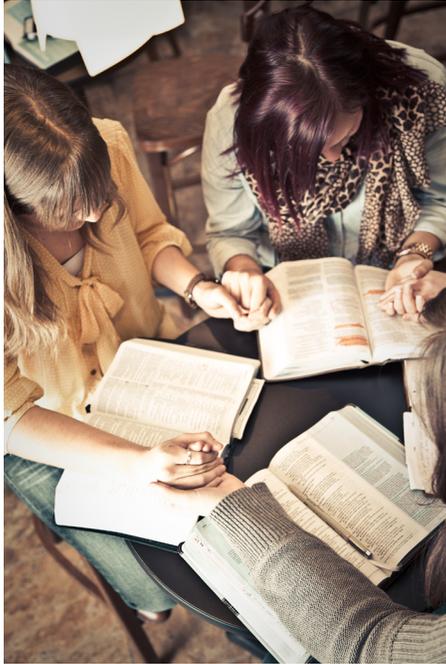


HEALTHY CHURCH

STRATEGIES FOR **ACHIEVING**
AND **MAINTAINING** GROWTH





HEALTHY CHURCH

WHAT IS A HEALTHY CHURCH?

Many have considered this question; however, very few have incorporated game-changing steps to address their conclusions. Some of those few include a group of Kingdom-minded individuals who saw the potential that technology could have for supporting the health of the church.

THE FELLOWSHIP ONE VISION

With features no Church Management Software (ChMS) had ever had—or has yet to have—Fellowship One (F1) was designed to give ministry leaders extraordinary visibility into the critical touch points of their members' lives. The software lets churches leverage that visibility to provide a level of care that truly facilitates health for individuals and the church.

Partnering with churches over the past 10 years has allowed the F1 team to stay current with church needs, trends, and innovation. We've seen that most churches have added technology to their operations at some level. However, the churches that distinguish themselves as truly healthy have incorporated structure, accountability, flexibility, and responsibility into each process, into all "people" decisions, and even into their technology, in order to facilitate ministry and leadership of individuals.

A NEW APPLICATION FOR FELLOWSHIP ONE

One church leading the way as a model for the concept of a healthy church is Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas. The 6-campus church, with sites spread out around the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, is focusing the question of church health first at the foundational and pivotal level of staff and internal structure.

Though this is not an entirely new direction, Gateway's twist on it revisits and expands upon the role that technology has typically played in the health of the local and global Church. In keeping with its track record, Fellowship One proves its relevance with functionality that supports Gateway's organic approach to church health.



HOW IT STARTED

Believing that decisions made together increase potential for more godly decisions, Gateway began to unify the 9-10 senior leaders around the notion of a healthy church. They wanted it to be a collective leadership definition.

Associate Senior Pastor Allan Kelsey had been thinking about Scripture’s liberal use of human anatomy metaphors to describe the Body of Christ. He wondered if biological structures could inform a general definition of health. Kelsey discovered that any organism taller than 9 inches must have a skeleton to survive, and that the larger the organism, the more vital the structure. He also learned that human bone marrow hunts for dead cells and replaces them, so that every bone is completely replaced every 7 years.

Gateway was in its 14th year. This correlation to 7 years seemed to indicate it was time for major bone replacement within the church! Using this knowledge of the skeletal system, they decided to start with the organizational structure of the church, with a goal of transferring health from bone (staff) to muscle (volunteers) to skin (congregation). Over several years, they completely overhauled their infrastructure at the bone level.

HOW IT DEVELOPED

Gateway began by categorizing the church’s various missions into three main buckets, with a designated leader at the helm of each one. For quite some time, Gateway has felt a calling to a global “Apostolic” mission to model and give away what they produce, so they positioned this mission prominently in their new structure.





1. ORGANIZATIONAL RESTRUCTURE

Gateway wanted to get away from the 2-4 year average church staff tenure by putting people in the right roles and equipping them to succeed.

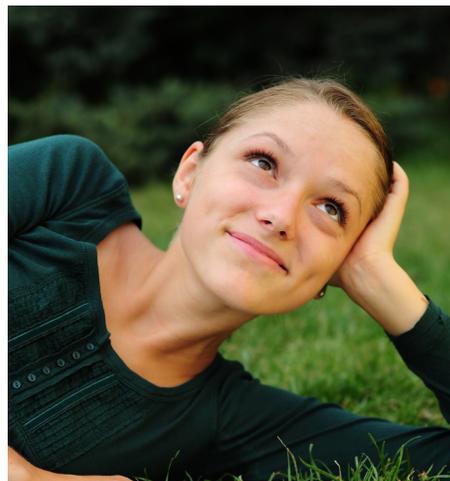
Existing roles and placements didn't make sense based on the new structure, so they removed names from their org chart and ruthlessly moved roles around to fit the new mission structure. They made sure that any decision made would scale as they grew.

It took 6 months and affected 1/3 of the staff.

“The job of staff restructuring is to reconcile the functional organization (how we want things to work) with the relational organization (how they actually operate.) When it is not managed properly, change can have a devastating effect on an organization.

The subject of change management is an industry all its own, but we can minimize the turmoil of change if we plan and prepare for its effects.”

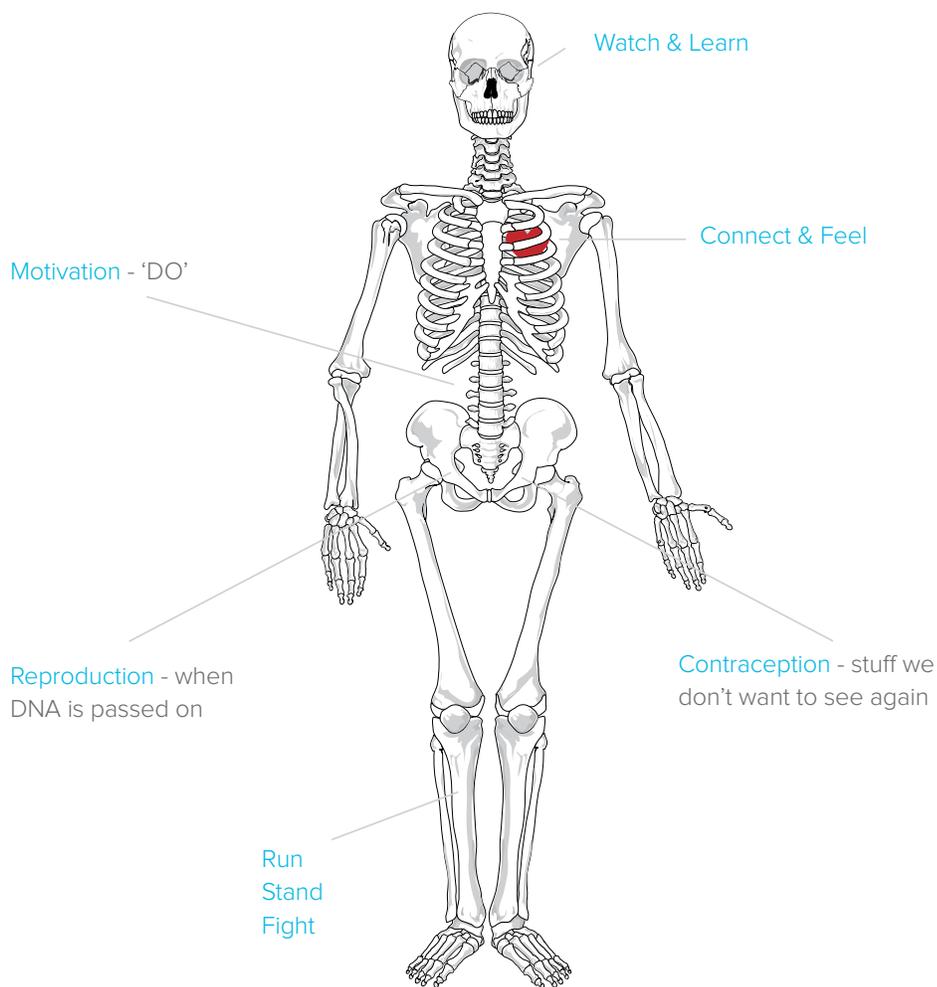
Eric Soon
Senior Director
Professional Services Consultants



2. MODELING HEALTH: THE “GATEWAY GUY”

Next, Gateway leaders recognized natural physical correlations to spiritual maturation in their skeletal model. They reason that their Gateway Guy is a model of a healthy person and a healthy organization, and, at the same time, represents both the structure and the process of building health.

With his backbone representing the church’s governance, the rest of Gateway Guy’s structure corresponds to human mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual processes.



“Healthy churches will not necessarily look alike. We want to share everything we have that works, but each church needs to determine its own applications, based on the calling God is placing on them.”

Allan Kelsey
Senior Associate Pastor
Gateway Church

3. NEXT STEPS

When the existing staff “diet” was layered over Gateway Guy’s developmental structure, “nutritional” gaps were revealed. It gave the leaders a clear picture of where they needed to focus to build up leaders and staff.

Every six months, they perform a “healthcare” check-up to make sure they are still on course in providing the nutrition Gateway Guy requires for each stage of growth. For the staff, that means:

+ **Documenting Expectations and Providing Tools for Success**

Each new hire receives a comprehensive manual for growth.

+ **Determining Competencies**

Competencies are skills that can be created, improved, and trained for, and these leaders know exactly which ones they’re building toward. Gateway uses Willow Creek’s 3 Cs of people evaluation (character, competence, and chemistry) and the *For Your Improvement* kit (Lominger) to match staff to 67 competencies.

+ **Determining Levels of Function**

Gateway uses the 9 Box model to assess how well people are doing in their current roles.

+ **Determining Leadership Competencies**

Everyone on staff is considered a leader, and specific and tangible language is used to convey levels of leadership:

- Lead self
- Lead others
- Lead teams
- Lead departments
- Lead functions

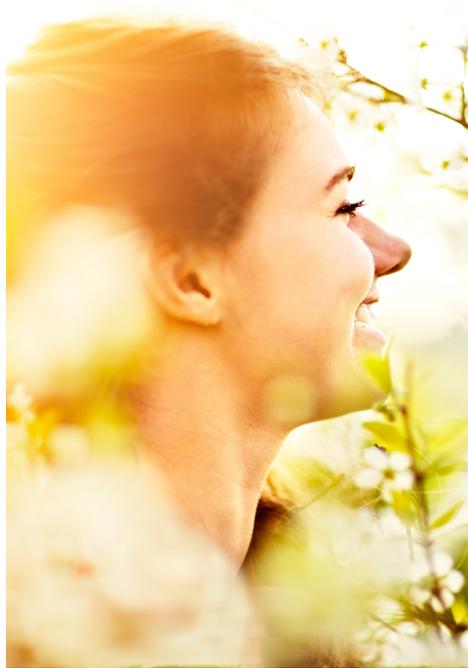
This creates a distinct path for growth, advancement, and defining responsibilities.

TRAINING

Gateway believes a pastor should be a license-carrying individual, and requires their pastors to earn 12 Continuing Education (CE) points per year, like other licensed roles, such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and lawyers. Through their First Tuesday all staff training, they provide 50 courses (annually), team-building exercises, and special speakers to edify staff members on a variety of topics, including personal issues like marriage.

4. HEALTH SUPPORTED BY TECHNOLOGY

During this process, Gateway leaders were acutely aware of the role technology could play in spiritual learning, active pastoring, and building community within the Body, and were taking steps to build out that functionality for use by the congregation.



Already in place at Gateway was Fellowship One, the technology that tracks the attendee and member growth process. F1 monitors individual growth from the “watch and learn” level (visitor assimilation) to the “doing” stage (spiritual engagement), to becoming leaders who train up new believers (reproduction) and who, finally, stand strong for the Kingdom (run/stand/fight).

In the same way, Fellowship One supports staff development benchmarks and monitors staff progress (individual and team), enabling not only a plan for maturing the church’s structure, but also accountability to ensure each goal is being met and exactly where improvements can be made.

The Fellowship One message has always been that processes and plans are more likely to succeed with trackable accountability and the ability to measure progress. This makes the software perfectly suited to **monitor staff development.**

SUMMARY

Technology is the silent partner in nearly every church discussion on growth and health. From church management software to social platforms—and everywhere in-between—technology is a vital part of the 21st century church.

Technology is not a solution for growth on its own. In the absence of good leadership and well-defined and managed processes, it can easily become a hindrance more than a help. That's why the Fellowship One way to a healthy church starts with education, process-based training, and software built for the way churches operate.



LET'S TALK!

Explore ways Fellowship One can help make HEALTHY CHURCH a reality for your church.

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