



## Four Keys to Keeping Network Leaders Moving

Best practices from network leader discussions of  
current challenges and issues

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## **THE NETWORK CHALLENGE:**

How can a network leader / facilitator keep a growing network's leaders and work teams focused on fulfilling their commitments?

## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF KEEPING LEADERS MOVING?**

1. Able to transform potential into real outcomes and achievement
2. Helps sustain momentum
3. Allows people to see God at work
4. Builds team morale and enthusiasm
5. Establishes credibility and trust
6. Models expectations and commitment levels for the rest of the network
7. Enables a greater impact

## **WHY IS IT SUCH A CHALLENGE?**

1. As the reach and size of a network expands, the task moves beyond the core team into distributed working teams. Commitment, focus and progress can dissipate as distance, complexity and communication becomes more challenging.
2. Network leaders bring different levels of availability, commitment, passion and skill to their roles.
3. Many networks are often staffed by volunteers or share resource people with other ministries and day jobs. This results in changing priorities, availability and focus.
4. Dispersed and remote work teams face additional challenges from isolation and miscommunication to unclear objectives.

## FOUR KEYS TO KEEPING NETWORK LEADERS / TEAMS MOVING

### 1. Set Clear Expectations:

- When inviting people to participate, set clear expectations from the beginning. Let them know contribution is expected.
- Frame the expectations for attending a working meeting. “You’re not being invited to a meeting; you’re being invited to join a 5-10 year project.”
- Be willing to revise roles, responsibilities and expectations as the network grows. Clearly document the roles and responsibilities, but consider customizing them to each network member’s availability and contribution.
- Check-in regularly on availability, commitment, knowledge, skills and passion. Be ready to adapt expectations to changing levels of member availability and engagement over time. “Has anything changed since we last talked?”
- Establish and share group expectations for meeting times, emails, phone calls etc. For example, do you recognize common work hours, time zone delays, translation issues?



Have a resource on the topic? Do something different? Share what has worked for you! Post your idea on the [Synergy Common's Discussion Forum](#) and help other network leaders.

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## 2. Share Information:

- Every meeting should have a stated purpose, outcome and agenda.
- Take notes and document decisions, deliverables, commitments and timelines.
- Ask each person to share their commitments and action items with the group before leaving the meeting. This needs to be built into the meeting agenda.
- Use visuals, maps and stories to keep the vision / big picture visible to everyone.
- Establish a shared final / official dataset so that all leaders have access to the same information. Multiple systems, information sources and versions create confusion and misunderstanding.
- Provide regular opportunities for connection, communication and sharing -- both personal and professional.
- Keep everyone in the loop. Don't exclude team members. Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!
- Keep clear measures, track progress and share the results.



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### 3. Provide Accountability:

- Schedule feedback loops / processes several times a year focused on progress. Establish these processes as norms so team leaders know you will be regularly checking in with the entire team. This increases accountability with singling out individuals. Share the status updates.
- Let people set their own commitment level, then hold them accountable to that. Ask each person how much they are able to contribute. It varies per person. Generally look for a minimum of 4 hours a week. Allow each person to set their own expectations. “If anything is worth doing it is worth spending four hours a week on it.”
- Quote: “We perfectly live out what we actually believe. A low commitment level actually means this is what a person internally thinks is an appropriate level of commitment.” Our actions speak louder than our words when it comes to seeing what someone actually believes.
- Manage low levels of commitment by establishing clear expectations and holding them up as a mirror so they can see how their beliefs are squaring with their actions. Acknowledge truth, avoid using guilt or shame to motivate people.
- Provide large measures of prayer, grace, laughter, and forgiveness.
- The most significant forms of accountability and commitment in a network context are a leader’s accountability to God, to one another, and to the network’s vision. Regularly discuss these commitments and sources of motivation. Keep people connected to them.
- Start a new project by finding a willing champion/advocate and creating an interest group. If the interest group gains traction, momentum and demonstrates progress, then it can become a working group. This will result in less disruption if assignments are not completed, allows leaders to self-select out if not interested and allows new leaders to build trust within the network.
- After working with team members without progress, it may become necessary to “fire” core team and network members who don’t show commitment. Often people know they are dropping the ball and are relieved when they are given the freedom to step away. Thank them for their gifts and contributions.

#### 4. Maintain Focus / Momentum / Motivation:

- The core team is the “Moral Owner” for the needs of the network.
- Set achievable tasks and objectives (LAO's) in 90 days cycles — 90-Day Objectives. This maintains a concrete, time-limited action focus.
- Use S.M.A.R.T. goals, clear outcomes and measure results.
- Maintain a sense of urgency that is aligned with the vision and purpose.
- Keep everyone informed of progress
- Assign tasks and objectives to two or more people so there is mutual accountability, encouragement and margin to keep things moving.
- Celebrate successes and accomplishments not just updates. Show appreciation. Recognize contribution in team meetings.
- Value people AND tasks. Both are essential to a successful partnership.
- Achievement and progress are contagious. So is the lack of it.
- Help leaders work in their areas of knowledge, gifting and passion. Understand what each leader needs to remain motivated and engaged.
- Actively make it easy to work together by removing barriers.



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## 5. Network Leader Reflections:

1. Describe your sense of the situation:
  - a. What did you see / hear about this sense?
  - b. What do you think about this issue?
  - c. What do you feel about this issue?
  - d. What is the impact on them, on you, the network, the mission?
  - e. What do you want for yourself? The team or leader? For the network?
  - f. What other explanations are possible?
  - g. What actions have been taken so far?
2. Identify 2-3 ideas from this document that might apply to or help the issue.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.

3. How might you use them in this situation?

4. Pray about the situation? What is God's leading?

5. Next steps. What needs to happen first? What happens next?