

The Critical Importance of A Healthy CM Structure

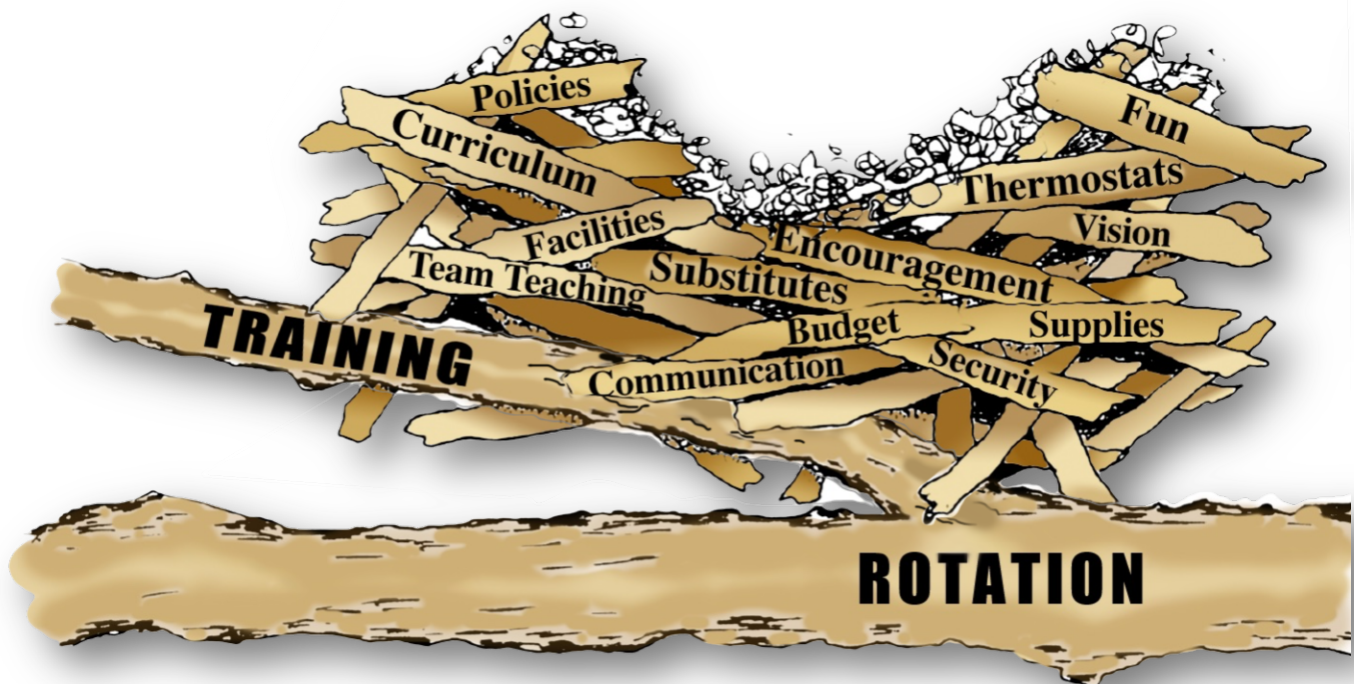
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Foundational Principle of The CM “Structure”

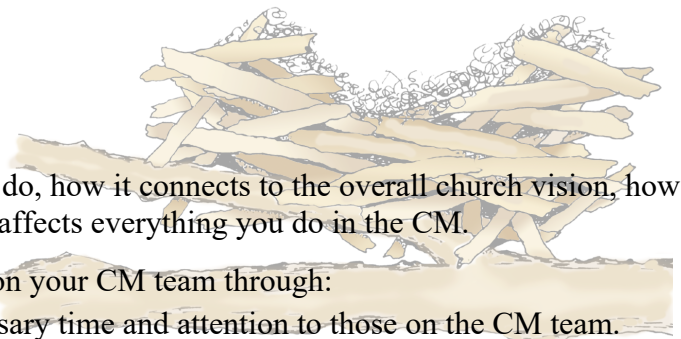
In one of my earlier ministries, I struggled with too few volunteers. I found myself experiencing the broad spectrum of feelings and emotions. On some Sundays, I would be joyfully trusting God, and other Sundays, I would be angry at “those people who sit calmly in the adult service and don’t care about the children.” I did all I could to beg God for more people! I even prayed the exact words of Jesus in Luke 10: 2 “*Lord, please send out workers into your harvest field...*” But nothing changed. People were still not volunteering to help!

After several weeks of frustration, God finally gave me an answer I’ll never forget. I didn’t hear His voice, but I certainly “heard” His answer: “*Steve, I have many people to send your way, but you aren’t ready to receive them.*” God began to show me the importance of a healthy “structure” in the ministry. He opened my eyes to the fact that He wasn’t going to send me called, gifted people if the “structure” of the ministry would just discourage them or “burn them out.” I’ve grown to compare this concept to a “warm, safe nest” that birds build to raise and protect their young. We need to build that same “warm, safe nest” for those who serve on our children’s ministry team!

Over the many years since that encounter with God’s wisdom, I’ve sought to assist others in building the ministry “nest,” so that God would bring His volunteers to the CM. God will bless the ministry to the degree that we are humbly submitting to the Lord and doing all we can to build up those who serve alongside us! On the following pages, I give you an opportunity to check the areas of your own “ministry nest” that may need more support.



Building Your “Ministry Nest”



Ministry Vision – Knowing why you do what you do, how it connects to the overall church vision, how it connects to the “Great Commission,” and how it affects everything you do in the CM.

Team Development – Nurturing those who serve on your CM team through:

Encouragement / Support – Devoting necessary time and attention to those on the CM team. This is eventually not possible without the help of assistants or department coordinators.

Positive Communication – Creating and protecting effective, positive communication from the CM leadership to the CM team, among the CM team, from the CM leadership to the church pastor(s), from the CM to the parents, and from the parents to the CM.

Enjoyable Interaction – Building a CM team who enjoy serving together, and who are encouraged to interact before, during and after the services. An active, growing plan to engage the CM team socially and electronically.

Team-Teaching – Creating an environment, which doesn’t permit CM team members being alone with children. A CM team that is made up of satisfied, happy volunteers who deeply enjoy serving together in teams. (This “hallmark” creates a reputation/image that attracts others to join the team!

Training – A plan for initial and on-going training for those who serve on the CM team. This training includes creativity, classroom management, interaction with children, interaction with parents, child evangelism/discipleship, emergencies/surprises, security, etc.

Rotation – A plan for “rotating” the CM team through set “cycles” of service (6 months, etc.). When the “cycle” of service has ended, the team members have the option of “rotating out” for an entire “cycle,” being available as substitutes, or serving as “floaters” to serve wherever needed during services.

Team identification – Attractive, professional, secure CM team ID badges, team wear, etc.

Curriculum – Developing, evaluating, and maintaining a set curriculum that is vision-based, child-focused, interactive, scripturally-sound, and that includes effective tools for teachers and parents.

Policies / Procedures – Establishing CM policies and procedures that protect the children, the team members, the CM leaders, the parents, and the entire church.

Supplies – Create a process for providing the CM team the supplies they need to be effective teachers. The process also includes a supply room in which supplies are stored, catalogued, and distributed.

Budget – Establish, maintain, and grow a CM budget that is “your CM vision expressed in numbers.” The existence of a growing CM budget legitimizes the CM and is an excellent tool for monitoring the growth of the ministry.

Facility – Effectively using the current facility; letting the facility express the CM vision; using the CM facility as a recruiting “tool”; and developing dreams for an expansion of the facility to better serve the ministry growth.