



Action Plan for Ministry

The Action Plan material contains four sections that outline both the 'why' and the 'how to' of ministry in your company. Each section contains a brief discussion of its purpose, of its importance and of how to teach the material. These sections are complete, a ready tool for your use.

All of the teaching is based on understanding the reason for an action, then determining a specific application for your organization. Bruce Wilkinson talks about the 'why' in his audio and videotapes. He states: "Your Company is a gift from God and you as the owner are a steward of the gift." And, as steward, you have a unique platform for supporting salvation, sanctification and service activities.

Larry Burkett talks about specific 'how to' steps in his audio series about "God's Principles for Operating a Business." Not all of his suggestions will apply directly to your company. But we need specific steps to give credibility to our marketplace testimony. Therefore we begin by gaining a clear understanding of your business purpose and then we progress to planning for execution of that purpose. Outlines and worksheets that facilitate the learning process follow.

Experience has shown that a CEO or Owner who applies these steps will move from vision to fulfilment, from theory to action. And action will lead to kingdom fruit, the "gold, silver and precious stones" of I Corinthians 3:12.

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**“Transform business leaders throughout Canada to live their lives
as ambassadors for Christ in the marketplaces of the world”
(2 Cor.5:20; Rom. 12:2)**

The Action Plan Process

As in most activities where spiritual growth occurs, the Action Plan process can involve internal stress. Corpath members wrestle with the conflict between the world's values and God's direction on a day-to-day basis.

On the one hand, we have been trained by the world. Business owners and leaders thrive on the ability to move quickly, to make decisions uninhibited by structure or bosses. As a result, planning, and the accountability for planned actions, is often ignored.

On the other hand, the Bible explicitly challenges us to trust God and to plan, to be accountable. God has a plan for Israel; Christ and Paul both had ministry plans. Seeking counsel, planning and accountability are clearly stated themes throughout the book of Proverbs.

For these reasons, the Action Plan process frequently involves spiritual growth for the Christian CEO or Owner. The accompanying sections have been created to help you follow the biblical exhortation to plan, while giving you room to customize those plans for your situation.

While these modules can be used separately, the best result comes from working through them in order. The material is intended for study in Corpath Groups. It can also be used in a group setting, one-on-one meetings, or by an individual studying on his own.

1. Developing a Business Purpose Statement

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Entrepreneurial ability appears to rely on instinct. It seems to work best as response to opportunity. Frequently entrepreneurs have a reactive, fire-fighting style of management. Success, if it comes, is as much by guess and gut feel as by planned, intentional activity.

This is a questionable style for Christian entrepreneurs who run a business set apart for God. We are not fulfilling a stewardship responsibility very well if we leave success to guesswork, particularly if we handle business ministry responsibilities in the same manner.

A non-biblical proverb says: "If you aim at nothing, you're sure to hit it." Biblical wisdom states the opposite: "The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty" (Proverbs. 21:5 LB).

To be good stewards, we need a target and a plan. The start of any business plan is a simple sentence or two that defines the target- the reason for the existence of the business. It's called the Purpose or Mission statement. It should reflect the clearest articulation of God's purpose for that company, as seen by God's steward, the owner or operator. It should be clear, easily memorized and a personal reflection of the owner's vision.

If you have not written a mission statement for your business, we suggest that you try the following approach. On a worksheet, isolate the essential issues. At a minimum, you should include the following: identification of the product, the product users and the purpose of the business. Natural, effective ministry generally flows directly from the product or market environment in which the business functions.

Once you have listed the information, you should prayerfully use the data to discuss a mission statement with your management team. That team may be just you and your spouse, it may be you and some key Christian friends, or it may work best with key members of your company. We have included a 'how to' list to help you through this process.

The example of a completed statement reflects the very first planning activity for a recording studio. The company started with a policy of equipping only Christians. Additional ministry activities were brought into focus. One was to target Christian music groups. That decision alone gave a "reason for being" that energized the entire organization.

Another direct result of the process was expansion of the company witness beyond a testimony to non-Christian recording groups. By providing a spiritually supportive environment, the product of the 'ministry' could reach out through recordings to both Christians and non-Christians alike.

Example Of A Completed Mission Statement

MY PRODUCT OR SERVICE: Sound Recordings

MY PRODUCT IS USED BY: Musical Groups

THE PURPOSE OF MY BUSINESS IS: To provide facilities and the environment that helps musicians relax and record their best music.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN MY BUSINESS IS MET BY: The witness of our Christian staff to all musicians. A prayerful, affirming haven for Christian music groups.

I KNOW I AM FULFILLING GOD'S PURPOSE IN MY BUSINESS WHEN:

Clients/musicians are led to Christ. More Christian groups use our facilities.

The Benefits Of A Mission/Purpose Statement

1. A proactive, focused manager is a better steward of God's resources than a reactive entrepreneur.
2. The purpose statement gives a long-term view about the business that can be the start of an exciting action plan.
3. A long-range view helps all business: small, medium or large, avoid the pitfalls contained in many opportunistic business decisions.
4. Some uses of the purpose statement are:
 - a. It helps say no to activities that are not related to the business strategy.
 - b. It can bring consistent focus to the business direction.
 - c. It can be a judge on alternative courses of action.
 - d. It gives new employees an understanding of whether or not they want to be a part of this business.
 - e. It can be a guide for employee training.

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Aspects Of An Effective Mission/Purpose Statement

- CLEAR
- CONCISE
- COMPLETE
- PERSONAL
- SHORT
- EASY TO MEMORIZE
- ANSWERS: "WHY DOES THIS BUSINESS EXIST?"

A Mission Statement Checklist

- Pray.
- Complete the worksheet.
- Discuss the data with your ministry team.
- Write several draft statements based on the worksheet contents.
- Put it aside for a period (no longer than two weeks).
- Select the best draft.
- Rewrite that one.
- Go with it.
- Review after six months and modify as necessary.

Proverbs 4:26 "Ponder the path of your feet and let your ways be established."

MISSION STATEMENT WORKSHEET

- My product or service is:
- My product is used by:
- The purpose of my business is to:
- God's purpose in my business is met by:
- I know I am fulfilling God's purpose in my business when:

2. Defining the Marketplace Mission Field

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Businesses all have one thing in common. They all involve people. In fact, no business could function without people and interpersonal relationships. Once God helps us see that our business is a platform to showcase His glory, it follows that our business relationships represent a fertile mission field. And, as chief executive or owner, we have influence in that field.

How big is the field? Start with your company.

- First of all consider your employees. Count both full time and part time, multiplying by 3.5 to factor in their families. Don't overlook any independent sales agents or reps that sell for you, but are not hired. Multiply by the family factor.
- Second, we can't exist without suppliers. We rent from them, purchase from them, get our cars serviced, buy travel tickets, etc. Estimate the number of people with whom you have a direct contact, plus families. Don't miss the other vendors that

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quote a price for you but don't get the order. They, and their families, should be included in this number.

- Third, the customers. Add up the number of people that your company contacts this year as you sell, ship or otherwise meet their needs. In addition, some do not buy from you, even though you have made the sales contract. You also influence many through advertising using print, direct mail, radio or TV.
- Finally you touch the lives of competitors and members in trade associations. If you are not competing with them, they may even refer business to you and vice versa. Perhaps you see them at shows or conventions or even serve on a board with them.

Add the number of people in each category. Many Corpath participants are surprised at the large number of opportunities they have to influence lives at the site of your mission field.

John 4:35 "...look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest."

DEFINING AND MEASURING YOUR MISSION FIELD

(show the total number of people in each case.)

Employees

- Active employees and their families
- Past or retired employees and their families
- People who apply to work for us

Vendors

- Those we buy from and their families
- Those we do not buy from and their families

Customers

- Those who buy from us now and their families
- Those we solicit but are not able to sell
- Those who see our advertising, receive our literature

Competitors and trade association contacts

- We refer business to them or they to us
- We see them at shows or conventions
- We belong to organizations with them

Others

- Our business neighbours and those who pass by
- Friends that we have because of business

Grand Total _____ (your impact area of ministry...Acts 1:8)

3. Brainstorming the Mission Options

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As Christians we have been charged by the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. We have learned that our mission field is comprised of the many people that we relate to in our business lives. The

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function of this section is to explore the several possible opportunities of reaching the business contacts God has given to us. We want to foster an environment in which His creativity can flow through us as we seek direction from Him.

To begin, we need to make sure that our personal witness is consistent with what we are trying to do. Tom Peters wrote in *Passion For Excellence*, "You are your enacted priorities, no more no less. The mundane, minute-to-minute decisions you make as you do your own job are the most powerful teachers you have." As God's ministers in the marketplace we need to "walk our talk", or our testimony will be painfully impaired.

Rather than copying the actions of others, we begin by doing those things that we are most comfortable doing. Because God has gifted us in both a natural and a spiritual way, what is perfect for us may be unsuitable for others. Our plans should flow naturally from our gifts and should fit with the gifts of our associates who join us in this ministry.

Finally, as we put ourselves in positions that will be conducive for missionary work, we need to focus on who it is that woos and calls, convicts and converts. We are not the stars here, and it is not our responsibility to do it all.

The Brainstorming Process

Start the brainstorming process by exploring both your resources and the needs of the mission field. If you are like most participants, you will turn up a broad range of opportunity by the end of the process. The accompanying outline takes you through a checklist. We recommend that you write down the things that come to mind as you go through each item on the list.

Next, gather a group of Christians who share your vision. Go through the definition of your mission field and your understanding of its need and your resources. Together, prayerfully seek God's wisdom.

Your purpose is to allow God's creativity to flow freely through the group and to explore as many of the resulting ideas as you can. Be open to input from the group. Do not make any judgment as to the value of a given idea. At this point, there are no bad ideas; all are considered good when they are given. Avoid the "killer phrases" like "we tried that before" or "that's too expensive." Evaluation will come later. The important part right now is that we want ideas; lots of ideas.

Brainstorming works best if you focus your energies on one area at a time. Start with your employees and their families. Ask the group for ideas about steps of salvation, sanctification or service for your employees. Record the ideas until the pace slows down. At that point move on to vendors, Repeat the process until you go through the list of mission fields.

This is normally a very exciting process; let the excitement feed on itself. Keep a rapid tempo; do not let things bog down. When ideas

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stop, go on to the next group. You should produce twenty-five to fifty ideas without any difficulty.

When finished, praise the Lord. If done prayerfully and sincerely, your list will represent God's options for ministry in your company. Put the finished product aside for a few days. In the next section you'll see how to use this list in building your plan.

Brainstorming Checklist

1. Do an analysis of resources and needs.
2. Convene a group of 4-5 Christians who share the Corpath vision.
3. Review your definition of your mission field and your understanding of needs and resources.
4. Prayerfully ask God for wisdom and discernment in:
 - a. Salvation - introducing people to Christ.
 - b. Sanctification - discipling those who already know Him
 - c. Service - sharing God's love
5. Focus search for ideas, exploring one mission area at a time:
 - a. Employees
 - b. Vendors
 - c. Customers
 - d. Competition
 - e. Other business associates
6. Put the ideas aside and praise the Lord.

Habakkuk 2:2 "Record the vision and inscribe it on tables."

Ministry Action Plan Resources and Needs Analysis.

1. Gifts and abilities
 - a. Owner and family
 - b. Management
 - c. Employees
2. Ministry needs we know about
 - a. Employees and families
 - b. Vendors
 - c. Customers
 - d. Competition
3. Obstacles to ministry we know about
 - a. Employees
 - b. Vendors
 - c. Customers
 - d. Competition
4. Highest priority opportunities
 - a. Employees
 - b. Vendors
 - c. Customers
 - d. Competition

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4. Establishing An Accountability Plan

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The list you produced in section three may be impressive. It may even be intimidating. However, not all of the items may be of God, or consistent with the gifts and resources He is calling you to commit to this work. This final step is to seek God's will, to set goals, to become accountable before the Lord and--expect to see fruit, Kingdom fruit.

We urge you to come before the Lord in whatever manner He has revealed as effective for you. A process that has been successful for others includes bathing yourself in prayer, soaking in the scripture that He leads you to use (suggested references are included in the accompanying material) and so abiding in Christ that His will becomes your will.

Next, read over your list of ideas carefully several times. Note the idea that is most appealing to your spirit. Write it down. Go back and repeat that process until you have 3-5 selected ideas. Put the rest of the list aside for a while.

Take this "short list" of ideas and analyze each on the basis of:

1. Cost in terms of dollars, people and time.
2. Potential risks and benefits.
3. Earliest possible start date.

Now, rank the ideas based on start date. Put together the sequential steps required to bring them to fruition. For each step, list the action, the person responsible for getting it done, the completion date and cost of the action. Once this has been completed for each idea, review the list in terms of people and financial practicality. In most Corpath businesses, there are a limited number of people capable of handling specific tasks. Pray about the conflicts and adjust your priorities accordingly.

The resultant priorities and plans should be consistent with God's plans, the needs of your mission field and the gifts possessed by you and your associates.

Implement The Plan

As you get started, develop some clear goals that you hope to accomplish as a result of your actions. Next, establish some milestones for evaluating progress of your priorities. These should be measurable and tried to dates. Now, become accountable for implementing these ideas. You can do this either before the Lord, or with another trusted Christian friend.

Whatever your intentions, you will likely find that things do not work out as planned. As you evaluate your actual progress you have the opportunity to make mid-course corrections. These refinements are important -- and biblical. The proverbs states, "The mind of a man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Some of God's richest teaching comes through the process of leading his servants through a path of open and closed doors.

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As this plan unfolds, look for fruit. God does not always give us immediate feedback, but He generally has ways of confirming that we are a out the proper tasks.

Look for it.

Proverbs 16:3 "Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established."

PLANNING CHECKLIST

1. Review the list and mark the ideas that attract you.
2. Analyze those 4 or 5 for:
 - a. Cost in dollars, people or time
 - b. Potential benefits
 - c. Potential risks
 - d. Earliest start date
3. Rank the ideas based on start date.
4. List the required steps, showing:
 - a. The action
 - b. The responsible person
 - c. The completion date
5. Establish the measurable results that you would like to achieve with each idea.
6. Set up measurable milestones and the dates on which you plan to review your progress.
7. Become accountable for the implementation.
8. Make necessary mid-course corrections.

"Commit your works to the Lord."

5. Some examples Of Purpose Statements

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1. Automation

"To be a witness for Christ in the recording industry by providing the facilities and staff which will stimulate the best work possible from all music groups, particularly Christian groups."

2. Newby Management Co.

"Sharing the love of Christ while managing mobile home and RV parks with excellence."

3. Beitler McKee Optical

"To help people see a clear vision of God, by providing timely, quality vision products and services to our customers within 200 miles."

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4. Scalise and Associates

To serve God: By using the platform that Scalise and Associates presents to share the love and life of Jesus Christ in the marketplace."

To serve man: By supplying insurance products and services to the trucking industry with a heartbeat for Christ-like excellence and professionalism."

6. Action Plan – Scripture Selections:

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Developing My Purpose Statement

- Prov 21:5 "The plan of the diligent..."
- Prov 15:22 "Without consultation, plans..."
- Prov 24:3-4 "Any enterprise is built by..."
- Prov 29:18 "For no man can lay a foundation..."

Defining My Marketplace Mission Field

- Prov 27:23 "Know well the condition of your..."
- Matt 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men..."
- Matt 9:37-38 "The harvest is plentiful, but..."
- Matt 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples..."
- I Pet 2:9 "But you are...a royal priesthood..."

Brainstorming My Mission Options

- Prov 1:7 "The fear of the Lord is the..."
- Prov 3:5,6 "Trust in the Lord with all your ..."
- Prov 21:28 "A false witness will perish..."
- I Cor 9:23 "And I do all things for the sake..."
- I Cor 10:31 "Whether you eat or drink..."

Establish My Accountability Plan

- Prov 16:3 "Commit your works to the Lord..."
- Prov 16:9 "The mind of a man plans his ways..."
- Prov 16:7 "When a man's ways are pleasing..."
- Prov 19:21 "Many are the plans in a man's heart..."

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