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Adaptability

Radical Adaptability: Facing Change with Faith

Lead Article by Mike Farag
page 20



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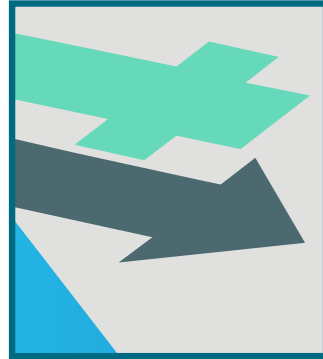
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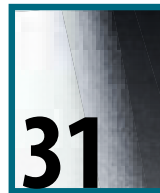
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From the Director

In 1980, we made a radical change by moving from Michigan to Houston. The only person we knew was a man who served in the Air Force with my husband. Talk about adapting. . . we had to adapt to an unfamiliar environment (radically different from the cold north), new home, new church, new schools, and new place of employment. It took a lot of adapting, but as we look back, we see God's hand in all of it and are glad we made the move.

For the past two years, every organization has experienced adaptability in some shape or form. For most, it has meant learning how to adapt to working remotely, collaborating with fewer team members, getting used to the supply and demand challenge, and learning ways to keep their organization fluent as they focused on those they served. Some organizations had to close their doors and adapt to a new way of life.

COVID hit right after our 2020 Texas Ministry Conference. We were grateful for the timing and spent the next year preparing for our 2021 virtual conference. Our entire organization learned how to adapt to a whole new way of bringing education and resources to our members virtually.

Following our 2021 conference, we learned that our conference venue would be undergoing massive renovation from August 2022 – August 2023, and we needed to find an alternative venue for this year. God closed the door on every church and space we inquired about, mostly due to schools using the classrooms. We were about to experience our biggest year of adapting yet. With fervent prayer, we asked God to reveal three things:

1. How could we come alongside our members and provide resources without getting our vendors before the 1100 people who attend our conference?
2. How could we provide education opportunities without a conference?
3. How could we be more effective in serving and communicating to faith-based organizations?

God not only answered our prayers, but He also provided the means to all three questions we asked. With the help of Fervor Marketing and Ministry by Text, we are adapting to a more effective way in communicating to others and clarifying our mission. You can learn more about Fervor and Ministry by Text by reading their articles in this issue.

One opportunity you will not want to miss is our 2023 CO+OP Connections. We will have two in Houston and one in the Dallas area. You will find details on pages six and seven. Attendance is limited, so I encourage you to register early.

Change is inevitable. While some change is planned, and some is not, being adaptable through it is key. We often look back and realize the effort of adapting provided better results in the end.

This issue of *CO+OP Magazine* provides insight and opportunities to adapt through many types of change. Find your quiet space, grab your favorite hot drink, and enjoy reading!

Together We Adapt!

Patti Malott, CEO/Executive Director



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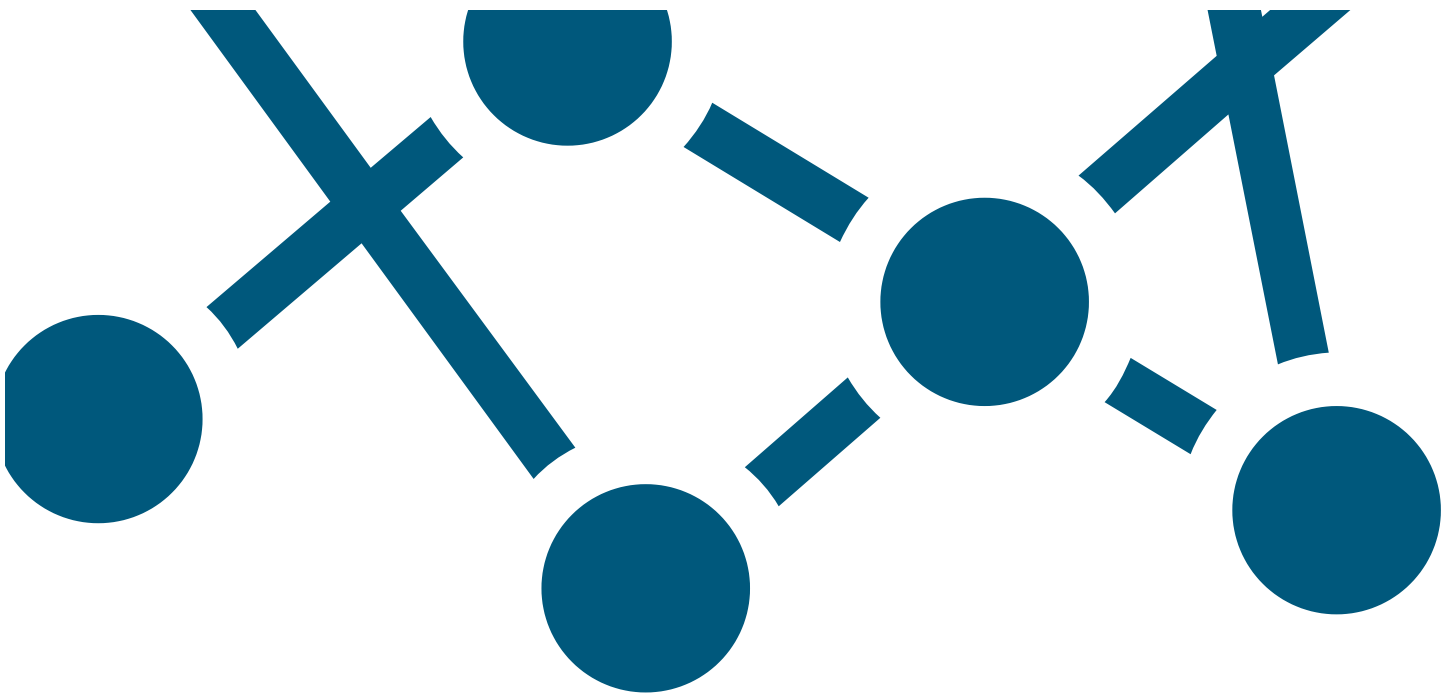
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Adapting to Technology

Can you imagine life without cell phones or workstations? For those of us now living in our middle to later years in life, technology has been the largest, most continuous change in our lifetime.

I am 57 years old, and when I started my career workstations were barely a thing and the first cell phones were hitting the market as large, clunky devices. Just a handful of years ago, who would have imagined most everything “living in the cloud”?

The fact remains, technology is constantly changing, faster than most of us can keep up with. For the non-technical layperson, it seems that as soon as we learn and start feeling comfortable with something technology-related, it changes. Adapting to changing technology is vital for functioning in daily life, and most technology actually makes our lives easier and more convenient – we just have to be open to learning new things and stepping out of our comfort zones.

From anywhere in the world, by using a smart phone app, you can do everything from setting your home DVR to record a show, to changing your thermostat and turning your lights on and off. You can send electronic gift cards, track your heart rate and calories, and plan your next vacation booking your airline and lodging all from apps on your phone. You now have the freedom to work from anywhere, can always be available and never miss a call (which may or may not be a good thing!). So, while change may be overwhelming, it’s also exciting. Constant change also means constant opportunities.

If you’re reluctant to change, you’re not alone. But since you can’t do anything to stop the train of ever-adapting technology, you may as well take advantage of all it has to offer. Rather than looking at technology as something to be feared, embrace it! Technology can make your life more productive, efficient and connected.

Below you will find tips for staying current with technology and making the most of tools that are meant to make your life easier.

1. Ask your friends, kids or grandkids what some of their favorite and most utilized apps are. Our kids introduced us to Giftster, which has been great for birthdays and Christmas.
2. Take advantage of all the tools that are already built into your smartphone. The Reminders app is incredibly helpful, as is Notes. These are great tools, especially if you often “forget what you were just thinking of.” Notes are great for starting and tracking any kind of to do list, shopping list, ideas list, etc. and you can share notes so other people can add to them. If you’re unsure how to use all your phone’s features, you can always get help from someone at your cell phone service provider. Pop into an AT&T, T-Mobile, or Verizon store and see what you can learn.
3. Download apps for all your service providers (banking, cell phone, cable). Be sure to activate two-factor authentication for your security.
4. Download apps for your favorite fast-food restaurants which allow for quick online ordering and convenient curbside pickup. Most of these will allow you to earn points for free food.

5. Download apps for the stores where you most frequently shop (Target, H-E-B, Walgreens). You can find out if the store you're headed to has what you want in stock and even see what aisle it's on to make your errands more efficient.
6. Organize all the apps on your phone into folders by category so that you can find them quickly.
7. There is a wealth of fascinating podcasts available. It's amazing how listening to an engrossing story can make the most mundane tasks like housecleaning and exercising fly by. Start a list in your phone notes of ones you want to listen to, and survey friends and family to build on that list.
8. If you aren't sure how to do something technology-related, search YouTube for an instructional video – they're available for just about everything.
9. Confused or have questions? Ask someone younger than you! Did you know that even the emojis we use identify our age? Apparently, the thumbs up is offensive to Gen Z (whoever that is). They released "a list of emojis that officially make you old". Schedule time with one of your kids or grandkids to have a technology tutorial. You'll get to spend time together and you'll be amazed what you can learn. And making an effort to stay current with trends is a great way to connect with the younger generation.

The good news is, nowadays middle-aged people aren't expected to know everything about technology. Matter of fact, it is widely accepted that middle-aged people will be asking questions of the younger generation. Once you get over the fear of not knowing how to use things and start asking questions, you can take full advantage of the technology around you. +



Doug Reed

Vice President and COO
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By Steven Carroll

Adapting to Change

The human impact on the earth's climate is referred to as anthropogenic climate change. Many argue that this is one of the world's most significant environmental challenges. The effects of climate change are expected to increase as the continued rise in greenhouse gas emissions is projected to further global warming and associated severe weather patterns. Although detailed predictions concerning global changes are inevitably uncertain in nature, what is certain is that some of these changes directly impact numerous sectors — in particular, the energy sector. At some point, we have all directly or indirectly faced severe and sometimes unpredictable weather conditions that have caught us off guard on more than one occasion. With summer and spring in our rearview, winter is on the way; the possibility remains that extreme weather could lead to rolling blackouts.

The majority of electricity outages are caused by severe weather. From thunderstorms and tornados to hurricanes and flash floods, much of the power grid in Texas and throughout the United States is vulnerable. And don't dismiss extreme temperatures. In 2018, even Texas experienced outages due to cold snaps. And, of course, there is always the looming risk of widespread blackouts from the intense record-breaking heat. Power outages cost our economy billions; half of small business owners estimate that a single outage incident costs them up to \$5,000.

A brief power outage may be nothing more than an inconvenience. When you find yourself without electricity, check to ensure the problem isn't isolated to your home or business. You may have blown a fuse or tripped a breaker, which can easily be fixed. If flipping switches at the breaker doesn't work, check with neighboring homes or businesses to find out how widespread the problem may be. Once you've determined that you're experiencing a power outage, you should report it to your utility company. Your local utility is responsible for maintaining the electric lines, transformers, and towers that deliver it to your business.

Blackouts happen when there isn't a sufficient supply of electricity on the grid for everyone who needs energy at that time. The Texas PUC (Public Utility Commission) wants customers to understand the potential need for involuntary load shedding (a.k.a. rolling blackouts). When there isn't

enough supply, ERCOT will order rolling blackouts to help distribute energy around the state. This happened during Winter Storm Uri. However, the problems caused by Winter Storm Uri existed because natural gas production was not winterized, and natural gas power plants could not get the fuel they needed to provide adequate power to customers. We have reason to hope this issue is resolved. Still, if a rolling blackout is ordered by ERCOT, your utility [AEP (Central and North), Oncor (Dallas), CenterPoint (Houston), TNMP] will be the one that processes the blackout.

Until the electricity grid is modernized to improve its reliability and resilience, it's essential to prepare and protect your home or business from power outages ahead of time. Reducing consumption is just as valuable as increasing supply. Believe it or not, you can help minimize the likelihood of blackouts by lowering your usage of electricity. If a notice goes out, start by trying to minimize the use of your big appliances — a little extra effort goes a long way.

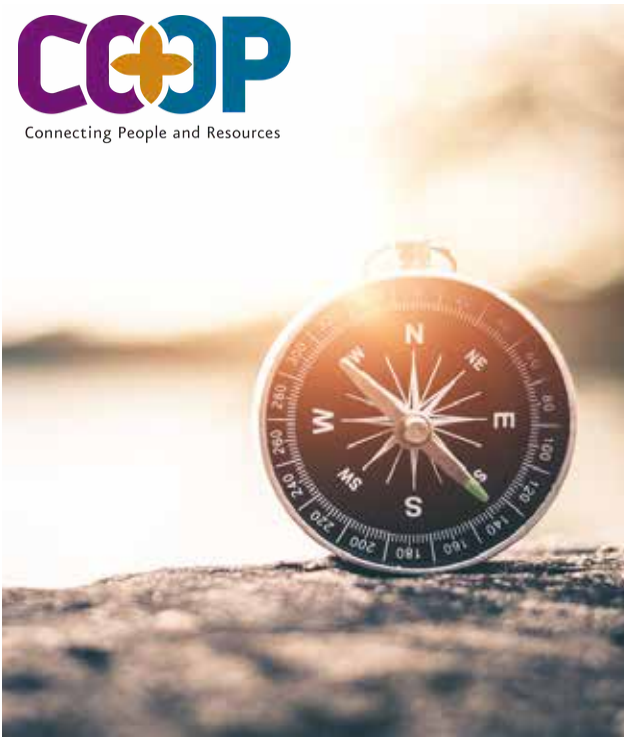
If the unexpected loss of power could result in a life-threatening situation for you or someone in your home who has been diagnosed by a physician as dependent upon an electric-powered medical device, please let your electricity provider know. This is known as a "Critical Care" designation and will ensure you receive advance notice of planned outages as well as prioritized restoration during unplanned outage events. To apply for this "Critical Care" designation, please ask your TES consultant or electricity provider for more information.

While we understand that blackouts are scary, we're always here to help. TES Energy Services encourages you to stay in touch with us during storms and power outages. We can advocate on your behalf and offer support during extraordinary situations. Don't get caught off guard by not locking in an electricity rate now for your home or business. If you are not a TES customer, please visit our website at www.tespowerbuy.com. +



Steven Carroll

Steven Carroll has over 18 years of experience in energy procurement. He has worked with some of the top energy retail providers and consulting firms in the U.S. This allows him to offer a unique and honest perspective to each customer to lower their energy costs and maximize savings.



What Is Our Purpose?

The purpose of the CO+OP is to give faith-based organizations the ability to do more. This concept is what drives our Mission & Vision and what we use to guide our decisions on how to better serve you.

Our Pillars:

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It's not easy to find vendors you can trust. And when money is on the line, it's even more important to make sure you won't be taken advantage of. That's why we vet our vendors very carefully, and we make sure they're a good fit for our members. We've done the due diligence so you can make decisions quickly and with confidence.

Faithful Stewardship:

You've been entrusted with a lot. And when budgets and timelines are tight, it can seem like you've been charged with the impossible. The good news — you're not alone. We're here to help you steward your resources well by making sure you get what you need at more affordable prices.

Inspiring Education:

One of our values is being committed to excellence. We hold ourselves to that standard, and we want that for you too. By offering a wide range of educational opportunities, we can help you grow in knowledge so you can increase your impact and the effectiveness of your organization.



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Adaptability in Our Changing Time

by Phill Martin

"It looks like we will have to PIVOT... again."

"We're moving into a new normal."

"Things will never go back to the way they were."

"I am so tired of change."

These declarations have become common phrases during this 2020 – 2023 cycle of response to a changing world. If you have not uttered them yourself, you have heard someone in your world express them out loud. The Association of National Advertisers (ANA) voted it the marketing word of 2020. I remember it feeling like a new word to me when I picked up Jenny Blake's new book in 2016 titled *Pivot*. She went on to produce the Pivot Podcast, which has recently dropped show number three hundred and twelve. In the intro to the podcast, she says, "If change is the only constant, let's get better at it." As the co-creator of Google's Career Guru Program, her focus in the book was mainly on career. But it quickly became apparent that it was a prequel to far more than career.

So... if this is our reality, what do we do to move through and, as Jenny suggests, "get better at it." The answer is complex, with thousands of strategies, articles, books, podcasts, and systems to help. Frankly, the way forward sometimes feels as complex as the challenge at hand.

That said, let's explore one possibility: adaptability. A basic definition of adaptability per Oxford Languages is "the quality of being able to adjust to new conditions." As we know, some find that easier to do than others. We see a clue as to why this may be true in what we learn from the CliftonStrengths® Assessment. In his landmark research, Don Clifton defined 34 talent themes and created a way to rank those based on an individual's innate uniqueness. Almost twenty-nine million people have taken the assessment, resulting in significant validation of the tool. Although we all possess the ability to develop any of these 34 talents, some are more natural and easier based on your unique makeup. Even if this talent theme lands high in your ranking, it doesn't become a true strength until you develop and practice its benefits. I know as one who finds it number four in my own strengths profile.

For a better understanding of how adaptability might serve us in our changing time, let's look at the characteristic as defined by Gallup's research. They say of a person with this theme, "You live in the moment. You don't see the future as a fixed destination. Instead, you see it as a place that you create out of the choices that you make right now. And so, you discover your future one choice at a time. This doesn't mean that you don't have plans. You probably do. But this theme of Adaptability does enable you to respond willingly to the demands of the moment even if they pull you away from your plans."

Keywords that might describe adaptability include spontaneous, responsive, in-the-moment, and flexible. Adaptability allows one to change and respond to unexpected or unplanned circumstances quickly. Others may freeze when presented with an unplanned or confusing situation, whereas adaptability allows one to be in the moment and see possibilities. This shifting in the moment can feel irresponsible and risky to those who find change difficult. Perhaps it could even seem erratic if not applied

well. If adaptability is easy for you, remember it is not for others.

With a healthy application of adaptability, one team member can help those struggling to see a new way to move forward, change the situation, and respond to new or evolving challenges.

Much training and many insights are available for understanding Adaptive Change — Ron Heifetz and Marty Linsky are among the pioneers and providers of resources in the field. In their work, they have identified two kinds of problems organizations face today:

1. Those with known solutions that only require the application of existing knowledge and workflows to solve.
2. Those with unknown solutions that require innovation, experimentation, and adaptation to survive.

Those problems with unknown solutions are called "adaptive challenges." Working harder at what we have done in the past will not solve them.

For adaptive change to occur, you can expect loss, resistance, and discomfort.

To learn more, consider their books, including 2009 *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* and 2002 revised 2017 *Leadership on the Line*.

In Tod Bolisinger's 2015 book *Canoeing the Mountains*, he provides an excellent resource for faith-based organizations to understand the principles guiding these challenges.

Also, Susan Beaumont's 2019 *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season* is helpful as you learn more about today's adaptive challenge and how adaptability can serve you along the journey.

So, consider these points as you think about applying adaptability to your situation.

- Awareness and acknowledgment are always the start of change. If you often push back when others suggest doing something differently, explore what is driving that in you.
- When planning an event or reviewing processes, think of possibilities that could derail the desired outcome. Then, work through “what if” options.”
- Keep a focus on the end goal or desired result. Be sure it is still valid. Allow the possibility of the ‘what’ changing to be a reasonable outcome. For example, long-range plans put in motion pre-pandemic may no longer be valid. Those deeply invested may find it hard to let go.
- Be a student of change. If you find adaptability hard, see it as a master class assignment. Find a mentor/partner to help you develop an opening to becoming a more adaptive person.
- Find those with adaptability in their top strengths and work alongside them to see how they would respond.
- If you are a leader, know change is hard, and there will be resistance to adapting to new realities. Therefore, expect loss, resistance, and discomfort to occur.
- If you are a team member who finds adapting easy, be a leader when adaptability is required. Support those who find it hard to adapt rather than being critical of them. Listen to understand.
- If you are a team member who feels resistance or anger over change, you should seek to understand why. Name what you fear losing, and find healthy ways to express your fear and anger.

Our current reality is full of uncertainty and change. We need the skills to move toward new ways of responding. Adaptability is one resource that can help us to move forward. ✨

Phill Martin



Phill Martin is the retired CEO of The Church Network, an inter-denominational professional association of churches and individuals which exists to connect, develop, and strengthen church leaders in administration. You can reach him at phill@forwardcoaching.net.





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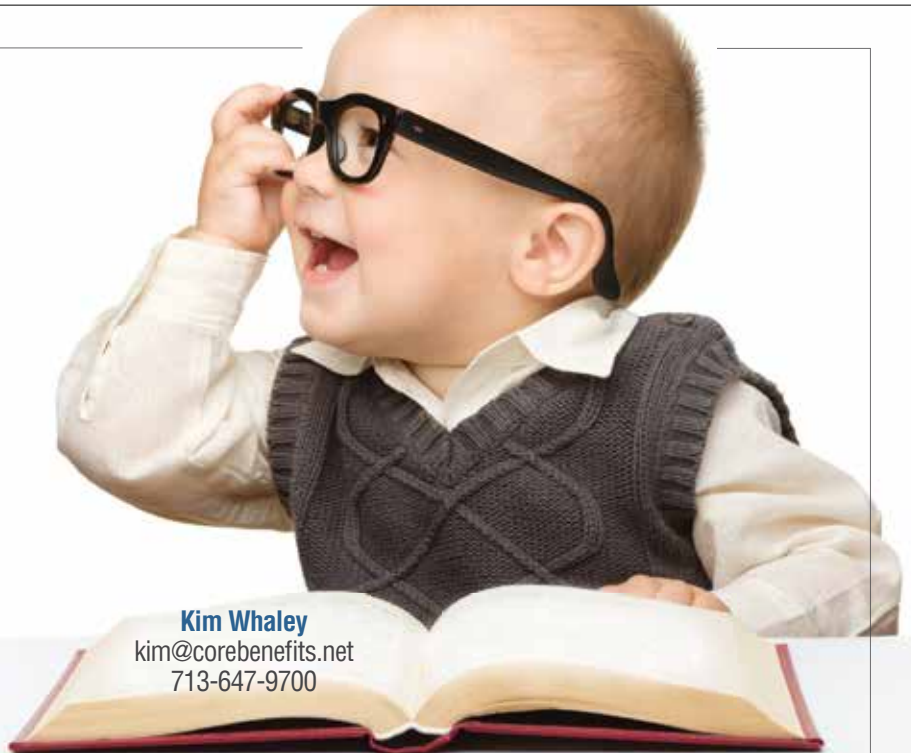
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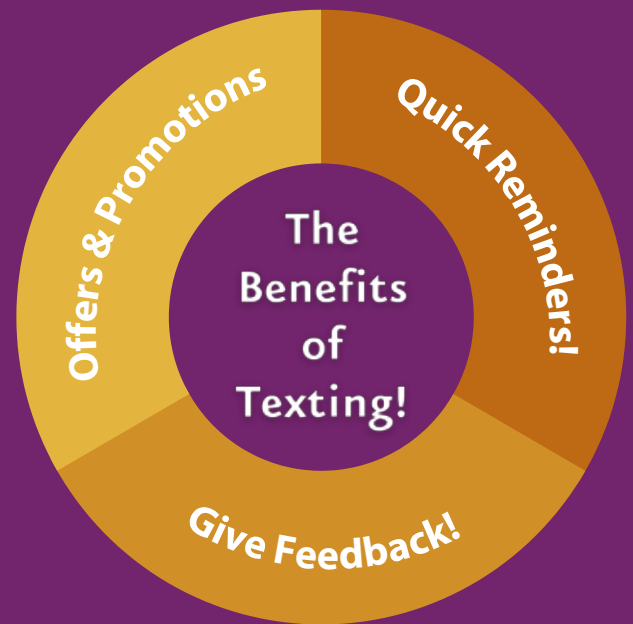
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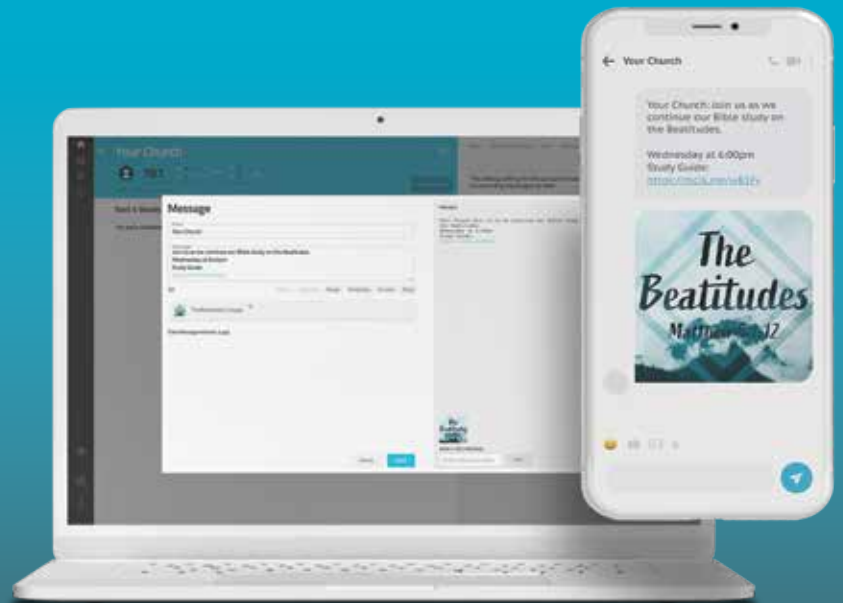


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It's Time to Start
Communicating
the Way Your
People Prefer

Adapt Your Communication
Strategy with Texting

by Ministry by Text

Do you remember the early seasons of American Idol?

If you do, it's likely that the first thing you remember is the people whose only talent was no talent. However, each season there were always a few talented people who would stand out and move through the competition.

Sitting on your couch as an American Idol viewer, you were encouraged to call in your vote to determine who deserved to move to the next round.

In the season one finale, 15.5 million votes were cast by phone. Between seasons one and two, American Idol landed AT&T as a sponsor. AT&T donated 7.5 million text messages to encourage voting via text. With text voting in place, the season two finale generated 24 million votes cast by viewers.

By season 12, more people voted on American Idol than in the 2012 presidential election (132 million to 122 million, respectively).

As American Idol grew in its popularity, the show was adapting how it communicated with its audience.

The progression to texting encouraged audience participation, and they saw this participation skyrocket. This American Idol use case was a microcosm demonstrating what happens when you communicate with people the way they prefer.

Create the Bridge Your People Expect

When people are contacted, they overwhelmingly prefer text. The proof is in the response rates.

- **95%** of text messages are read and responded to within 3 minutes of being received.
- **48%** of consumers prefer direct communication via text.
- **90%** of customers prefer text messages over direct phone calls.

It's clear that people prefer receiving text messages and have conditioned themselves to read their text messages. Paired with that, in 2012, only 11% of web traffic was on mobile devices. By 2022, mobile device web traffic had skyrocketed to 57%, surging past desktop devices in utilization.

This combination has created a paradigm shift where people expect a self-service experience on their mobile devices.

There has to be a bridge between people's phones and your mobile-optimized digital content.

That bridge is texting.

It has become a best practice for ministries to tell their story online in a mobile-optimized way and connect their people with the content via text messages. It is no longer a question of "if," but rather "how" we utilize texting when connecting with our communities.

The Benefits Create Exciting Possibilities

Increase Engagement

You are much more likely to increase your engagement with your community when you utilize texting. Your audience receives your intended messages, reads, and then responds at a much higher rate than with any other digital media.

Encourage Member Retention

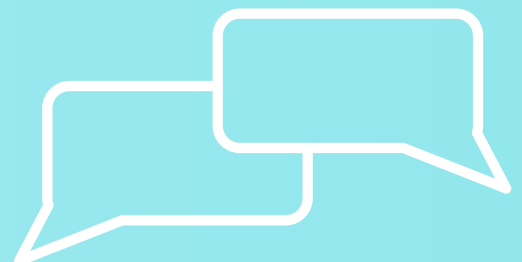
Personal and timely support is crucial when ensuring that your community members know you care for them. Texting is the best way to support your people when they need it. Additional texting features, like two-way texting, provide avenues by which your texting service can help to retain and support community members.

Optimize Interaction

Texting gives you a vast array of ways to connect with your people. Tools like live Q&A during ministry events or sending videos with outbound MMS help to clarify and maximize communication with your audience.

Reduce Conventional Costs

Commit to a reduction strategy for paper, printing, and postage costs. Transitioning to digital content, using text as your delivery engine, will provide a low-cost alternative with a more accurate and higher return on your investment.



Your Texting Company Matters

With the widespread use of texting growing, texting companies are popping up all over the place. However, not all companies are equal. Some companies will point to the benefits of texting, but fail to provide the guidance you need when it's time to implement texting into your communication.

Ultimately what you need is not just a software service, but a partner who can guide you along the way to maximize the benefits of mass texting while making sure you avoid any pitfalls.

When choosing a texting service, there are several issues that you should consider.

Company values matter. The first issue to consider is whether the company values align with the unique values of your ministry. Many companies are just looking to financially capitalize on mass texting. They'll cut corners to cut costs at the expense of their clients. Sometimes the corners that are cut may affect the integrity of your ministry.

For example, there are different types of delivery with texting. One way is using short codes, which are 5 or 6 digit numbers that your recipients see when you text them (i.e. "Text HELLO to 12345"). Short codes are the best way to improve brand identification and build trust as well as avoid getting tagged as SPAM by cell carriers. Some companies will offer you a short code at a highly discounted rate because it is a "shared short code." This means you share the short code with multiple ministries or brands, eliminating all the aforementioned benefits of a short code. Shared short codes are not endorsed by cell carriers. A DEDICATED short code is unique to your ministry. When someone interacts with your short code, they recognize that it's you and can trust they're getting a message from the ministry they've opted to receive communication from.

This is just one example of why you need to choose a company that doesn't cut corners for its own benefit. You need to choose a texting company *that cares more about the integrity of your ministry than its bottom line.*

There is "a" way to do it, and there is the "BEST" way to do it. Another issue to consider is whether the company will deliver your messages with accuracy and efficiency. The way in which you deliver your message matters, and we've established that

the best delivery method is texting. But what you say and when you say it matters too. Engage a texting software company that doesn't just turn on your account and hope you figure it out. Partner with one that understands best practices and tailors a texting strategy based on your ministry requirements.

Partner with industry experts. This very important issue relates to compliance and legal issues in sending text messages. Most of us at this point have probably received a text message that we didn't want to receive and from a sender we didn't authorize.

The carriers have heavily weighed in on this subject. They're not going to allow what happened with email spam to happen with texting. The same laws for commercial business are applicable to ministries. There can be hefty penalties, so you want to be sure the company you choose is an expert in navigating the laws and best practices of texting.

Start Adapting Your Strategy with Texting

Implementing texting as the communication centerpiece of ministries is not the future; it is now.


When churches and ministries create mobile-optimized digital content and then use texting to connect their people to this content, the responses will come faster, will be more frequent and will be delivered with greater accuracy. This fosters ministry growth and a deeper sense of community within your ministry.

It is not a question of should you utilize texting, but rather who should you trust for your texting strategy. Start your research, ask questions, and begin your journey now. ✦

Ministry by Text (MBT)



Ministry by Text (MBT) was created to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to every nation, tribe, and tongue. We are a team full of Jesus-followers whose goal is to see God's kingdom message reach the ends of the earth, so we work to enhance and maximize church and ministry communication strategies. Our dedicated account care teams and enterprise-level software help ministries communicate with their communities, implementing text messaging as the delivery vehicle. MBT has been serving ministries since 2009 with its founders having over 30 years of industry experience. Visit ministrybytext.com to learn more!



Radical Adaptability: Facing Change with Faith

by Mike Farag, CEO of Fervor Marketing

Friends, we are in a season of extreme change. Have you noticed how much is shifting around us? Do you wake up wondering, “What’s next?” It’s not just the barrage of headlines; our churches and community organizations are in a state of upheaval as well. You’ve felt it, right?

Nonprofits are eyeing a recession on the horizon and anticipating struggles ahead; the number of small-gift donors already dropped 17% in 2022.¹ Even though there’s some evidence that Millennials are returning to church in greater numbers post-lock-down², overall, less than half of American adults are currently members of a faith community — for the very first time.³ Job stress, isolation, and political divisions have led 42% of pastors to consider quitting in the past year.⁴ A full third of Generation Z don’t claim any religious affiliation, calling into question how churches will engage with young digital natives.³

I want to present a controversial opinion about all this change: It’s not a reason to fear. It’s not an excuse to panic, get defensive, or bunker down. Instead, we’re being called to pay attention, get curious, and even celebrate. If we believe God is good and at work in everything, then every season of change is a season of opportunity.

What does this era of opportunity demand from us? Radical adaptability.

Adaptability isn’t our natural posture when faced with destabilizing change. I lead Fervor, a marketing agency that helps faith-led organizations and nonprofits grow, starting with strategy. I can tell you that we’ve said “no” to more churches requesting marketing help in the past 12 months than we’ve talked to in the past 12 years. Why?

They are facing change but not asking the right questions. They want us to help get people back in the pews, but they aren’t asking what they need to switch up to make that happen. Adaptability requires bigger questions: How do we serve our community? How do we minister to them? How do we support them? How do we love them?

This is a huge opportunity for us as believers to recognize that we’re capable of more. I think God’s given us a chance to grow. God gave humans the capacity to change, and that’s what I’m really addicted to — helping organizations

transform. But transformation is hard work. Here are a few things we’ve learned about adaptability while helping organizations like yours change.

Created to Adapt

Fervor was founded to help a nonprofit change. In 2008, I went on a trip to Haiti with an organization founded by Mike and Beth Fox. At the time, it was called C3 Missions International. They had a good board, projects in three countries, a solid donor base, and I saw for myself what an incredible impact they were making.

But when I got back home, I ran into a major problem: It was hard to communicate to my friends and family what C3 was doing. Their name didn’t connect. Their website and communications didn’t do their amazing work justice. I told Mike I loved his organization, but that I was seeing a disconnect. Why wasn’t he putting the kind of marketing effort he invested in his secular business into his philanthropic life’s work?

He said, “You’re right. Fix it.” My first question to him was, “But are you open to fixing it?” In other words, are you ready to adapt? He said yes. And that’s how Fervor got started. I put together a team, and we dove right in. We learned several things about adaptability right away:

Lesson 1: Leaders need to be willing.

Mike and Beth are the epitome of adaptability. The minute they understood there was a problem, they were willing to do what it took to change. Inspired by them, I call adaptation-minded organizations “entrepreneurial nonprofits.” But that willingness needs to come from the top. Mike and Beth showed me early on that real leadership looks like flexibility.

Lesson 2: Make it about the people you’re serving.

One of the first things we knew needed to change was the organization’s name. C3 was an oblique reference to propane, the basis of Mike’s for-profit business. We knew the name needed to be about the nonprofit’s mission; the story needed to be about whom Mike was serving, not Mike himself. But names are sensitive subjects. I asked him if there were any sacred cows — knowing the more sacred cows there were, the less adaptable the organization could be.

I've gotta hand it to him: He said everything was on the table, including his name and logo. There were no sacred cows! That kind of open-handedness is special. Lots of times founders have a hard time not making it about themselves. But Mike and Beth were ready to put the focus on the kids and the people who were on the journey with them.

Lesson 3: Sometimes you need to offer a pathway to change.

We renamed the nonprofit the Global Orphan Project and rebranded everything: website, logo, communication pieces. We created a true strategic marketing plan where we understood the organization's message and its best donors and advocates. We were a month from going live when Mike and Beth walked into my office feeling nervous. They had been having conversations with some of their key stakeholders, and those stakeholders weren't as ready for the change as Mike and Beth were. So we came up with a plan: We'd launch the Global Orphan Project as a fundraising campaign of C3. We would give people a chance to warm up to the new branding and take ownership of the new name. It worked. Very quickly, the rest of the organization grew comfortable with the changes and were able to follow Mike and Beth's adaptable lead.

These early lessons from our origin story would come in handy a few years later, when Fervor needed to practice radical adaptability too.

Adapt, but Don't Get Cute

Sometimes entrepreneurial organizations can be too good at adapting. You know the attitude: I'm going to change, but I'm going to change my way. I'm going to be the most innovative innovator you've ever seen! I admit it: I've got that propensity for tinkering, but I've learned that adaptability needs a steady hand too. I had to practice a calmer, slower style of adaptability when Fervor began adopting the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) several years ago.

Lesson 4: Notice when things aren't working...but don't act right away.

Fervor had a great year in 2017, but it was followed by a challenging 2018. One of our biggest clients got a lot smaller, and we lost some work we had been depending on. It gave me a chance to evaluate the health of our company. I had observed the practices of so many leadership teams, and I could tell the healthiest organizations had great rhythms. We didn't. I didn't want to be as stressed out as I was. I wanted to have a team of leaders I could count on to make decisions with me. If we wanted a different outcome, we needed to change the way we were operating. But I didn't quite know how to make those changes...yet.

Lesson 5: Find wise counsel.

Around that time, someone recommended *Rocket Fuel* by Gino Wickman and Mark C. Winters to me. I read it in a weekend and immediately started Wickman's next, *Traction*. These books outlined a system (EOS) that helped organizations like ours establish better patterns and grow. I sent both books to Lori Zehr, Fervor's Chief of Staff and my right hand. She had them both done before I finished *Traction* and sent me a text: "We're doing this." We found the right advice at just the right time.

Lesson 6: Follow that wise counsel.

Lori and I got into a meeting room, took our tear sheets out, and started to outline how Fervor could implement EOS. And immediately I started to do what I always do: We could tweak this, we could do that our own way. Lori stopped me and asked me a good question: "Mike, why are we doing this?" I stopped. I thought. And then I had to answer, "Because we've tried it our own way, and it didn't work out the way we wanted it to."

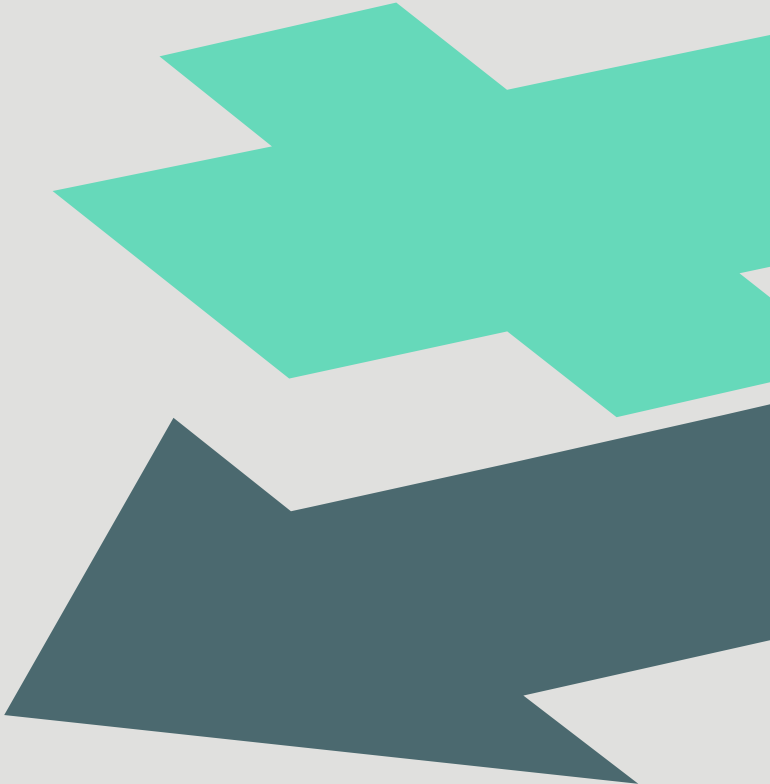
We needed to actually listen to the wise counsel we found. So we both committed at that moment to run EOS exactly as outlined in the books for at least a year. That was a turning point for us. We adapted, but we didn't do it on our own terms. Instead, we followed the example of those who went before us.

Four and a half years later, we have healthy rhythms, we have an engaged and happy staff, and we have a strong leadership team. All because we didn't get cute with it. I couldn't imagine it any other way.

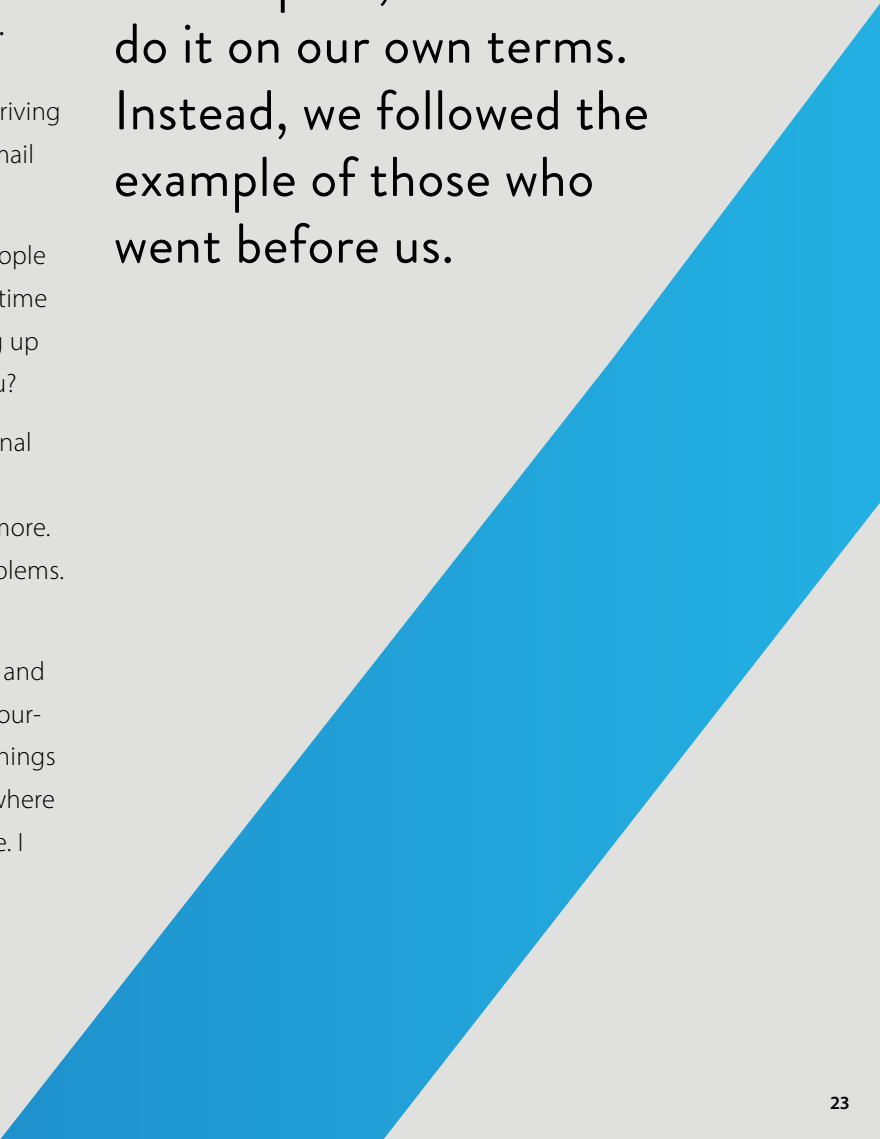
Radical Adaptability: Why now?

In addition to the macro-evolutions we talked about earlier, there are so many immediate, practical challenges demanding adaptability from faith communities and nonprofits. We're currently walking alongside our clients as they stay flexible and make the most of the opportunities these changes are presenting:

- **Multi-touchpoint communications matter.** If you want to reach your audience and retain their attention, you need to communicate with them through multiple channels. There's no silver bullet; there's no one-and-done messaging anymore.
- **Owned digital spaces are more important than ever.** Digital spaces you don't own, like social media, are increasingly noisy and hard to impact. We're seeing thriving organizations shift focus to their own websites and email lists — and even leave social media altogether.
- **Search is a priority.** It follows that you need to get people to those owned digital spaces. Internet usage is at all-time highs; how can you make sure your content is coming up in searches? Are you giving people reasons to find you?
- **New fundraising models.** In addition to more traditional routes, some entrepreneurial nonprofits are finding solutions in investment funds, for-profit entities, and more. I love this multi-faceted approach to solving hard problems.
- **Work environments are drastically different.** Organizations have fewer rules about how and where and when they work. I used to be a five-day-a-week, get-your-butt-in-the-office kind of guy. But I got taught some things in the past few years! We're a hybrid workplace now, where everyone spends around two days a week in the office. I pray we never go back to five.



We adapted, but we didn't do it on our own terms. Instead, we followed the example of those who went before us.



- **Deeper calls — and higher stakes — for authenticity.** Organizations need to know what they stand for and be willing to stick with it. You can talk a big game, but what happens when business is on the line? Do you have the character to follow your principles?

So how do you become more adaptable?

All of these challenges, both big and small, will force faith communities and nonprofits to ask themselves: Are we willing to change to meet the needs of the moment? And if we are willing, how do we actually practice the skill of adaptability? Here are a few suggestions:

- **Live your why.** There's no better motivation than being locked into your calling. If you know your purpose, and are committed to living it, going through the pain of change will be worth it.
- **Realistically count the cost.** Speaking of the pain of change — it's inevitable. Change hurts! It's best to go into transformation with realistic expectations for what adapting will cost you. Growth comes with a price tag. Run scenarios so you know what you're dealing with and can commit with open eyes.
- **Get wise counsel.** We'll say it again: We all need to learn from each other. Seek out people you respect, study healthy organizations, and don't be too proud to ask for advice.

- **Stick with your plan.** Change takes time. Don't abandon your attempts at adaptability just because you don't see an immediate impact! It's just like going to the gym. That first day of a new workout plan feels terrible. But a few months in, you're not only feeling great, but you're seeing results. Give yourself time to evolve.
- **Build the character needed to lead through change.** We've seen past clients choose near-term profit over long-term change and growth. That's a tragedy. Take care of your spiritual health (and the spiritual health of your team) so you have the fortitude to make the right choices.

When life hands you big changes, don't be afraid to respond in kind. God made us creative. God made us curious. God made us adaptable. Radically adaptable, even! Ask the big questions and be ready for God to surprise you with what comes next.

Mike Farag



Mike Farag brings creative concepts to life as the CEO of Fervor. After years of marketing and selling wireless, cable and software for names like Cox and Sprint, his dissatisfaction with the corporate norm and passion for doing good collided. A trip to Haiti helped Mike realize there had to be a more vibrant model for making connections, a more satisfying narrative for the advertising life — and Fervor was born. Fervor

is strategic communications for the most good possible, a consulting firm built for faith-led organizations and world-changing nonprofits out to make the world a better place. He is passionate about serving brands at the intersection of faith and business. Under his leadership, Fervor is revolutionizing the craft of helping organizations from the inside out. Mike is married to Kim, and they have four kids.

1. [“Collapse’ in small gifts poses threat for nonprofits as recession looms, report says,” Drew Lindsay, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*. 17 October 2022. Accessed 23 November 2022.](#)
 2. [“A New Chapter in Millennial Church Attendance,” *Barna.com*. 4 August 2022. Accessed 22 November 2022.](#)
 3. [“U.S. Church Member Falls Below Majority for First Time,” *Gallup.com*. 29 March 2021. Accessed 22 November 2022.](#)
- [“Pastors Share Top Reasons They’ve Considered Quitting Ministry in the Past Year,” *Barna.com*. 27 April 2022. Accessed 22 November 2022.](#)

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IN-HOUSE TO THIRD-PARTY CONTRACTOR: ADAPTING TO CHANGE

by Robert Jacobs

The change from an in-house cleaning program to a third-party contractor is a decision numerous churches and schools have faced over the last decade — a decision that is made more difficult when the in-house cleaning team has long been members of the facilities staff. As the janitorial industry ages, its ability to adapt and become more efficient has outpaced many facilities, and the decision to outsource has become more prevalent.

There are many reasons why a facility would stay with an in-house crew. A strong belief that their knowledge and understanding of the building's activities and needs leads them to believe they will be able to clean the building better. The same beliefs leading them to think that they can do it cheaper and be able to better take care of their employees. The biggest obstacle and aversion to change is their ability to control the cleaning process and manipulate it to fit their changing needs. While all these reasons have their advantages, they all typically cost the facility in the long run. If we step outside of our safe zone and take an objective look into the cleaning industry, the advantages of outsourcing almost always far outweigh those of being in-house.

When looking into going to a third-party contractor, the first and main assumption that the facility should make is that a reputable contractor will be able to clean your facility for health, better and more efficiently than any in-house team. Typically, a contractor will strategically align themselves with a consumables vendor so they are always up to date on the latest and greatest equipment that will make them more efficient. There are numerous industry organizations that contractors are members of that inundate them with industry standards on cleaning. These standards include how long it should take to clean a restroom, how many square feet of carpet can be vacuumed, or how much tile can be mopped. These standards are what a contractor is thinking about when evaluating a facility. Often, an in-house cleaning crew utilizes a cleaning system that is based around the methodology, "This is how it has always been done." While this method may not be broken, they are usually cleaning for appearance and not cleaning for health. A contractor's procedures are based around removing dirt and germs from the facility, thus leaving a safer and healthier environment. Cleaning for appearance is purely surface-level cleaning. Our knowledge of chemicals is backed by industry support from both industry groups and vendors. We see so many facilities that have over the years added labor to their crews to support additional activities and have over time become over-staffed. It becomes difficult to see the inefficiencies in the staff. When a third-party contractor looks at a facility, their main goal is to complete the scope of work as efficiently as possible, leaving the campus clean and safe for the lowest possible cost. When you look at this as a business

decision; usually an in-house crew that has been working at the facility for several years, they are typically full-time employees that are getting a 2%-3% increase on wages year after year, the facility typically is overpaying their labor for the job. A third party will be able to come in, restructure how the cleaning shift is scheduled, move labor to parttime, and ultimately lower wages to an industry standard wage. Almost always, a cleaning crew made up of parttime employees, working a 4-hour shift, is more efficient than full-time employees. This does become the hardest part about making the change to a contractor, the elimination of team members, but if we remind ourselves that we have a responsibility to the facility to provide its patrons with the safest facility and that this is a business decision that in the long run will pay off, it makes it more palatable. Truth be told, in today's work force market, the previous facilities labor will not have a difficult time finding other job opportunities.

There are many costs that are more difficult to quantify involving in-house cleaning, Human Resources being one of them. There is the obvious cost associated with it — insurance, liability, overtime, and payroll burden — but there is another cost as well: the cost of absenteeism and turnover. The ability to be plugged into the labor market when someone does not show up for work or quits is crucial to ensuring continued services. A contractor will constantly have strong ties to the labor market so when absenteeism happens, they will have a pool of labor to pull from. The contractor will ensure that the tasks for the day will always be completed. A contractor will handle every aspect of Human Resources. If the facility wants a cleaner removed for any reason, an email to the company requesting the person's removal is all that is needed for their removal. Background checks for all employees are handled under the contractor's HR team, and they can provide a letter that the employee has passed background checks. A Safety Compliance Officer will not only be able to validate that OSHA regulations are being followed, but also that the janitorial staff is properly using wet floor signs to reduce slips and falls. The contractor's Safety Officer will ensure that the facility is safe, not only for their team, but also for the patrons of the facility. A contractor will provide supervision to the crew that includes ongoing training. I often tell Facility Managers that their time is more valuable spent working on the maintenance and running of the facility than it is training a housekeeper on cleaning toilets.

Unfortunately, all the advantages of outsourcing become mute if the wrong contractor is chosen. It is imperative that a contractor fully understands the needs of the facility. Be as specific as possible with the requests that you have, but also have an open mind that there may be better ways of doing things. Lean on a contractor to support and validate the way you are thinking. A reputable contractor has typically seen it all and can be a wealth of knowledge for you. Understand your budget and if your needs fit your budget. I often ask prospects: If we can improve the facility's cleanliness, and that, in turn, brings a new family or two to the facility, how would that affect your budget? The mindset should always be that the right decision in choosing a contractor can have a long-lasting positive effect on the facility, but the cost of choosing the wrong contractor or picking the cheapest contractor will have the opposite effect. There are a lot of janitorial contractors, and, unfortunately, a lot of them give the janitorial industry a bad reputation. You get what you pay for. Look for a contractor that has a proven track record in your market, a contractor that has numerous years in business and under the same ownership. A good contractor should be a resource for your facility, even if they are not chosen to service your facility.

If this article has generated questions or interest, please reach out to PJS of Houston. We would welcome the conversation. ✦

Robert Jacobs



After completing his degree from Texas A&M, Robert joined the PJS team where he spent his first two months working as a janitor in one of PJS' premier accounts. Robert specializes in developing janitorial processes for churches and private schools.



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LIGHTING IS CHANGING

by Jason Gingrich

Planning for desired or necessary lighting improvements in your school or church facilities can be an overwhelming and expensive process. LED technology is here to stay and is changing the facilities management landscape when we think of what is involved to implement it. LED lighting, while it has many benefits, has required some adaptability in the way we approach installing and maintaining this technology. Gone are the days of lighting being a commodity that “shouldn’t cost that much.” Simple bulb swaps are sometimes available but many times not the right solution for your situation.

The biggest roadblock to getting your lighting improved and modernized is typically cost. We have historically waited for budgets to be planned and approved, or we’ve counted on capital campaigns to pay for these costs. Or maybe we’ve chipped away at it a chunk at a time, hoping that products or technology or prices don’t change too much in the middle of a phased upgrade approach.

But what about the costs of not upgrading? What if you are paying more for your current system than you need to — a system that doesn’t perform to the level that you desire? Or perhaps your current system “works for now,” but if you could, you would update the aesthetics of the space or add some additional functionality.



Have you considered what your current lighting costs to operate and maintain? On average, lighting accounts for 30-40% of your electricity bill. On a recent project, over (100) units of 300W worship center lights were replaced with 40W LED lights. The worship center was brightened up while saving over 26,000 watts! Considering a typical 40-hr week, that could translate into an electricity savings of \$5,400/yr. This doesn't even factor in the savings of the time and money that was spent to maintain the old lights — not to mention the air conditioning that had to offset that heat load!

What if we could change the way you think about lighting costs — as something that is expensive to keep, not just costly to upgrade? Better yet, what if we could use the funds that you are currently spending on electricity, cooling, maintenance, equipment, security losses, etc... and reallocate that to new and improved lighting? What if we didn't have to use a large capital outlay and instead could use those monies for other ministry or facility needs and desires? Yes, switching to LED lighting will have a certain payback period, after which your investment pays itself off with the savings that you realized. But what if that payback could be immediate? Last, but not least, what if we could reallocate the time you spend on maintaining lights to other areas of your operation or ministry that need your attention?

If you could adapt to a new way of thinking about lighting expenses for your church, school, or non-profit, then it may be to your benefit to look at a Lighting-as-a-Service (LaaS) agreement. This would eliminate the need for capital to pay for your upgrades, and you complete your lighting wish list sooner rather than later and in full.

How would a LaaS agreement work? Your lighting would be improved with an upgrade at the beginning of your contract and then maintained — all on a monthly cost basis, using monies that are already allocated to

that budget line. You could get where you need to go faster, without the frustration and risks of waiting until the capital is available, approved, or raised. You wouldn't have to cross your fingers and hope that another building need doesn't suddenly derail your lighting plans at the last minute and take those funds away.

Also, think long term. Down the road, when your LED lighting starts to show signs of needing to be replaced again, as components start to fail, don't count on parts being available to keep these alive. The likelihood is very high that you will need to address whole areas again with a full replacement. LaaS provides you with a plan and a way to easily address this time when it does come.

So why partner with a lighting expert to assist you with this part of your facility's needs? LED behaves differently than legacy lighting did. It responds to and interacts with environmental and system elements differently than the lighting of yesterday. Things like controls, heat, colors, uniformity, and proper light distribution and output become critical considerations. A quick decision for economy products, because the price was right, cannot be counted on to serve you well long term. A Voss Lighting consultant can help you to work through these things so that your upgrade investment has great rewards! We can work within your means to develop a plan to quickly get your lighting to where you need it to be. ✦

Jason Gingrich



Jason Gingrich is the Branch Manager for the Voss Lighting Houston office. He has enjoyed a career that spans 25 years at Voss Lighting in Missouri, Colorado, and now Texas. He gets much satisfaction from helping people improve their lighting situations. Jason is also an active member of Founders Baptist Church. In his free time he enjoys biking, nature walks, and any time spent with his family.

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John Hagarty, Director of Member/Vendor Relations, interviews Jack Parks, Jr. of Humble Elevator



Nick Vandiver from Humble Elevator Service, Inc. wins \$100 Perry's Steakhouse gift card during a quarterly meeting

Patti Malott, CEO, presents the "Together We" Award to Robert Jacobs and Floyd Mahaney of Professional Janitorial Service (PJS) for their dedication, resourcefulness, and service to our CO+OP members



Buddy Randall of CFAC Mechanical shares his insight on communicating with CO+OP Members



Matt Jenkins from Health Insurance Solutions offers his views on connecting with members and vendors



Terry Pemberton from APS Building Services explains how he connects his organization's resources to meet the needs of our members



Andy Bourn of National Signs shares his perspective on serving our CO+OP Members



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KEEP THE CHANGE!

A wise soul once said, "If you don't like change, go to a soda machine. It's the only place you won't find it."

I keep lots of things around me to help me deal with inevitable change. One of my favorites sits in my office.

Every time I get my ducks in a row, somebody moves the lake.

I find myself at the stage when people start sounding like their parents. So many of my sentences seem to begin with, "I remember when..." and "Times have changed since..." I think the reason wisdom comes with age is that we have learned the technique of bobbing and weaving as life moves us along different paths. God didn't create us to be boulders. We were meant to be like flexible willows. Easier said than done sometimes.

A few changes labeled as "progress" that I could gladly do without include:

- Cell phones (What happened to quiet time?)
- The internet (Reading books to get factual information is a lost art.)
- Facebook (Remember when families didn't air their dirty laundry?)
- Twitter (How about forming our own opinions instead of chiming in with celebrities?)

I've had to adapt to cell phones and the internet for my work and communicating with my family. My kids insist on a text-only basis. They don't seem to know how to talk on those things.

And then there was Covid. That meant figuring out a whole new way to conduct my business. Learning to use Zoom was way outside my comfort zone. It's been two years, and I'm still terrible at using it. Fortunately, I was able to adapt my methods

and continue guiding my clients through the maze of Medicare enrollment. Why I kept waving my arms around and pointing during phone consultations is still puzzling to me.

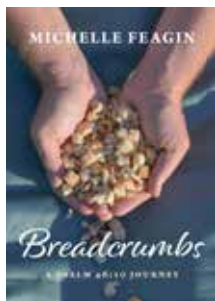
My son, Matt, has recently joined my agency. It's fun working with him, but it's also a challenge to let go a little bit and make room for him to grow in his new responsibilities. It takes me back to the days of his eagerness to drive when he first got his license. The passenger seat can feel pretty uncomfortable at first.

The late Erma Bombeck once commented about changing roles with her mother. She said the first time she realized the transition was when she was driving to the store with her mother. Someone pulled in front of her, and she had to slam on the brakes. She instinctively put her arm out to protect her mother – as her mother had done so many times for her. At that moment, she was struck with the change in their roles. It required adapting for both of them.

I had life all figured out with everything in a neat little box — until I hit 40. Then God cut the carton tape, and it was time to start all over! I suddenly found myself taking on the role of instant Mom to three little boys. It was challenging, to say the least. My life hasn't been neat or simple since, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

Years later, I felt Him asking me to write about the experience to help others struggling in times of change — or anxiously awaiting it. Becoming an author was a challenge I didn't readily accept. I found countless reasons for several years to avoid the request. But even the hardest head can get tired of a constantly echoed request. So, I finally accepted it with obedience, and He gave me the words to write. I was just the typist.

The book is called *Breadcrumbs*. I pray that it can bless you as you adapt to changes in your life. ✦



Michelle Feagin, RHU

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Michelle is an independent insurance agent specializing in Medicare plans. With over 30 years' experience in health insurance, she helps clients understand how Medicare works and assists them with enrollment in the plans that will best fit their needs.



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Adapting to God's Timing

It was Monday morning, March 28, 2016. I was getting ready for work when Judy (my wife and a CPA with her own practice) mentioned that she wasn't feeling well and was going to rest. I left for work, and it continued to be a normal day for me. By evening, Judy was feeling better, and we enjoyed dinner together. Tuesday morning, Judy wasn't feeling well again and had no appetite. She decided to stay in bed. I got her some water and headed to a dentist's appointment.

After the appointment, I drove to the church to process payroll, heading home about noon to check on Judy. She declined anything to eat but asked for more water. That afternoon, I worked in my office at home, completing a project for church. I stopped only when Harley, our dog, decided he needed to go for a walk. When we returned from our outing, I headed upstairs to ask Judy what she wanted for dinner. At this point, she had eaten nothing all day.

I opened the door. There she was, sitting in her chair near the bed. Her water bottle had dropped out of her hand to the floor. Her head was slumped forward. She wasn't breathing. I called 911, and they coached me through giving her CPR until the paramedics arrived and took over. It seemed like an eternity.

Someone ushered me out of the bedroom as the attempts at resuscitation continued. One paramedic took me to the kitchen to get a list of the medications she was on. Judy meticulously kept a list of every prescription, recording the time and amount of each dose. In my dazed state, I had totally forgotten about the list and fumbled through the cabinet, pulling out various pill bottles for the paramedic.

By then, an ambulance had arrived to take Judy to the closest hospital. I was told it did not look good. I was preparing to follow the ambulance to the hospital when a new neighbor, who had just moved in that weekend, showed up and refused to let me drive myself. Her husband drove me instead. On the way, I called the church and my kids to let them know what was going on.

Upon arriving at the ER, I was taken to a small room to wait. Several people from church along with two of my kids soon joined me. I was so cold. Someone gave me a warm blanket. About 6:30 p.m., the doctor came in to tell me — Judy didn't make it.

Sitting in the passenger seat on the drive home, I asked myself over and over again, "Why?" According to our doctor, it wasn't supposed to be this way. Judy was supposed to outlive me! I didn't sleep much that night. The next several days were spent preparing for and attending the memorial service.

The question continued to haunt me — "Why?" After all, I was serving God and working at a church. I loved my wife, was faithful

to her. I didn't understand God's timing. But then my "Why?" turned to "Why not?" I began to rejoice in the nearly 45 years of marriage we had together. The memories we had together.

I awoke each morning with the song lyrics "I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God" playing through my head. I cannot explain the peace I had in the midst of the sadness. I remember thinking how thankful I was that, as a Christian, I had a hope! What about those who have no hope? How do they get through a time like this?

Over the next couple of weeks or months (I really don't remember how long), the question became, "What am I going to do?" I refused to become one of those spouses who died within a year after his/her mate. My first thought was to get involved with a couple's ministry — but obviously that was now out of the question. Legacy (senior adults)? I wasn't ready for that. About that time, Chris, the youth pastor, and I were driving together. I asked Chris, "How old is too old to work with youth?" After all, I was 69 at the time. His enthusiastic response was, "Not that old!" I had visions of working with high school students — visions that soon became a reality. In the fall of 2016, I was made a leader of a group of sixth grade boys. To be honest, most of the time I felt like I was herding cats — blind cats.

Those boys are now my juniors. From the beginning, I told them my goal was to see them graduate high school, if they would have me. They have taught me so much about God's love, beyond anything I could have possibly imagined. The one-on-one discussions, the hugs, the introduction to SnapChat — they've kept me young! I'm not sure who has ministered more to whom. All I can say is that those are my boys, and I love them. It has been a privilege to have a small part in their lives. "I get to."

In addition to this, two years ago, I became the leader of a second group of sixth grade boys. They are now eighth graders, and I intend to see them graduate as well.

While this is not the course I would have chosen, I am so thankful for these ministry opportunities God has given me in a season of change and sorrow. His plan, His timing, and His wisdom are perfect. ✦



Ken Emert

Ken Emert is currently on the staff of Pure Heart Church where he has served as the Business Administrator for the past 10 years. Prior to that, he did CMS software training and was on the staff at Scottsdale Bible Church for 21 years. While his job is working with numbers, his passion is working with youth. He is currently the Crew Leader of 7th grade and sophomore boys. He started working with his sophomores when they went into 6th grade. His goal is to stick with each group until they graduate. Ken is a widower and has three children and five grandchildren.

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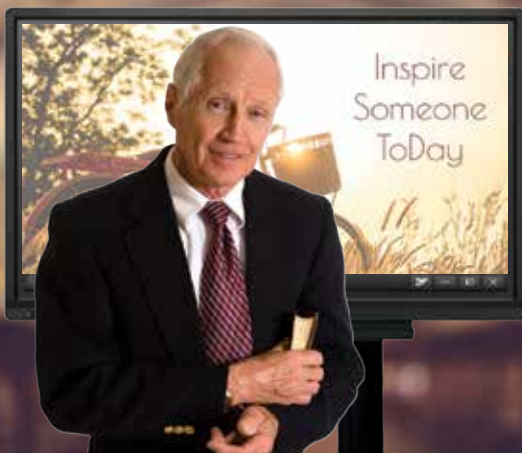
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