

Rural Church Leadership



Building a Team that Works!

An interactive experience to take your leadership team to the next level



The Rural Church Pastors Network
www.ruralchurchpastorsnetwork.com



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In 2011, three rural pastors and their denominational 'coach' felt led by God to reach out to rural pastors in central, Alberta offering opportunities to connect for fellowship, training and prayer. Now, two years later, a grass roots movement of rural pastors has expanded to three provinces and fourteen denominations. It appears a pressing need has been identified and addressed!!

Known as the **Rural Church Pastors Network**, the ministry is designed for rural pastors, and offers hope, encouragement, and support to all pastors serving in a rural church setting.

In an attempt to keep up with the development of the RCPN, regional leadership teams of rural pastors are being developed to promote events in their own regions and to develop and strengthen ongoing relationships between semi-annual events. You are encouraged to support your regional RCPN hub leadership team.



Visit our Website www.ruralchurchpastorsnetwork.com where you will find...

- ❖ Free audio files to download offering insight and support related to the uniqueness of being a rural pastor.
- ❖ Follow the blog of a rural pastor as he shares life and ministry experiences
- ❖ Download past RCPN event training resources to use with your church or local ministerial... How to Meaningfully Engage with your Community... How to Keep Balance Between Life and Ministry in a rural church setting.
- ❖ Find information on the next event planned for your area in October 2013
- ❖ Resources, Book Reviews and more!
- ❖ Let Us Know How We Can Pray for You!
- ❖ Join us and become a member of the RCPN!
- ❖ Keep connected to Rural Pastors.



The Helium Stick

is a deceptively simple but powerful exercise for learning how to work together and communicate as a rural church leadership team.

How to lead the exercise...

- Line up in two rows which face each other.
- Introduce the Helium Stick - a long, thin, lightweight rod, 5-6 foot wooden dowel (no more than ½ thick), available at most building supply stores.
- Ask participants to point their index fingers and hold their arms out at waist level.
- Lay the Helium Stick down on their fingers. Get the group to adjust their finger heights until the Helium Stick is horizontal and everyone's index fingers are touching the stick.
- Explain that the challenge is to raise the Helium Stick to their shoulders and then lower it to their knees.
- Demonstrate the task by yourself – it will take no more than 2 seconds.
- Ask groups to project how long the task will take them to complete as a team.
- **The catch:** Each person's fingers must be in contact with the Helium Stick at all times. Pinching or grabbing the pole is not allowed - it must rest on top of the fingers.
- Remind the group that if anyone's finger is caught not touching the Helium Stick, the task will be restarted. Let the task begin....
- **Warning:** Particularly in the early stages, the Helium Stick has a habit of mysteriously 'floating' up rather than coming down. By this time in the exercise you will note that people are either laughing or terribly frustrated.
- Participants may be confused initially about the paradoxical behavior of the Helium Stick.
- After a few minutes of trying, some groups or individuals, may be inclined to give up because the task seem too hard.
- The facilitator can offer directions or can suggest that the group stop the task, discuss their strategy, and then try again.
- Eventually the group needs to calm down, concentrate, and patiently lower the Helium Stick by sliding and pushing their fingers together which allows them to lower the stick.

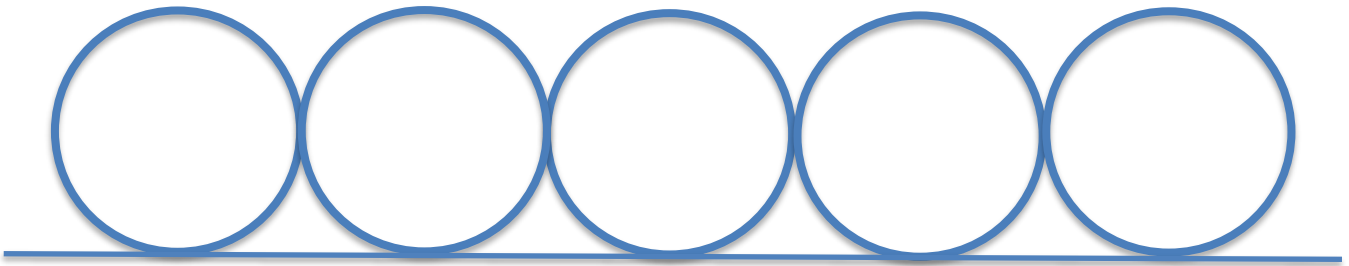


How Does it Work?

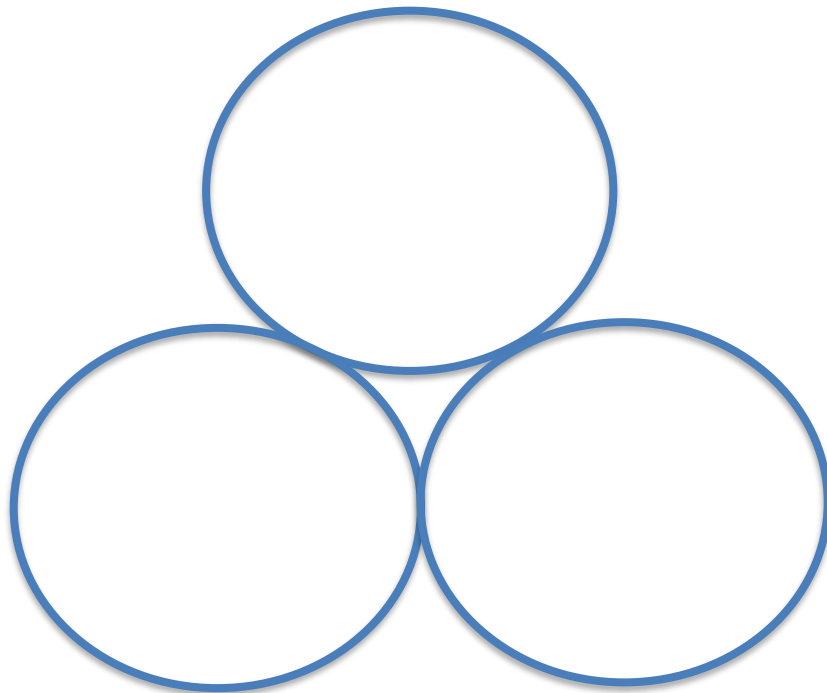
- The stick does not contain helium! The secret is that the collective upwards pressure created by everyone's fingers tend to be greater than the weight of the stick. As a result, the more a group tries, the more the stick tends to 'float' upwards.



The Five Ingredients of a Healthy Team:



Three Considerations before ever Making a Decision:





The Four Personalities Sitting Around Your Leadership Table

When a rural leader sits down at the leadership table a personality style and dominant ministry focus comes with them. On the following pages we will consider four different personality styles and three different ministry focus defaults that need to be identified and affirmed in each leader for your rural leadership team to function at its highest level. Each one of your leaders has a personality style that carries both strengths and challenges that must be understood and respected: For the purpose of this exercise the four personality styles will be linked to the following four items:

**POWERFUL
HAMMER**



**VERSATILE
SWISS ARMY
KNIFE**



**ADAPTIBLE
DUCT TAPE**



**PRECISION
MEASURING
TAPE**



Before each personality style is described you are invited to complete the inventory exercise (on the next page) by checking off each term that either you believe applies to you or that others would normally comment about your personality. When completed, mark your scores on the graph below and then connect the score markings from left to right.

20	20	20	20
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
15	15	15	15
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
10	10	10	10
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
5	5	5	5
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
POWERFUL HAMMER	SWISS ARMY KNIFE	DUCT TAPE	MEASURING TAPE
SCORE: _____	_____	_____	_____



**POWERFUL
HAMMER**

- Leader
- Takes charge
- Eager
- Assertive, confident
- Firm
- Enterprising
- Competitive
- Daring, enjoys challenges
- Problem solver
- Vigorous, productive
- Bold
- Purposeful, goal-driven
- Decision maker
- Adventurous spirit
- Force of character, strong-willed
- Independent, self-reliant
- Unconquerable
- Persistent
- Action-oriented
- Determined

SCORE ____/20
Plot Score On Chart



**VERSATILE
SWISS ARMY KNIFE**

- Confident, charming
- Open-minded
- Persuasive, motivator
- Enthusiastic
- Takes risks
- Visionary
- Energetic
- Very verbal
- Promoter
- Friendly, mixes easily
- Fun-loving,
- Likes variety
- Spontaneous
- Enjoys change
- Creative, Embraces New Ideas
- Group-oriented
- Optimistic
- Initiator
- Infectious laughter
- Inspirational

SCORE ____/20
Plot Score On Chart



**ADAPTABLE
DUCT TAPE**

- Sensitive
- Loyal
- Calm, even-keeled
- Avoids confrontation
- Enjoys routine
- Warm and relational
- Moderate
- Generous
- Cheerful
- Accommodating
- Cautious humor, considerate
- Adaptable
- Sympathetic
- Thoughtful
- Nurturing
- Patient
- Tolerant
- Good listener
- Peacemaker
- Unifier

SCORE ____/20
Plot Score On Chart



**PRECISION
TAPE MEASURE**

- Reads all instructions, deliberate
- Accurate, cautious
- Consistent
- Controlled
- Reserved
- Predictable
- Practical
- Factual
- Conscientious
- Disciplined, orderly
- Discerning
- Detailed
- Analytical
- Inquisitive
- Precise
- Persistent
- Scheduled
- Sensitive
- Introspective
- Receptive

SCORE ____/20
Plot Score On Chart



**POWERFUL
HAMMER**
**Strengths Carried
Too Far**

- Too direct or demanding
- Pushy
- Overbearing
- Unyielding, too blunt
- Takes big risks
- Cold-blooded, uncooperative
- Avoids relations
- Too busy
- Overlooks feelings—do it now!
- Insensitive
- Imbalanced, workaholic
- Inconsiderate of others' wishes
- Impulsive, restless
- Inflexible
- Bossy
- Avoids seeking help



**VERSATILE
SWISS ARMY KNIFE**
**Strengths Carried
Too Far**

- Cocky, proud, tries hard to impress
- Gullible
- Pushy
- Overbearing, overcommits
- Dangerous, foolish
- Daydreamer
- Manipulator
- Impatient
- Puts foot in mouth
- Exaggerates
- Shallow relationships
- Too showy
- Too flippant, not serious
- Too scattered, disorganized
- Not focused
- Lacks follow-through
- Unrealistic, misses details
- Obnoxious
- Phony



**ADAPTABLE
DUCT TAPE**
**Strengths Carried
Too Far**

- Easily hurt
- Misses opportunities, over-trusting
- Lacks enthusiasm
- Pushover
- Misses honest intimacy
- Stays in rut, complacent
- Not spontaneous
- Few deep friendships
- Codependent, passive
- Unwilling to risk
- Can be taken advantage of
- Patronizing
- Indecisive, compromising
- Overly cautious
- Loses identity, vacillates
- Holds on to others' hurts
- Enabling
- Weak convictions
- Attracted to hurting people
- Stuffs feelings



**PRECISION
MEASURING TAPE**
**Strengths Carried
Too Far**

- Afraid to take risks
- Critical
- Lacks spontaneity
- Too serious
- Stuffy
- Lacks variety
- Not adventurous
- Picky
- Controlling, inflexible
- Negative toward new opportunities
- "Paralysis of analysis"
- Loses big-picture view
- Smothering, nose-y
- Strict, perfectionistic
- Pushy
- Boring
- Stubborn, oversensitive
- Self-absorbed
- Gullible
- Reluctant, overcautious
- Rigid, unrealistic



Understanding The Four Personalities Styles

Adaped from material in *Preventing Ministry Failure* (Wilson/Hofmann)

This book was given to all attenders at the RCPN events held in November 2012.

You are encouraged to order a copy of this book for yourself and your ministry.

The Powerful Hammer (CAUSE Minstry Focus)

The leader who functions like a ‘powerful hammer’ has been entrusted with a personality with strength and confidence. They don’t mind taking on the big challenges that face the rural church. In a rural setting this person is usually identified and influences the church as the ‘patriarch’ figure, someone other than the pastor!



Often heard saying... ‘Let’s get it done *now*,’ ‘Let’s do it *my* way,’

Key Strengths... the ability to take charge of most anything, usually ‘results oriented,’ can see the big picture and ability to apply the pressure that will get results.

Tendencies when strengths are taken to an extreme... can appear bossy, insensitive, impatient, domineering, reluctant to delegate or give credit to others. In getting things done, the powerful hammer leader can appear to ‘use’ people for the greater purpose of getting things done.

Emotional Needs... desires to be appreciated for and receive credit for personal accomplishments; wants his/her wishes obeyed.

Likes working with... people who do things their way; cooperate quickly; will be supportive and submissive.

Reliable in their work in... completion of their new and innovative ideas, and their ability to overcome obstacles.

Influences others by... finding innovative solutions to a given problem; demonstrating a personal sense of power and confidence; empowering others; possessing a quick sense of what will work.

Could improve ‘team serve’ by... using more patience, empathy, participation and collaboration with others; allowing others to make decisions; ‘nailing down’ the details; not expecting everyone to produce as they do.

Can be ‘spotted in a crowd’ by... their restlessness; quick grab for control; fast moving and high energy approach.

Think about your closest relationships, both personal (family/friends) and ministry based: Who might this tool describe? Give an example of how you have noticed this in their life.

The Versatile Swiss Army Knife (CAUSE Ministry Focus)

The leader who functions like a ‘Versatile Swiss Army Knife’ has been entrusted with energy and passion. They don’t mind taking on the big challenges that face the rural church, but tackle it through passion and levity. In a rural setting this person is usually identified and influences the church as a ‘optimistic and visionary cheer leader.’



Often heard saying... ‘We *can* do this!’ ‘Let’s have some fun along the way,’ ‘Let’s be optimistic about this!!’

Key Strengths... networks well with others; can talk about anything, anytime, anyplace, with anyone, with or without information; has an effervescent and bubbly personality; good sense of humour; likes to tell stories; naturally enjoys people; seems to know everyone even if they can’t remember their names!

Tendencies when strengths are taken to an extreme... can be disorganized or avoid managing details, embellishes and exaggerates for the sake of motivating others, trusts others to do the work, lacks seriousness at times when being serious is necessary; avoids follow through in avoiding accountability.

Emotional Needs... desires approval, acceptance, attention from other people.

Likes working with... people who enjoy looking at the lighter side of life and ministry, and laugh at their stories and jokes, and offer approval for the direction things are going.

Reliable in their work in... persuading and inspiring others; ability for being natural promoters (can sell a dead horse to a cowboy) excel in creativity, optimism, and tendency to cheer up others.

Influences others with... praise and doing things for other people.

Could improve ‘team serve’ by... being more organized at times, focusing on follow-through; keeping commitments and completing tasks assigned; not talking too much; learning to work within a reasonable time frame.

Can be ‘spotted in a crowd’ by... their energy, chatter, animated expressions, enthusiasm, ability to mix easily, networking with others.

Think about your closest relationships, both personal (family/friends) and ministry based: Who might this tool describe? Give an example of how you have noticed this in their life.

Adaptable Duct Tape (COMMUNITY Ministry Focus)



The leader who functions like an ‘Adaptable Duct Tape’ has been entrusted with a personality that ‘keeps things together and unified.’ They are more concerned about how people are doing during a journey rather than getting to the destination.

Often heard saying... ‘Don’t make waves’ ‘Let’s take the path of least resistance,’ ‘How are you doing?’ ‘Excuse me, can I say something now?’ ‘I can’t decide, what you do think?’

Key Strengths... a pleasing and friendly personality, shepherding orientation, aware of the needs of those around them, takes time to listen to people. Nurtures everyone around them.

Tendencies when strengths are taken to an extreme... may lack enthusiasm and energy; struggles with indecision; uncomfortable with change; no obvious outward flaws but may have a ‘hidden will of iron.’ These people have a problem saying ‘no’ because they want to please and not disappoint others. They become distracted from the ‘main thing’ being discussed because of personal related issues of people that are not being discussed or considered.

Emotional Needs... ‘keep the peace’ and have no conflict, be understood and emotional support, a sense of being respected and feel worthwhile.

Likes working with... people who ‘like them’; will respect and appreciate their contribution; will make decisions for them’ will note ignore them.

Reliable in their work by... being steady, consistent and predictably peaceful; ability to be a peacemaker and to mediate between contentious people; cooperative and calming influence.

Influences others with... accommodating; being ‘pleasing,’ consistency in work performance.

Could improve ‘team serve’ by... standing up for themselves, learning to cope with a reasonable level of conflict, expressing ideas; working faster than expected, setting goals and becoming self-motivated.

Can be ‘spotted in a crowd’ by... their calm, modest and accommodation posture; maintaining a low profile by ‘blending’ into the social situation.

Think about your closest relationships, both personal (family/friends) and ministry based: Who might this tool describe? Give an example of how you have noticed this in their life.

Precision Measuring Tape (CORPORATE Ministry Focus)

The leader who functions like a 'Precision Measuring Tape' has been entrusted with a personality that knows how to do things the 'right way' with great accuracy. They are good at keeping track of things and noticing details that others might miss.



Often heard saying... 'Let's do it the right way,' 'But what about _____,' 'Our task isn't complete until the paperwork is done!'

Key Strengths... the ability to organize and manage details, analyze, set high standards and set long range goals and track them to completion. Quality control in doing things the right way.

Tendencies when strengths are taken to an extreme... over focuses on details. In their ability to 'pick things apart' they can also 'pick people apart' and are seen as judgmental, impersonal, calculated and critical for their desire to be 'right.' They believe they are right most of the time (and they are!), they can become close minded and not listen to the creative ideas of others. They will micro manage situations, remember the negative, spend too much time on preparation.

Emotional Needs... having a sense of stability and order; need for silence, sensitivity, support and space.

Likes working with... people who appreciate their attention to details; are serious; are sensible; want to 'play by the rules.'

Reliable in their work in... maintaining high standards and thoroughness of performance; love of analysis; follow through; detail oriented; compassion for others who may be hurting.

Influences others with... organization; sensitivity to others' feelings; desire for quality performance; creative problem solving.

Could improve 'team serve' by... not having to get things done perfectly; not insisting that others hold to their standards; not taking life and ministry too seriously.

Can be 'spotted in a crowd' by... their sensitive nature; serious conversations; well-mannered approach to others; well-groomed appearance (with some exceptions!)

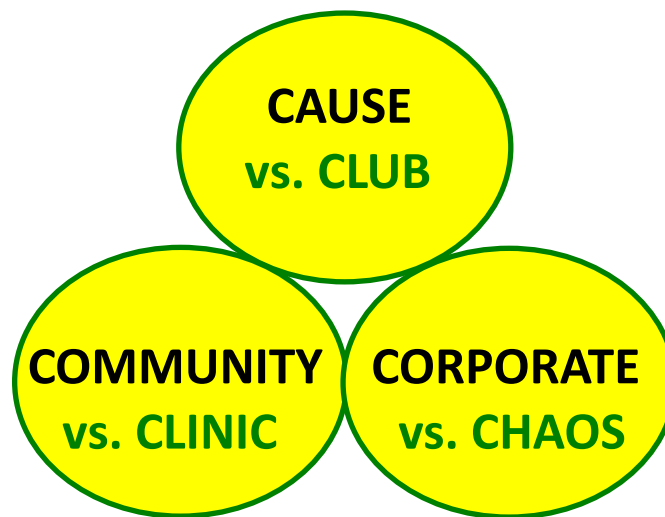
Think about your closest relationships, both personal (family/friends) and ministry based: Who might this tool describe? Give an example of how you have noticed this in their life.

Which of the four 'tool types' do you find it easiest to understand and get along with and why?

Which of the four 'tool types' do you find it most difficult to understand & get along with /why?



Three Ministry Focus Default Perspectives



When leaders discuss plans for the future of their church they come with an ingrained ‘focus default’ that will find them energized and focused for certain parts of the planning cycle rather than others. The four personality styles also manifest themselves in line with one of the three default perspectives.

It is imperative we learn what these three focus areas are, because if planning at the leadership level takes place without considering all three focus areas, you are doomed from the outset in creating a planning outcome that will at best ‘limp’ along into the future.

The **CAUSE** perspective focuses on **PURPOSE** and answers the question **WHY?** Why are we doing this? How does this align with our purpose? Is this matter worthy of the investment of our time and resources and energy? Is this really worthy of my commitment?

Personality Style Alignment: The **CAUSE Focus Default** is usually held by those with elevated scores in the **Powerful Hammer** and **Versatile Swiss Army Knife** personality styles.

The Danger of Ignoring the CAUSE: When rural leaders become preoccupied with issues of people and matters of planning without regularly considering the **CAUSE** or reason why things are done in the church, it soon becomes a **CLUB**. This condition is especially prevalent in rural churches where there isn’t regular addition of new members and where the same old, same old mindset is the rhythm of week by week church experience. Because of the strong ‘family’ based relational structure of rural congregations, it is hard for new people to ‘break in’ and feel accepted.... and this why pastors often have to stay longer than the previous pastor before they are fully accepted into the congregation as ‘one of ours.’

The **COMMUNITY** perspective focuses on **PEOPLE** and answers the question **WHO?**
Who are we planning this for? Who is the target group we have in mind?
Who will benefit most from this investment of our time and energies?

Personality Style Alignment: The **COMMUNITY Focus Default** is usually held by those with elevated scores in the **Adaptable Duct Tape** personality styles.

The Danger of Ignoring the COMMUNITY: When rural leaders become preoccupied with the issues of cause/purpose and corporate matters of planning without regularly considering the **COMMUNITY** of people who are the recipients of ministry, the church soon feels **CLINICAL** rather than relational. This condition is evident in rural churches where there is unresolved conflict between people, families or with the pastor. It also occurs when newcomers are not allowed into fellowship because they are ‘new’ to the church (the personal needs of the newcomer/community are being set aside)

The **CORPORATE** perspective focuses on **PLANS** and answers the questions **WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, and HOW MUCH?** What are the details to make this happen? Where will it be held? When will this occur? How much is this going to cost?

Personality Style Alignment: The **CORPORATE Focus Default** is usually held by those with elevated scores in the **PRECISION MEASURING TAPE** personality styles.

The Danger of Ignoring the CORPORATE: When rural leaders become preoccupied with issues of cause/purpose and matters of community/people without regularly considering the **CORPORATE** aspect of planning properly, the church soon functions with **CHAOS** rather than in an organized manner. This condition is evident in rural churches where planning is left until the last minute – flying by the ‘seat of our pants,’ because things always seem to work themselves out in the end. In reality, certain people seem to rise to the occasion to ‘save the day’ to make up for the lack of planning. (passive response rather than proactive planning)

Consider: From your experience in working with those who currently sit around your leadership table, what do you believe to be their ‘default ministry focus’ and dominant personality style?

Name	Ministry Focus Default	Dominant Personality Style



Questions to Stimulate Team Based Conversation

The following questions are designed to invite leaders to share their heart related to leadership fears, dreams and aspirations they currently hold. It has proven meaningful for boards to share and pray together over one question at their monthly meetings.

As a Leader/Elder share...

I would love to learn how to ... (i.e. how to deal with conflict/how to pray or conduct visits)

My greatest fear as a leader is ... (i.e. speaking in public)

I would appreciate a discussion about ...

My pastor can assist me in my leadership role by ...

I can better support my pastor in his ministry by ...

I need an answer to this question ...



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