

Developing Blueprints and
“Earthing” them out

What is this session about?

- By the end of this seminar you will have:
- An outline understanding of a blueprint and some of its benefits.
- Some knowledge about how to develop your blueprint.
- Made a start on developing your blueprint
- Identified some further actions for developing your blueprint within your organisation.

A cautionary note

- There are challenges that come with outworking heavenly blueprints in a less than perfect world.
- Point to note: Most projects fail because of these common factors-
- No clearly agreed definition of what the “thing” is and isn’t – avoid mission creep!

A cautionary note

- Poorly set out constitution or governance arrangements
- Who has authority and responsibility – avoid mutiny or hostile takeovers!
- A lack of understanding of, and failure to mitigate, the risks and liabilities inherent in any project
- Understand the law, safeguarding, policies and procedures, financial management, compliance, HR, lack of skills or experience.

A cautionary note

- Failure to understand the environment you are operating in – opposition spiritually and earthly (competition, statutory agencies, other churches, charities, public, etc).
- Underestimating how much work it will be – admin, HR, finances, compliance, Marketing and communications, operational delivery.
- A that'll do approach – bare minimum, least effort, poor quality
- Naivety – relying on God's grace to cover our backsides. – As soon as you become aware, you become responsible.

What will see you through?

- Knowing your mandates and authority
- A clear vision and mission – blueprint
- Clear governance – roles and responsibilities defined
- A collaborative attitude – draw people to you – share
- Passion and heart – determination in the face of obstacles
- Good organisation, management and administration
- Christian passion, Professional Excellence – doing everything to the highest standard maintains integrity and quality and removes objections, criticism and prejudice.

What is a Blueprint?

- A Blueprint can be depicted as a map, or a journey, linking the activities/inputs of a ministry, programme, intervention or organisation to the outputs and intermediate and long-term outcomes experienced by members, service users, and other stakeholders.

What is a Blueprint?

- Blueprint illustrates links between the activities you deliver and the changes you anticipate creating for beneficiaries. It requires you to explore the assumptions about what you seek to do and how change is created.
- Blueprint development is a process - a structured thinking process that allows groups to turn theories about what needs to be done into a pathway.
- It's also a product – a document that illustrates the results of the Blueprint process.

Developing a Blueprint- why bother?

- Making good decisions and plan services - understanding the links between the things that you plan to do and how they create change for individuals, families and communities (both intended and unintended) – creates a clear strategy
- Tests your assumptions about your work – and acts as a check for what you do and don't do as an organisation – keeping you “on mission”

Developing a Blueprint- why bother?

- Gets people involved – developing a Blueprint is a great opportunity to pull in different stakeholders to work together to shape and evaluate projects.
- Identifying opportunities – for collaboration, partnership working, developing new services – release people to their destinies!
- Provides clarity for trustees, staff, users and other stakeholders – a good Blueprint will be clear to understand, so everyone has a shared vision about what the organisation is seeking to achieve, how and for whom.

Developing a Blueprint- why bother?

- Building a name (brand) and reaching beneficiaries - a brand that speaks of your values and to the values of beneficiaries (yes, Jesus is our brand but you are his ambassadors)
- Monitoring what works— monitoring progress against your Blueprint ensures you know what makes a difference and what needs changing.
- A good blueprint will illustrate and explain everything about your project. It may be a picture, a chart, a written explanation, but it must be capable of communicating your vision.

Developing a Blueprint- why bother?

- A visual representation of the project you want to see and how you expect it to come about – spiritually and earthly
- A benchmark for evaluation with measurable indicators of success identified (Activities)
- An agreement among stakeholders about what defines success and what it takes to get there
- A powerful communication tool to capture the complexity of your initiative

Developing a Blueprint- why bother?

- Your Blueprint is likely to include a map, or series of maps, of your aims, outcomes and the activities and outputs that you believe will lead to your long-term aim.
- This may be accompanied by a list of assumptions and a narrative demonstrating the linkages between different elements of the model.

Clarifying assumptions

- As you go through the process of defining your blueprint, you will have made a series of assumptions about your project's potential to achieve its specified outcomes.
- Recognising these assumptions helps you identify some of the critical factors affecting the success of your project. It will also help you to shape how you deliver your services. You will want to evaluate and track progress so it is important to document them.
- There are different categories of assumption; the important ones are likely to be about the following:

Relational

- How do different areas of authority work together – mountains, benches, staff?
- Do you assume everyone will have the same level of commitment and passion
- Have you clarified who will take what roles and responsibilities
- What do you assume about your beneficiaries behaviour?
- Just because people use the same words do not assume everyone means the same thing!

Operational Delivery

- Links between programme activities and the outcomes they are expected to produce – under or over estimating skills, resources, time needed, etc
- Contextual or environmental factors that may influence whether outcomes are achieved.
- Unforeseen issues – legal, political, economic, social, opposition

Remember the importance of mandates first

- If it isn't established in heaven it won't be established on earth
- You are aiming to create a shadow of a heavenly blueprint on the earth
- Your mandates will determine your success
- If you don't have one, get one or get out!
- The mandate gives access to the resources of heaven
- It produces favour on the Earth
- If you accept it, you are responsible for it!

Developing the Blueprint

6 Honest serving men: Rudyard Kipling The Elephant's child.

I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.

- These are the simplest measures by which any concept can be explained and will answer most of the questions that will commonly arise as you share your vision.

Why?

- Everyone likes to tell you “what” but you get commitment when you explain why?
- Define the “problem” so the reason you are doing it is clear
- Understand your heavenly mandates – God’s why?
- The more you understand about the why, the better your design and delivery will be.
- Be able to explain why your project is the solution. If you don’t know why then no-one else will either.

Why?

- Learn about the problem and its underlying issues:
- Seek God together for clarification – lean not on your own understanding!
- Use earthly research, yours or others – due diligence
- Consult with, and draw on, stakeholders experiences – unity and agreement are essential

What?

- Spiritual Authority to do the “thing” - what mountains?
- Earthly Authority – personal, organisational, legal?
- Identify the deliverables & activities – what are you actually going to do?
- Understand the results you are expecting – outcomes
- Outcomes tend to fall into categories such as:
 - Community, Health, Education, Behaviours & Attitudes, Relationships, Employment, Spiritual, Financial, etc

How?

- Organisational structure
- Governance
- Bench of 3, 7 & 12
- Ekklesia, Trust, club or society, company, charity, CIO, partnership.
- Members, Trustees, Directors, exec/non exec.
- Staff, volunteers
- Maintain integrity of purpose - constitution

Where?

- Sons and Kings rule over a kingdom
- Geography - Place, town, city, region, country, World, Solar system, Galaxy, Universe, All of creation?
- What is your jurisdiction - legal right do you have either earthly or heavenly over that place?
- Are there boundaries?

Who?

- Do you have authority and responsibility for?
 - Staff
 - Volunteers
 - Ekklesia
 - Members
- Do you want to help?
 - Beneficiaries
 - Local Residents
- Do you have to work with?
 - Agencies – statutory

When?

- Timing?
- Now or later?
- Duration - One off or ongoing?
- Short term or ad infinitum?
- Never rush in – some things need to be incubated!
- Allow for time to prepare and be prepared
- Ask God for his timing.

Using your Blueprint

- As your Blueprint develops you'll revise it many times – testing out assumptions and adding, moving or deleting outcomes - until you have a blueprint that everyone agrees with.
- The discussions involved in this are crucial as they help people to be really clear about what they are trying to do and why

Write the vision

- Your Blueprint may now be presented in a chart, a set of tables or a spider's web or starburst. Each is unique.
- Write the Blueprint as a narrative as well. This means drawing out the connections and assumptions contained in your visual representation and expressing your vision in normal language. Avoid jargon!

Unity and Agreement

- Where there is unity God commands a blessing!
- If you cannot get agreement - review your mandates, reappraise the blueprint
- Make sure you have the right governmental structure – one person should not drive everyone else – 3 in agreement not 2 vs 1 or 1 telling 2.
- Culture of honour essential – never just go along with it

Developing your Blueprint practical exercise

- We are going to help you identify the Why, What and How? Of your plan today.
- 3 pieces of paper headed up Why, What and How? respectively.
- Use post it notes to add to each page