

Mistakes and Lessons in Church Planter Coaching

What are the typical mistakes in coaching church planters and risks that we should avoid? Dietrich Schindler will share his experience and lessons that he has learned as a church planter and also as a mentor and coach of other church planters in Germany.

Dietrich Schindler is a German-American church planting leader in Germany and beyond. In twenty-three years of ministry, he and his wife Jan have planted five churches in Germany. They have three adult children and one wonderful grandson, Max – born to his church planting parents in Taiwan. The past six years Dietrich was the executive director of church planting for the German Evangelical Free Church denomination, pursuing the goal of planting 100 churches in ten years. As of 2006 63 churches have been started. Dietrich is currently a church planting consultant and speaker with the German Evangelical Free Church. He is the author of the book, “The Jesus Model: Planting Churches the Jesus Way.” He has also generated a new life-based course for secular post-modern Europeans entitled “MyLife-Workshop” (www.mylifeworkshop.org).

I. The road to failure as a church planting coach

A. Not having a model of church planting from which to work (Four Phases)

1. Start Team
2. Preview Services
3. Intensive Phase
4. Grand Opening (Launch)

B. Not having an outcome-based coaching system for church planters

1. Time frame: yesterday, today, tomorrow
2. Simple coaching model: (P³ O³)
 - a. Personal: How are you? Tell me more! (Prayer)
 - b. Progress: What have you put into practice since our last meeting?

c. Praise: You did really well to . . .

d. Hinge Question: What is currently your greatest challenge in church planting?

e. Obstacles: What obstacles will you have to overcome in order to meet this challenge?

f. Options: What are the options available to you to meet the challenge?

g. Outcomes: What practical steps will you take in the next six-eight weeks before we meet again? (SMART goals)

C. Not having metrics with which to measure progress
(For check lists see The Jesus Model, p. 204-213)

II. The issues to which the coach needs to pay particular attention

A. The personal life of the church planter

1. Health of the marriage (talk to spouse as well)
2. Health of his/her life with Jesus (Is joy discernible?)
3. Disengagement

B. Forward moving dynamic in the church planting ministry

C. Making disciples (not just members or workers)

D. Raising up leaders (“I would rather be a king-maker, than a king!” – Lloyd Perry)

E. Bi-Focal vision: The next church plant is in view

Conclusion: The joy of the older Christian leader is the ministry success of the young leader. We will do all we can to leave behind us a spiritual legacy of young church planting leaders that we have empowered to be fruitful.

Suggested Readings:

Covey, Stephen. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Simon and Schuster, 1989.

Breen, Mike. *Building a Discipling Culture*. 3 Dimension Ministries, 2009.

Keller, Timothy. *Center Church*, Zondervan, 2012.

Logan, Robert E. and Carlton, Sherilyn. *Coaching 101: Discover the Power of Coaching*, Church Smart Resources, 2003.

Searcy, Nelson and Thomas, Kerrick. *Launch: Staring a New Church from Scratch*, Regal, 2006.

Schindler, Dietrich. *The Jesus Model: Planting Churches the Jesus Way*, Piquant, 2013.