

125

TIPS FOR
MultiSite Churches
and those who want to be



"The MultiSite Guy"
JIM TOMBERLIN

COMPILED BY BEN STROUP

BONUS! Materials

- Myths
- Mistakes

- Trends
- Church Profiles



www.multisitesolutions.com

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FOREWORD

It is a delight to introduce you to this work by Jim Tomberlin on the MultiSite church movement. When I heard that Jim was bringing together in one place his experience on MultiSite churches, I said, “I know many leaders who need to know what is inside these pages!” This book will help you avoid the common mistakes and pitfalls that happen when starting or improving a MultiSite ministry. Throughout the country today, Jim is the leader of leaders in this field.

Jim Tomberlin is a pioneer in the MultiSite church movement. He was one of the early practitioners, beginning with his church in Colorado and then helping Willow Creek Community Church set up its sites. Now with his premier consulting ministry from coast to coast, Jim is a pacesetter in this enormous shift in how we “do church.” From interacting with so many churches in varied settings and sizes, Jim brings great perspective and clarity of thought.

This change in the church is a quantum leap. Going from one site to multiple church sites is not about incremental change. New ways of leading the church are needed, new challenges are being encountered, and more people are joining these churches. To become a MultiSite church, the challenges range from staffing to equipment, video preaching to new venues, congregational acceptance to congregational growth. We need help in these changing times!

When my church needed state-of-the-art advice on our MultiSite operations and an upcoming church merger, we turned to Jim. When church leaders in the XPastor community ask me for a great consultant on MultiSite, there is one name that rises to the top—Jim Tomberlin.

Use Jim’s insights, tips, and techniques so that you won’t have to repeat the failures of others. There is a common phrase that is apt here: “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” In this book, enjoy the principles and learn the concepts!

Dr. David R. Fletcher
Founder & Host, XPastor.org
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INTRODUCTION

Going MultiSite is not for every church. It will not turn around a sick or dying church, but it can be an instrument to extend a healthy one. MultiSite is not a growth engine, but it can be a vehicle for a growing church. MultiSite is not a fad to jump on, but it has become a proven strategy to reproduce healthy, fruitful, growing churches.

What began as a “Band-Aid” in the late 1990s for a handful of megachurches that found themselves out of room or restricted by zoning laws, the MultiSite idea quickly proved to be an effective option for any healthy, growing church regardless of size. Though over 50 percent of all megachurches have multiple campuses or video-venues, they only comprise about a third of all the MultiSite churches across America today. Church size doesn’t matter, church health does.

What started as a radical idea with a few early pioneers has become the “new normal” across the national church scene. On any given Sunday more than 5 million people attend a MultiSite campus church in North America. According to a 2010 survey conducted by *Leadership Network*, here are some fast facts about MultiSites:

1. MultiSite churches outnumber megachurches.
2. Two-thirds of MultiSite churches are denominational.
3. MultiSites reach more people and mobilize more volunteers.
4. One in three MultiSites added a campus through a merger.
5. One in four MultiSites have a campus in another language.
6. One in five MultiSites birthed a “grandchild” campus.
7. One in ten have an Internet campus.
8. In-person teaching is utilized more than video.
9. Average size of a church going MultiSite: 850.
10. Average size of a MultiSite campus: 361.
11. Eighty-five percent of MultiSite churches have three or fewer geographic locations.
12. Average weekend attendance of a MultiSite church: 1,300.
13. MultiSite campuses have a 90 percent success rate.

This eBook is about helping guide leaders through the decision-making and implementation process of going MultiSite. My intent is that these tips will become guideposts to help you navigate these new waters. And for those of you who have been doing MultiSite for some time now, it will serve as a refresher about the most important details as you continue to multiply the number of additional campuses your church starts, supports, and sustains.

While going MultiSite can certainly be a practical, pragmatic decision, it is also one that allows us to expand our reach and multiply our ministry impact in one of the most reasonable and cost-effective ways available to church leaders today. There is nothing more exciting than to be a part of a growing, healthy church. There will be surprises along the way, but the good news is that many have already been there and are finding their MultiSite strategy to be a critical element to their Kingdom expansion strategy.

May God extend your borders, multiply your impact, and enlarge your harvest. If we can help, let us know.

Be fruitful and multiply!

Jim Tomberlin

MultiSite

Tips



Why MultiSite?

- 1.** First question to ask going MultiSite is, “Why are we doing this?” To fulfill mission, reach more, and increase impact.
- 2.** Going MultiSite is less about growing a church and more about reaching a community.
- 3.** A MultiSite campus is a new congregation in a new location. MultiSite is church-planting 21st Century style!
- 4.** “We have to clarify in order to multiply. We cannot export what we cannot explain” (Dr. John Jackson).
- 5.** MultiSites take the church to the people rather than forcing them to drive long distances to a church.
- 6.** A MultiSite church puts the “local” back in the local church.
- 7.** What began as Band-Aid for megachurches out of room, MultiSite proved to be an option for healthy churches of any size.
- 8.** MultiSite is not the vision for your church, but it can be a vehicle for your church’s vision.
- 9.** MultiSites create more seats at optimal inviting hours at less cost.
- 10.** Primary reason for going MultiSite is not proximity convenience for church members but reaching those far from God.
- 11.** MultiSite evolution: Space solution for megachurch . . . growth strategy for healthy church . . . revitalization for stuck church.
- 12.** MultiSite helps churches solve a space problem, reach people, grow, mobilize volunteers and leaders, reach an area, multiply impact.
- 13.** Wrong reasons to MultiSite: everybody else is doing it, it could fix my church, it might work. Right reason: God’s leading.
- 14.** John Wesley, who was criticized for preaching outside the walls of the church, started a great awakening. Go and do likewise!

Biblical Basis

- 15.** All ministry is local: God sets the times and places where we live, and He is not far from each of us (see Acts 17:26–27).
- 16.** Jesus said, “I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent” (Luke 4:43 NIV).
- 17.** The life principle for all living things is found in Genesis 1:18—be blessed, be fruitful, and multiply. That’s God’s desire for every church.
- 18.** We’re called to fill our cities with the teachings of Jesus (see Acts 5:42).
- 19.** Each week at three thousand MultiSite campuses across the U.S., disciples are devoting themselves “to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42 NIV).
- 20.** The Great Commission: Making disciples of all nations beginning in your backyard “Jerusalem” (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).
- 21.** Localizing ministry: “But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went” (Acts 8:4 ESV).
- 22.** Transform your community: “And this Message of salvation spread like wildfire all through the region” (Acts 13:49 MSG).
- 23.** The second-Greatest Command after loving God with all your heart: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39 NIV).
- 24.** Transform your city: “When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, ‘Who is this?’” (Matt. 21:10 NIV).
- 25.** MultiSite Motivation: “I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:22 NIV).

- 26.** God's eminent domain plan: "I will give you every place where you set your foot" (Josh. 1:3 NIV). Start walking and praying!
- 27.** Why limit God's anointing to one location? "When the vessels were full . . . the oil stopped flowing" (2 Kings 4:6 ESV).
- 28.** Love your city: "Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (Jer. 29:7 NIV).

Funding

- 29.** Startup costs for a new campus revolve around a technology package, pre-launch staff salaries, children's equipment, and marketing.
- 30.** Average cost of launching a MultiSite campus in a low-risk, low-cost facility (school or theater) is \$250,000.
- 31.** Per-person giving of the start-up core tends to increase at the new location because they have more ownership or "skin in the game."
- 32.** If campuses don't become financially sustainable and experience at least 5 percent annual growth within two years, you are losing kingdom ground.
- 33.** Startup costs are usually a gift from the sending campus.
- 34.** Typically campus income is redistributed for local campus expenses, central support, future campuses and/or opportunities.
- 35.** Paid staff ratio should be one paid staff for every hundred attendees.

- 36.** Majority of MultiSite churches put MultiSite funding into their regular budget.
- 37.** New campus budget categories: operational (salaries, rent, programs), central support, missions. (Allocation percentages vary.)
- 38.** MultiSite reaches more people and mobilizes more volunteers for less money than buying additional land and building bigger buildings.

Organizational Structure

- 39.** Every MultiSite church is different and has a unique “church-print”—there is no one-size-fits-all formula.
- 40.** MultiSite changes everything—how you think and do church, staff structure, communication, governance, resource allocation.
- 41.** Decide whether your church is going to be a church *with* multiple campuses or a church *of* multiple campuses.
- 42.** Effective MultiSite churches empower a leader on the senior lead team who wakes up every day thinking about MultiSite opportunities and challenges.
- 43.** Going MultiSite will surface all redundancies and inefficiencies in your church, forcing you to simplify and become healthier.
- 44.** The most successful MultiSite churches are clear on their mission, vision, values, and execution. Are you?
- 45.** The easy part is launching a new campus. The challenging part is managing the relationships between campuses and reorganizing staff to support multiple campuses.

46. Although all MultiSite churches are unique, they all address the same issues.

47. MultiSite evolution: idea to be entertained . . . nuisance to be tolerated . . . virus to be stopped . . . asset to be exploited . . . integrated DNA.

48. Going MultiSite requires moving from intuitive to intentional leadership and organizational change.

49. Best example of unified voice among a teaching team is the church of Antioch in Acts 13, but this is rare.

50. The MultiSite church staff—central leadership team, central support team, local campus staff—should meet together at least monthly.

51. If something about your church needs to change, fix it before you go MultiSite.

Campus Pastor

52. The success of a MultiSite campus rises or falls upon the campus pastor. Hire well!

53. Prerequisites of a campus pastor: spiritual maturity and integrity.

54. Great campus pastor: catalytic leader, multi-tasker, people magnet, team player/builder, communicator, DNA carrier.

55. Hire the campus pastor nine to twelve months before launching a new campus.

56. The biggest challenge for a campus pastor is to stay connected to the vision and heart of the senior pastor.

57. The goal of a campus pastor is to establish a biblical-functioning, self-sustaining, high-impact, outreaching, reproducing congregation.

58. Campus pastors are the ideal person to oversee a geographically based adult small group ministry around their campus.

59. To succeed in MultiSite ministry, a campus pastor must have an underdog mentality and an unstoppable pioneer spirit.

60. Campus pastors need to have freedom to develop the vision of their campus within previously established parameters.

61. Typical source of campus pastors: 70 percent from sending campus, 50 percent currently on staff, 24 percent lay leaders at sending campus.

62. Be intentional but don't rush—it took seven years for Sam Walton to open his second store and took Starbucks thirteen years to grow to five stores.

Sermon Delivery

63. Three ways to deliver sermons in a MultiSite church: live in-person; video; and live in-person/video hybrid.

64. Ideal preaching strategy in MultiSite churches utilizes a teaching team plus video capabilities at all campuses, including the original campus.

65. The ideal teaching team in a MultiSite church is made up of the campus pastors.

66. Only 20 percent of MultiSite churches utilize videocast sermons, while nearly half use live in-person teaching primarily, and a third are a hybrid.

- 67.** The larger the potential audience, the more sophisticated the video quality needs to be.
- 68.** Technology approach depends on budget size, number of campuses projected, distance between campuses.
- 69.** It's much easier and less expensive to reproduce a sermon video than a teacher, and this approach provides stronger consistency and alignment across campuses.
- 70.** Why constrain transformational teaching to one location when technology allows going beyond the walls of one sanctuary?

Launching Campuses

- 71.** Six P's of launching a campus: Prayer to precede, Provision to start, Programming to deliver, Pastor to lead, People to follow, Place to meet.
- 72.** Before going MultiSite, maximize the sending campus with multiple services, IMAG side screens in main auditorium, and a video venue.
- 73.** A video venue at the sending campus not only adds additional seats at primetime service but is a great incubator for developing future campuses.
- 74.** Ideal launch distance from sending campus is closer than you think—the majority of churchgoers live within a fifteen-minute drive of their church. (A 10- to 20-minute driving distance is typically the sweet spot for a new campus.)
- 75.** “We don't get any credit for who we keep; it's who we reach” (Andy Stanley).
- 76.** September is a good month to soft-launch a new campus with just the core followed by a public grand opening.

77. Second-best launch time of a campus after fall is early winter, at least a month before Easter.

78. Priority staffing for a successful campus launch: campus pastor, worship leader, children's director, technology expert, administrative support. (Whether to hire full- or part-time people varies according to local circumstances.)

79. When launching the first campus, go for easiest win (fifteen minutes from original campus and with a large core) then branch out to more challenging locations.

80. A great pre-launch strategy is to gather together to cover your community with prayer.

81. Start geographic small group “missional communities” and serve community with externally focused activities in the target area of MultiSite campuses.

82. Launching two campuses simultaneously engages the whole church and creates greater momentum—but it's not for the faint of heart.

83. “You can stumble to two sites, but you have to plan, think, and restructure to get three or more sites” (Lyle Schaller).

Building a Launch Team

84. The larger your launch core, the larger overall net gain of your church. Bigger launch, bigger net gain.

85. The larger the launch core, the sooner to functionality and financial sustainability.

- 86.** Nationally, the minimum launch core is seventy-five people while the ideal launch core is at least one hundred.
- 87.** “To succeed, become a force that can’t be denied, like any emerging movement” (Bill Hybels).
- 88.** Launch campuses with people you have and near their homes (being too far away cripples critical mass).
- 89.** Typically, annual net church growth gain will equal or better the size of your multi-campus launch core.
- 90.** “Four out of five MultiSites report increase in lay leadership development” (Leadership Network).
- 91.** Launching multiple campuses simultaneously increases broader congregational ownership.
- 92.** “Great vision without great people is irrelevant” (Jim Collins, *Good to Great*).
- 93.** Never launch with only new people, but begin campuses with your best and seasoned staff, leaders, and volunteers.
- 94.** The more a church relies on volunteers, the simpler the system needs to be.
- 95.** Five types of adopters: innovators (3 percent), early adopters (15 percent), middle adopters (35 percent), late adopters (35 percent), and laggards (12 percent).

Facilities

- 96.** Startup facility estimates: 50 percent meet in schools, 30 percent are church mergers, 15 percent meet in commercial buildings, and 5 percent gather in theaters.
- 97.** Theaters generally are the lowest risk, lowest cost facilities in which to launch a campus. Schools are the next lowest.
- 98.** Declining commercial real estate values are a boon for MultiSite churches.
- 99.** A MultiSite strategy creates maximum number of seats at the optimal inviting Sunday morning hours of 10 or 11 a.m.
- 100.** MultiSite churches effectively reach a community by taking church to places Jesus would go: schools, theaters, and retail centers.
- 101.** A MultiSite approach multiplies a church exponentially and has a greater return-on-investment of dollars and people than constructing bigger buildings.
- 102.** Multiple locations create more seats at the optimal inviting hours at less cost of building additional buildings in one location.
- 103.** Set up legal firewalls that protect the whole church from potential lawsuits brought against a local campus.
- 104.** Minimum requirements for a MultiSite location: three hundred seats, two hundred parking spots, four children's rooms, great visibility, accessibility, and in or near residential areas.

Internet Campuses

- 105.** An Internet campus is another “neighborhood” (online) full of people far from God and not limited by the size of a building.
- 106.** Internet campus strategy: Know your ‘hood, have online pastor, ensure a clear connection process, define your objective.
- 107.** Be sure to have the senior pastor’s full support—philosophically and financially—before starting an Internet campus.
- 108.** Internet campuses are affordable, with many free or inexpensive tools to get your church on the digital map.
- 109.** Create a digital community with your Internet campus by utilizing online tools like Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- 110.** Successful Internet campuses have a heart, so hire a dedicated Internet campus pastor to provide care for those online.
- 111.** Decide ahead of time how your Internet campus will handle communion and baptism (it will come up).
- 112.** Internet campuses won’t be seen as a “real” campus unless you see online relationships as legitimate.
- 113.** Internet campus costs less than a building but more than you think, so budget for a small staff, quality equipment, streaming fees, etc.
- 114.** An Internet campus is a worldwide campus, so be sensitive to world events, holidays, and America-centric attitudes. Be as inclusive as possible.

Mergers

- 115.** Be clear on the non-negotiables before the negotiations begin.
- 116.** Mutually desired church adoptions, absorptions, affiliations, and acquisitions (the best way to describe mergers) are becoming a growing component of MultiSite churches.
- 117.** “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete” (Buckminster Fuller).
- 118.** Mergers work best when there is at least an 80 percent match in ministry style and philosophy of the two churches.
- 119.** Missional church mergers are synergistic and a fast track to MultiSite success because more can be done together than separate.
- 120.** Most mergers in the 20th Century were $4 + 4 = 6$, meaning a net decline in attendance and growth (Lyle Schaller, *Roadtrip*).
- 121.** Lifechurch.tv’s four D’s of merger: decision, disruption, development, debut.
- 122.** Merger types: ReStarts, ReDevelopments, ReAlignments, and ReVisions.
- 123.** The decision to merge happens usually within a quick one to two months while the actual process takes three to nine months. (The longer the merger discussions, the more something can go wrong.)
- 124.** A merger is unlikely to occur if the senior pastor or leader of the merging church is unwilling to relinquish control.
- 125.** If the risks of a merger are greater than the rewards, it would be unwise to proceed.

BONUS

Section



MultiSite Myths

Myth: MultiSite is a vehicle for celebrity megachurch pastors.

Reality: Only a third are megachurches.

Myth: MultiSite is a fad.

Reality: MultiSite is the new normal for healthy, outreach-oriented churches.

Myth: MultiSite churches are video-driven.

Reality: Only 50 percent utilize video.

Myth: MultiSite is a solution to space problems.

Reality: MultiSite is an outreach strategy to better impact a community.

Myth: MultiSite is not incarnational or communal.

Reality: MultiSite puts the “local” back in the local church.

Myth: MultiSite is a church-growth engine.

Reality: MultiSite is a vehicle for growing churches.

Myth: MultiSite is not church planting.

Reality: MultiSite is a reproducing church strategy.

Myth: Video sermons won't work in my church.

Reality: Video sermons work because the medium is not the message.

Myth: MultiSite inhibits developing gifted teachers.

Reality: MultiSite can be a vehicle for raising up a teaching team.

Myth: MultiSite is too expensive.

Reality: Healthy churches of all sizes are MultiSite.

MultiSite Mistakes

- Lacking a compelling vision.
- Underestimating the role of the campus pastor.
- Launching campuses too close to, or too far from, the sending campus.
- Under-delivering the campus experience.
- Not anticipating and embracing the paradigm shift from mono-site to MultiSite.

MultiSite Trends

The last decade of the 20th Century saw the rise of the MultiSite innovator-pioneers. The first decade of the 21st Century saw the wave of the MultiSite early adopters with over three thousand MultiSite venues and campuses launched across North America. Now as we enter the second decade of the this century, the middle adopters will mainstream the movement as it spreads around the world.

Here are my predictions concerning MultiSite trends as we move through the next decade:

- 1.** The MultiSite movement began as a Band-Aid for megachurches that were out of room or limited by zoning restrictions. It quickly evolved into a growth strategy for healthy churches of all sizes and will become a revitalization strategy for stuck or struggling churches. Many of these aging churches are solid but stuck in non-growing situations because of the inevitable social-demographic changes occurring around them and/or their inability to embrace contemporary worship styles and culturally relevant ministry practices. MultiSite allows stuck churches to reinvent themselves by extending in new ways and to new locations without abandoning their base. Revitalization mergers also allow smaller, struggling churches to have a new beginning by being adopted by a stronger, vibrant church. This revitalization will be the impetus in the surge of church mergers that is growing across the church landscape.

- 2.** Church leaders will focus less on growing their church and more on reaching an area for Christ through externally focused MultiSite campuses and “missional communities” (small groups).
- 3.** The new big is small. Though the majority of megachurches have multiple campuses, smaller MultiSite churches already outnumber them and will lead the way in launching new campuses with a smaller core in smaller communities.
- 4.** The rise of the collegiate model of church reproduction will gain momentum. This is the hybrid of MultiSite and church planting. Church plants will incorporate MultiSite campuses and MultiSite churches will launch church plants. These reproducing churches will be the new tribes or mini-denominations of the future.
- 5.** Denominations will integrate MultiSite into their strategic plans and offer MultiSite and merger coaching to their churches.
- 6.** The buzz word in church circles in the 1980s was *growth*. In the 1990s it was *health*. At the beginning of the 21st Century the word is *connected*. Effective churches of the future will fully utilize all the social networking tools available to build community and foster relationships.
- 7.** Businesses and organizations that serve churches will fully incorporate a MultiSite orientation in the development and marketing of their products and services.
- 8.** Technology will continue to produce more and innovative tools for communicating the gospel and biblical truth. MultiSite churches will lead the way in utilizing these tools. Video-streaming over the internet will be easier, cheaper, and the primary way video sermons will be delivered to MultiSite churches.
- 9.** MultiSite churches will explode across Europe, Africa, and Asia in the next decade.
- 10.** More mergers, Internet campuses, and international campuses.

MultiSite Church Profiles

PROFILE:

Liquid Church « Morristown, New Jersey

church mission/vision: Take church to the people, lead our generation into a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ.

year founded: 2007

denomination: Nondenominational

lead pastor: Tim Lucas

church web site: www.liquidchurch.com

year went multisite: 2009

number of campuses: 2

number of mergers: 0

number of weekly services: 5

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: Video

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 1,500

internet campus?: Yes

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

Give yourself a year of planning and make sure you capitalize on expertise and experience that is available (e.g., use the MultiSite Guy).

PROFILE:

North Way Christian Community « Wexford, Pennsylvania

church mission/vision: Freeing people to follow Jesus. One church, multiple locations, all generations.

year founded: 1982

denomination: Nondenominational

lead pastor: Dr. Jay Passavant

church web site: www.northway.org

year went multisite: 2008

number of campuses: 3

number of mergers: 0

number of weekly services: 10

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: Video

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 3,000

internet campus?: No

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

- Go!
- As soon as final plans for the second campus are finalized begin immediately preparing for the third (we waited too long).
- Begin immediately investing in emerging leaders and emerging artists to staff future campuses. We have had greater success with internal hires than with external ones.
- Hire Jim Tomberlin as a consultant—I mean that! (And I'm not just hoping for a discount.)

PROFILE:

Redemption Church « Phoenix and Gilbert, Arizona

church mission/vision: To make disciples who, in response to the gospel, seek to redeem all of life for the glory of God.

year founded:

East Valley Bible Church (Gilbert), 1991

Praxis Church (Tempe), 2004

Redemption Church (Merger), 2011

denomination/network: Acts29 Network

lead team: Tom Shrader, Justin Anderson, Tyler Johnson, Tim Maughan, and Neil Pitchell

church web site: www.redemptionaz.com

year went multisite: 2009

number of campuses: 3

number of mergers: 1

number of weekly services: 11

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: In-person

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 4,500

internet campus?: No

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

- You had better have the administrative and strategic people to pull it off.
- The level of communication and coordination required to keep all three of our campuses on the same page has been daunting. Work on the systems first, make sure they are sound and then build yourself a test phase to work some of that out.
- Not only does MultiSite bring about new challenges but it really exposes and multiplies existing weaknesses.

PROFILE:

Hope Community Church « Cary, North Carolina

church mission/vision: The purpose of the church is to “develop disciples of Jesus Christ through worship, transformation, community, service, and influence in order to glorify God and to share the love of God with our world.” Our mission is “to transform people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.”

year founded: 1994

denomination: Nondenominational

lead pastor: Mike Lee

church web site: www.gethope.net

year went multisite: 2009

number of campuses: 2

number of mergers: 0

number of weekly services: 6

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: Video most often; in-person several weeks a year.

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 5,711 (average)

internet campus?: No

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

It is a great use of resources because it allows the pastor to be a pastor. It also is great for the community because it localizes the church.

PROFILE:

The Summit Church « Little Rock, Arkansas

church mission/vision: Our mission at The Summit Church is to cooperate with God in developing multiplying communities of fully devoted followers of Christ.

year founded: 1999

denomination: Southern Baptist

lead pastor: Bill Elliff

church web site: www.thesummitchurch.org

year went multisite: 2010

number of campuses: 2

number of mergers: 0

number of weekly services: 4

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: Both

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 1,200

internet campus?: No

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

- Develop a working relationship with city officials and serve very intentionally in the community.
- Rent a recognized location in the community.
- We teach live at the new campus about 25 percent of the time.
- Our campuses do men's and women's ministry events together.
- Core students from our sending campus helped us begin student ministry at our new campus. The two meet on different nights, and many of those student leaders still attend both.
- Don't give an existing staff member the added responsibility of leading the MultiSite expansion without releasing him/her from a significant amount of existing responsibility.

PROFILE:

Zion Church « Clarion, Pennsylvania

church mission/vision: Leading people to be CHANGED by God, CONNECTED with others, and COMMITTED to making a difference.

year founded: 1825

denomination: Nondenominational (baptistic in theology)

lead pastor: Trent Kirkland

church web site: www.zionlife.com

year went multisite: 2008

number of campuses: 3

number of mergers: 0

number of weekly services: 5

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: in person

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 650

internet campus?: No

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

- MultiSite is the best strategy I know to reach rural communities, especially if the original location has a solid reputation in the region and the resources to make it happen.
- Remain somewhat flexible (organic) when it comes to additional campuses.
- Be committed to reproducing your DNA, but remember that every “kid” doesn’t look and act exactly the same.

PROFILE:

Washington Heights Church « Ogden, Utah

church mission/vision: Experiencing together God's grace and transforming power . . . one life at a time.

year founded: 1955

denomination: Conservative Baptist

lead pastor: Roy Gruber

church web site: www.theheightscommunity.org

year went multisite: 2009

number of campuses: 2

number of mergers: 1

number of weekly services: 6

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: In person now; moving to video soon

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 2,250

internet campus?: No

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

- Count the cost ahead of time and get as much input and advice as possible before and during the process.
- A qualified consultant is well worth the expense.
- Do not dabble in MultiSite. It must flow out of a deep-seated conviction of a vision God has given to you. If that is the case, give it everything you have and enjoy the journey.
- Going MultiSite will change many things about your church, how you do things, and even individual leaders too.
- MultiSite is more culture than program. It is about reaching more people for Christ, not making a ministry larger. If God is calling you to do it, go for it!

PROFILE:

Church For All Nations « Colorado Springs, Colorado

church mission/vision: Empowering locally, sending globally, reaping eternally.

year founded: 1979

denomination: Non-denominational

lead pastor: Mark C. Cowart

church web site: www.churchforallnations.com

year went multisite: 2007

number of campuses: 4

number of mergers: 3

number of weekly services: 3

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: By satellite

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 2,200

internet campus?: Yes

international campus?: No

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

- Be sure to give a vision of MultiSite to the existing congregation.
- Evaluate the start-up and take-over costs, as well as the ongoing expenses.
- Build relationships with leaders in the church that is being merged or becoming a campus.

PROFILE:

Granger Community Church « Granger, Indiana

church mission/vision: Our mission is “Helping people take their next step toward Christ . . . together.

year founded: 1986

denomination: United Methodist

lead pastor: Dr. R. Mark Beeson

church web site: www.gccwired.com

year went multisite: 2008

number of campuses: 4 (Granger, Elkhart, Monroe Circle, Prison Re-entry)

number of mergers: 0

number of weekly services: 8

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: Video

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 5,000

internet campus?: Yes

international campus?: We have started 957 churches in India, but they don't share teaching or video with our U.S. campuses.

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

It is harder than you think. Church planting is a walk in the park compared to MultiSite. It takes effort and intentionality to keep your campuses aligned with the overall vision of the church.

PROFILE:

ICF ZURICH « Zurich, Switzerland

church mission/vision: We dream of a modern church, right on the heartbeat of time. People find here a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In this church people experience true love and fellowship. Gifts are discovered and encouraged. The church we dream of is passionate, constantly growing, and has a positive influence on society. May God make this dream come true through us.

year founded: 1996

denomination: None

lead pastor: Leo Bigger

church web site: www.icf.ch

year went multisite: 2008

number of campuses: 3

number of mergers: 1

number of weekly services: 11

video or in-person teaching for off-sites: 70% live in-person,
30% video

worship attendance (all geographical sites): 2,600

internet campus?: Yes

international campus?: Yes

advice for churches thinking about going multisite:

It makes sense and it is the best evangelistic tool to reach out to people where they live.

What Next?



Should My Church Go MultiSite?

The MultiSite movement is transforming the church landscape across the nation. It is no longer a trend but the “new normal” for healthy growing churches of all sizes. Is it right for your church?

- Is your church growing at least 5 percent a year?
- Is your church facility 80 percent full at optimal inviting hours?
- Does your church face resistance to campus expansion due to zoning rules, environmental concerns, or traffic congestion?
- Does your church have a good reputation in the community?
- Does your church have a solid infrastructure and healthy systems in place?
- Do you want to release more people into high-impact, meaningful ministry?
- Do you want to launch new congregations in your region that are healthy, sustainable, and reproductive?
- Do you want your church to be more accessible to more people in your region?
- Do you want to reach and serve more people in the most efficient and cost-effective way?
- Would you like to merge or be merged with another local church?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions, then your church is a good candidate for going MultiSite. (See the “Next Steps” section for more information.)

Currently a MultiSite in Need of a Tune-up?

MultiSite changes everything. It changes how we think and do church. So, how are you managing the change?

Though a MultiSite strategy is a proven model for reaching and serving more people, it does have its challenges. Though every MultiSite church is unique and different, all of them face the same basic issues—technology, inter-campus relationships, staffing, organizational structure, funding, resource allocation, governance, etc.

You may be in need of a diagnostic assessment that will “look under the hood” of your current MultiSite experience and ask vital questions such as these:

- Is your MultiSite experience not going as well as you anticipated?
- Is the staff thinking and acting like a MultiSite church or a church with MultiSites?
- Are your campuses growing at least 5 percent a year?
- Are your campuses financially and functionally self-sustaining?
- Are you having difficulty managing the inter-campus relationships?
- Do you need help in structuring the staff to support a MultiSite church?
- Are you experiencing technical problems in delivering the sermon content?
- Are you having great success but don't want to mess it up?
- Is your MultiSite strategy working fine but you want it to be better?

The MultiSite Solutions team includes seasoned practitioners who can help you assess the health of your MultiSite church. We can help you fine-tune your current situation and prepare you for a fruitful future.

Because we have launched our own MultiSite campuses and work with numerous other ones across North America, we see what is working and what is not. We've been there, done that. We've paid the stupid tax so you don't have to.

We will do a weekend visit and then debrief on Monday with your team to help you process your unique challenges and opportunities. We will share with you the best practices of succeeding MultiSite churches and surface the issues that are hindering your church from maximizing its redemptive potential.

You are doing it—we can help you do it better! If you want to “look under the hood” together, contact us to set up a consultation. Go to the “Next Steps” section for more information.

Next Steps

Stay connected to the ideas and insights that are shaping the MultiSite strategies of churches across the country and around the world in four easy steps.

1. www.MultiSiteSolutions.com/newsletter

Sign up for the e-newsletter to receive a monthly update about MultiSite strategy sent from Jim to your inbox. It doesn't get any easier than that.

2. www.MultiSiteSolutions.com/contact

Complete the "contact us" form to talk to Jim about how your church can benefit or improve the MultiSite process in your church. Sometimes you need more than information. Our greatest assets are our experience and perspective. We've been there, seen that.

3. www.MultiSiteSolutions.com/map

Discover the churches in your area that have already adopted the MultiSite strategy. It's always helpful to find local leaders and talk to them about what worked, what didn't, and what they learned along the way.

4. www.Twitter.com/MultiSiteGuy

Follow Jim Tomberlin on Twitter and continue getting daily MultiSite tips.

APPENDIX: MULTISITE VOCABULARY

Campus pastors: “the face with the place” who give leadership and pastoral oversight to a MultiSite campus. Synonyms: neighborhood pastor, community pastor, lead pastor.

Central support: executive team, accounting, IT, HR, worship arts.

Inter-campus relationships options: branch (dependent), franchise (interdependent), license (independent).

Internet campus: an online interactive church experience in the virtual world of the internet.

MultiSite church: one church meeting in multiple locations sharing a common vision, budget, leadership, and board.

ReAlignment merger: a church that informally *aligns* with the vision of a stronger, vibrant, and typically larger church.

ReDevelopment merger: a struggling church that’s *adopted* by a stronger, vibrant, and typically larger church.

ReStart merger: a struggling or dying church that’s fully *absorbed* by a stronger, vibrant, and typically larger church.

ReVision merger: two churches, both strong or growing, that formally *affiliate* with each other under a new united vision and leadership.

Videocast: the act of transmitting sound and images by video.

Video venues: on-campus environments using videocast sermons.

Words to avoid in MultiSite world: main campus, mother ship, big house, big kahuna, satellite, sites, tonight.

Words to use in MultiSite world: original campus, sending campus, additional campuses, locations, today. Geographic (e.g., town) campus names are ideal.

CONTACT JIM TOMBERLIN

Jim Tomberlin began his MultiSite church journey in the mid-1990s when he was the senior pastor of Woodman Valley Chapel. In 2000 he went on to pioneer the MultiSite model at Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. Since 2005, he has been consulting and coaching churches that are developing and implementing MultiSite strategies. Jim leads a seasoned team of practitioner specialists who can help you maximize the redemptive potential of your church.

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