

V.O.T.E.
Visitation Outreach Team Evangelism
II Corinthians 5:17-21

HISTORY

1. Prevailing methods for outreach were not working:

The weeknight visitation approach was not working. Too few church members were involved, and it became the focus of a lot of frustration for the pastors and outreach directors.

2. Assumed that more members of our church wanted to be actively involved in the outreach ministry than were participating each week:

We chose to believe that the limited participation in a one-night-a-week visitation program was not always a good indicator of how many folks really wanted to be involved in the outreach ministry of the church. There were more who desired to be involved, but lacked the vehicle to accommodate that desire.

3. Present programs sporadic in contact with prospects & members:

When only a few participate, it limits an ongoing cultivation-type visitation for prospects and inactive members. For example, when you have a large prospect list, but only a few to visit each week, it may be months before a

repeat visit is made to a prospect. It is vital that meaningful relationships be established with prospects for effective evangelism & ministry to occur.

4. Jesus mandate of the Great

Commission: Regardless of the plan or program, the one, unchanging element is the fact of Christ's expectation that we be a people on the "go" with the gospel.

PHILOSOPHY OR FOUNDATION

1. Acknowledge where the people are in their outreach skills:

All too often, those in church leadership continuously call for the members to "come up where they are" in their dedication and involvement. This program seeks to realistically "meet" folks where they are, and travel with them in a growth experience.

2. Ask our members to do that which is realistic in light of their circumstances and lifestyles:

It is an indisputable fact that members of our churches have personal schedules that are full, and reflect multiple commitments to family, church, community, etc. Many times these schedules hinder their participation in an outreach program that conflicts in time with prior commitments.

3. Expect effectiveness:

As this approach attempts to match the members' desires with expectations that are realistically

achievable, we may expect a level of effectiveness that surpasses former plans or programs.

NEEDS

1. Pastoral Leadership and Involvement:

V.O.T.E. is at the heartbeat of the church's main task of evangelism and growth. It is essential that the pastor be personally involved with the implementation and ongoing dynamics of the program.

2. V.O.T.E. Secretary:

This needs to be a person who is faithful in attending the monthly team meeting, and maintaining careful records of prospect files, and visitation assignments.

3. Team Commitment/Accountability

Cards: These cards are signed by the team members (teams may be comprised of 2 or 3 people) as a pledge to: (1) Pray for the other visitation team members and for prospects; (2) Attend the monthly team visitation meeting, unless providentially hindered; (3) Make contact with at least two prospects between the monthly team meetings. The V.O.T.E. secretary will keep these cards on file.

4. V.O.T.E. Master Control Chart:

This chart reflects the ongoing assignments and disposition of prospects throughout the year. It

will be maintained by the V.O.T.E. secretary, and will be on display ONLY during the monthly team meetings.

5. Refreshments:

An absolute essential for every monthly team meeting! Keep it simple.

6. Card-in-Pocket forms and materials:

These will provide the team members with the prospects' names, addresses, phone numbers, and notes concerning results of prior visits.

7. Prospects (internal and external) and guidelines for submitting names of new prospects.

The V.O.T.E. secretary will maintain the prospect file. Guidelines for submitting new names will be determined by the team members as they meet during the first or second monthly team meeting.

ENLISTMENT PLANS

Each church will determine the most effective way to explain the program and enlist participants. After the church has determined to implement the program, a Commitment Service should be scheduled for signing and submitting the Team Commitment Cards. It is suggested that team members bring their signed commitment cards forward during an invitation time in a regular worship service, and offer a prayer of commitment before returning to their seats.

VOTE Monthly Meeting: 1-1½ hrs in length:

Adequate preparation for each monthly meeting is vital. When the team members arrive, they will sense the importance this program holds for the pastor/leader by the type of preparation that greets them. Everything should be in place when the first team arrives; refreshments prepared, chairs in place, records secretary ready to receive reports and to place prospect cards on table, and a positive, upbeat greeting from the pastor/leader.

1st Meeting – Prepare instruction sheet handout. Give to team members at the door:

Sample guide: 1) Get refreshments; 2) Go to “Hot Prospect Table” with team partner and select prospects; 3) Take selected prospect cards-in-pockets to V.O.T.E. secretary; 4) Be seated in a circle and visit until meeting begins. *In subsequent meetings, reverse (1) and (2).*

Suggestions and Agenda for Monthly V.O.T.E. Meeting:

The monthly V.O.T.E. meetings will result in achieving more than just the mechanics of giving reports and securing new assignments. Team members will share information about the people they visited, including any concerns or matters that will be helpful to the team that will visit the same prospects during the next month. Team members will

receive visitation and evangelism instruction from their pastor/leader and encouragement from the testimonies of fellow team members. Team members will share in a prayer time for their selected prospects, and each meeting will conclude with the team members praying specifically, by name, for each other.

Keep it Informal:

1. Opening Prayer
2. Report and testimonies of previous month’s visits from each team member and prayer for shared concerns
3. Share names of next month’s visitation assignments (each team member shares a name). Spend time in prayer with each team member praying specifically, by name, for the prospect whose name he/she just shared.
4. Team Encouragement time for concerns, questions and support
5. Visitation Team Training: 15-20 minutes (leader’s training time)
6. Close meeting with each team member praying specifically for the person on his/her right.

PROSPECT MANAGEMENT

Prospects may be found among the inactive on your church’s membership rolls. Names of prospects may be secured from your congregation in a regular worship service. Place a special card in the bulletin, set aside a few minutes in the worship service, and ask

them to write the names and addresses of those they know who are unchurched. All the prospects you have gathered should be displayed (cards in pockets) on the table at the **first meeting**. Each team will make its selection from those prospects. This is the only time that all your prospects will be displayed. The team takes the card, and the secretary records the team names on the pocket and places it in a notebook.

In **subsequent meetings**, only those prospects that are part of the ongoing program will be put on the table for the teams’ selection. That means that each team should return their prospect cards with the pertinent information relative to their visit/contact clearly written on the card. After the V.O.T.E. secretary records the visit, he/she will place the card and pocket on the table so that a different team may select it for the next month.

New prospects may be added into the program in the following ways:

- If the assigned prospects are discovered to be deceased
- If the assigned prospects have moved from your community
- If the assigned prospects request no more visits
- If the assigned prospects have become active in another church
- By adding new teams - every team added means that two new prospects can be added to the process

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