

The Resource Guide for Church Planters

THE STARTUP CHURCH: 3 LESSONS FOR GROWING CHURCH PLANTS



A resource provided by



[CAUSELY.COM/REACH](https://causely.com/reach)

INTRODUCTION



As a church planter, you're a lot like an entrepreneur. It's easy to lose sight of that fact since your mission is so much greater than selling a product or service. But you're faced with many of the same challenges as entrepreneurs, and you need to find ways to solve them. You're also working through great uncertainty, often with a large element of risk attached to it.

Just as entrepreneurs lead startups, you lead your church plant. And the similarities don't stop there. Startups exist to learn how to develop into lasting companies, like church plants develop into thriving spiritual communities. The reason we make these points is that you might be interested in learning how startups do things differently to grow sustainably and efficiently.

Specifically, startups learned that it's better to start small, figure out what works, and then build using that knowledge. Otherwise, you're navigating in a sea of uncertainty on a hunch and a prayer. By adopting some of the ideas startups use to achieve success, you'll be able to take a proven path and reach more people in your community than ever before.

A book by Eric Reis, *The Lean Startup*, inspired us to make the connection between your church plant and startups. From there we created this eBook that covers three big startup ideas to help your church plant grow abundantly. Our hope is that you will find these points helpful so you can lead even more people to Christ.



STARTUPS ARE ALWAYS LEARNING



Startups make learning their mission, and that process helps them deliver the best value for their customers. They do this by using customer feedback to continuously innovate and improve their offering. While you're not selling a "product", you are building a community. By intentionally listening to your community and learning what's important to them, you adapt much quicker to their spiritual needs.

In startup speak, this continuous process of innovation is called a learning loop. But we don't need a fancy name to talk about it. Besides, you already do it, even if you don't think of it in quite the same way. You probably started your plant in a mobile or temporary worship location, and you tested the location and worship time. Then, based on your discoveries, you eventually built or bought a building and slowly rolled out multiple services.

This process of intentionally learning and building upon what you learn works for any organization, but it works especially well for small, faster-moving ones. That means it's a perfect process to officially adopt at your church plant.



As an example of what it would look like in practice, think about the things you want to know before starting a new 6-week series on a particular topic. You want to know if the topic is one that meets a need in your church community. Right? To figure that out, you could survey a small group of church members to gauge their interest. Or you could give an abbreviated form of the series to a small group to get their feedback. Then, you could take the feedback and make changes or build on the idea to deliver a new series that is sure to speak to your community.

By establishing an environment built on learning, you open up innovation and a sense of curiosity. You create a culture in which it's all right to try something new, fail, learn from it, and then move on. It's in this space of open learning that true greatness comes alive, and we think that could be magical for your church community.

To learn how Reach helps church leaders add and retain members with Facebook, visit us at:

[CAUSELY.COM/REACH](https://causely.com/reach)



STARTUPS FORM TEAMS DIFFERENTLY



Through all that learning and experimenting, startups found that the way you structure a team greatly impacts its outcome. They learned that teams designed to support innovation and autonomy act quicker and collaborate more freely. They also discovered that the best functioning teams have representatives from each department on them. You may have heard this referred to elsewhere as “cross-functional teams.”

Since your launch and leadership teams are critical to your church plant’s success, it’s worth adopting some of these ideas at your church. Plus, you’re probably already using them to a degree.

For instance, when you have meetings to plan your worship services, you’re probably using cross-functional teams already. You’ve got someone from worship involved to collaborate on the music and service. Pastoral is also there to plan the message, and you have the audio/visual team there to plan for lighting, screens, and audio. Children’s ministry gets involved by planning age-appropriate services and activities for kids, and you probably have a few other people present too.

So where else can you bring together representation from all teams and free them learn and innovate? What about when you’re planning your Christmas season events? It makes sense to involve people from all of your teams. Otherwise, critical details can easily be missed. You might end up with too few chairs for your youth choir performance because your Operations lead wasn’t involved. Or maybe you end up with not enough parking, or not enough volunteers to engage new visitors.

The list of times you should build nimble and cross-functional teams is almost endless. For instance, it would be valuable when you’re expanding your church space, planning your missions, and on and on.



To learn how Reach helps church leaders add and retain members with Facebook, visit us at:

[CAUSELY.COM/REACH](https://causely.com/reach)



STARTUPS DO ACCOUNTING DIFFERENTLY



So with all that innovation and learning, you might expect the way startups measure achievement is different. And you'd be right. Startups measure all the normal things, like revenue in and expenses out. But they also carefully measure their learning.

They look for ways to set up milestones and measure progress. They ask questions like:

- What things do we need to track to measure our impact as a church?
- How do we know the results we see relate to the changes we've made?
- What experiments can we conduct to improve our metrics?

One great way to start this type of learning accounting is with your service collection. You can test taking it at the beginning of the service instead of at the end. Or you might change how you take it all together. Be methodical tracking the changes and results and you'll discover the best time and way to do your collection. That takes the guesswork out of the process and helps you further your mission.

You can also try different service times and different ways of getting people to connect with your church (of course, if you followed the first step about learning, you would have asked your community what times work best for them). Or consider looking at metrics during a series to see how those metrics compare from one series to another. In fact, you can track just about any data point to learn from it.





Many church planners start by looking at metrics like new visitors, new members and member lifetime. Member generosity is also a great variable to learn from.

But don't feel daunted if this all seems a little too corporate. We think about these ideas in regards to helping you help more people. If these ideas help you reach more people and fill more hearts and minds with Jesus, then they are ideas worth considering.

You are an entrepreneur, and your church plant is a startup. Sure, your currency and mission are far greater than dollars and profit. But why not pick the best ideas startups use to grow faster and more sustainably and apply them to the process of building your church plant? You just might find they help you further your mission in ways you never imagined.

If you are interested in reading more about startups and how they make efficiency a core strategy, we suggest checking out the book [The Lean Startup](#), by Eric Reis.



Are you a church planter?

Reach is designed to generate personal, friend-to-friend, invitations to your church. We use the power of Facebook check-ins to generate *thousands* of personal invitations every week. How do we do it? Every time a member of your congregation checks in on Facebook, we make a donation to a Kingdom-building charity.

To learn how Reach can help you scale personal invites at your church, schedule a demo with us today:

[Click here to schedule your Reach demo now](#)

Or visit causely.com/reach