

Outstanding Leader: Dan Entwistle

Dan Entwistle serves as the Managing Executive Director of Ministries at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection, a multi-campus church in Kansas City that has grown from a handful of families in 1990 to more than 16,000 adults and children. Dan has served on the staff in various roles over the past 17 years and now serves as a key leader in decisions related to staffing, governance, strategic planning, and ministry development. Dan and Emma have three young children- Hunter, Chaz and Lila.

1. Of 130+ organizations BCWI has surveyed more than once, COR is on the list of top 10 most improved over time. What factors would you list as attributing to the change in staff commitment/engagement scores?

When we first took the BCWI survey in 2004 I made two promises- fire everyone and never take the survey again. The truth was brutal; not everyone loved their work environment as much as I did. In fact, we discovered that in many respects our work culture was mediocre or worse. Sure, we had a strong sense of our church's purpose and we tended to agree that the church's ministry was having a significantly positive impact. But underneath the surface, our growth had led our entrepreneurial church

into several organizational challenges. Fortunately, I quickly backed off from my promises and we rolled up our sleeves to make sure we fixed what was broken for the good of our ministry.

The changes we implemented were wide-ranging, beginning with open disclosure of what we heard from



our team followed by listening-post sessions to unpack the areas of greatest concern. We gathered input from the staff team on our *desired* work culture and we produced a staff covenant for each member of our team to sign. The covenant outlines the commitments we make to one-another, to our own spiritual growth, to our performance attributes and it names several important aspects of our shared ministry. We also revamped our annual staff review process in order to move beyond goal achievement. Our new reviews

included two additional sections (in addition to performance goal): a review of the employee's adherence to the staff covenant and a 360-review process whereby we gather input from 8-10 coworkers and volunteers regarding *how* the work got done (aka performance *attributes*). This process allowed us to address another import demotivator by moving to a merit-based review system that differentiated between those that were thriving and those who weren't.

Finally, we needed to restructure. Our work environment was lead by too many people reporting directly to our Senior Pastor. We, in effect, had created several disparate work cultures under the same roof. By streaming our ministries under one executive leader we were able to speed up the decision-making process and ensure a more consistent application of our values across the work environment.

2. How does your faith shape your leadership?

Resurrection aims to be a very well-run and well-led organization- commitments that aren't unique to Christian organizations. But our purpose and our values are distinctly shaped by our faith. In fact, we have no compelling reason to exist beyond our purpose, which is to "build a Christian community

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where non-religious and nominally-religious people are becoming deeply committed Christians.” In this line of work, faith makes all the difference... it shapes our values, informs our decisions, determines how we measure success and motivates us for the cause. Nobody on Resurrection’s staff would mistake this workplace as being a secular environment because at root we are in this solely because faith does matter.

As a staff team, we make a commitment to move toward Christian perfection or sanctification, in both personal and social holiness. We structure this commitment around three aspects: first we seek to avoid things that would separate us from God or harm others, secondly we aim to do good and practice our faith, and finally we commit to pursuing growth in our spiritual lives. Our staff covenant spells this out further. Ultimately, we realize that our church members will not go beyond the example we set for them.

3. What advice would you give the leaders of other Christian organizations?

Think back over your life. Which boss had the greatest positive impact on you? Which boss had the most negative impact? Consider the characteristics that describe the

first boss and also which words describe the second. A good starting point for creating an outstanding workplace is often as simple as being the kind of person for whom people enjoy working.