SMART SEGMENTATION

The Need

Any network leader feels the limitation of finite resources–time, money and personnel–when stewarding influence over a geographic grouping of churches. How will the finite resources be distributed? There are several logical possibilities:

- Resources may be distributed based on the "squeakiest wheel." (Joe keeps calling for help.)
- Resources may be distributed based on personal chemistry or relational history. (I really like Chris, let's help him.)
- Resources may be distributed based on biases of gifting. (Passionate teachers resource teaching.)
- Resources may be distributed by functional priority. (We need to fund more church planting.)

But the most strategic utilization of resources is distribution based on generating overall network health. (We want the strongest network possible.) In order to allocate attention for the sake of the entire network, a segmentation "lens" must be applied based on a church's relationship to the mission of Jesus. How is the church fulfilling its kingdom potential? Smart segmentation is the primary lens to evaluate a church based on five "conditions of mission."

The definitions are not technical and are not given for quantitative analysis. Rather they are given for the quick discernment for an effective network coach or consultant to help understand what the church may need in the given moment. Segmentation alerts the network leader to both priority and posture when allocating time to pastors. The smart segmentation categories themselves are heavily adapted from a typology originally created by George Bullard who taught on "The Right Approach for the Right Congregation."

The Principle

The foundational principal for utilizing smart segmentation is: the strength of the few determines the health of the whole. In larger networks it becomes all too possible for the network leader to spend a majority of time with mediocre or struggling churches. In addition, in many denominations there is a massive value gap between the denomination leader and the denomination's strongest or largest churches. The network leader laments, "The large churches don't need us!" Understanding smart segmentation is the first step toward adding value to the pacesetting church in the network. But it's not based on favoritism or a desire for political maneuvering with "the best;" it's based on the conviction that if the strongest churches don't stay effective and innovative, the entire network will suffer.

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Condition of Mission	Code	% of whole	Definition	Network Strategy
LEADING	L1	5-10%	The church is **stellar** with relationship to the mission. There is overall health, leadership trust, external focus, demonstrated disciple-making and ministry innovation.	• Convene • Collaborate • Distribute innovation
LIVING	L2	5-20%	The church is **strong** but no longer stellar. Effective ministry continues with stability that may be pre or post plateau. There is no innovation. A passionate culture of mission has cooled off a bit. The church has a very good reputation.	• Convene • Coach • Distribute break-thru learning
LONGING	L3	5-20%	The church is no longer strong, but feels **stuck.** Yet the leaders know that mission is not hitting on all eight cylinders and they want to fix it. They want change and are hungry to learn. They ask for help.	• Coach • Consult • Distribute inspirational case studies
LAGGING	L4	25-40%	The church is **struggling** and has normalized the feeling. It may be looking on the horizon for hope. There is no impulse or readiness to change. Spiritual breakthrough is needed with disciple-making revitalization.	• Consult • Catalyze • Distribute prayer for break-thru
LANGUISHING	L5	25-40%	The church is **sick.** The lack of spiritual vitality can stem from many causes including mistrust, internal fighting, or spiritual complacency. Spiritual break-thru is needed with a significant organizational renewal or a complete replanting process.	• Console • Distribute assets (to launching or leading churches)
LAUNCHING*	L0	0-10%	The church is **starting** and will be L1-L5 within 18 months	• Coach