

THE FRAMEWORK FOR A SUCCESSFUL HYPHEN TEAM

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Creating, growing, and maintaining a Hyphen ministry throughout your district can take many different people, personalities, and logistical resourcefulness to get where you see your vision leading you.

Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

This concept of Young Adult ministry must begin in the prayer lives of the leadership of your district. From there it has to become a vision brought on by or brought to your Youth Committee or District Board. Statistics tell us that over 90 percent of young adults will walk away from their relationship with God at some point between the ages of 18–30, but with the right vision to carry out to your district’s churches, I believe we can alter that percentage.

This has to commence with one person’s burden to see souls saved through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Without a burden for the lost, we are spinning our wheels to get together a social outing. The Hyphen director for your state sets the tone for things in the present and future based on many different aspects, but most important—aside from their walk with God—the support from their district.

John Donne said, “No man is an island.”

The district support you receive to create the framework of a successful Hyphen ministry is not always the same as it is for other states:

1. Some states may have a director that works openly with the youth committee. This allows them to hold events on the sectional level without restraint because they are already in an elected position. This can work for you because they are already connected and acquainted throughout the district with the local leadership. It may not be feasible for your current committee due to the amount of time it takes for growing this ministry properly, but that is at your discretion and your district leadership’s discretion.
2. Your district Hyphen director may work independently or alongside the youth president, but take advantage of other Hyphen leadership on the local church level. This type of plan leans heavily on the local church. If your Hyphen ministry is already prevalent in your district, then it should work with great success because you can build upon that momentum that has already been established. If Hyphen ministry is relatively new in your state, then you may hit some speed bumps along the way with this idea just to get it off the ground with local church leaders. Always enlist the help of already successful Hyphen leaders as much as possible. Their attendance is vital.
3. Some states may appoint sectional leadership along with their Hyphen director (mine included) to assist on growing their Hyphen ministry on the local level. This allows the Hyphen director to have a constant team around him or her. This is a favorable option because the flexibility allows you to reach out to churches throughout your state no matter how far away they may be from the director’s reach. Hyphen directors are not voted in or appointed to just grow this ministry in their area, but to speak vision to the entire state. One Hyphen team builds upon the ideas of other teams for their sectional events, whether it is a service, an outing, or an idea for the upcoming camp. It develops our mindset jointly because we are all focused on the mission of reaching Hyphens. This option may not be necessary if the previous option is already in place, because it will require the most attention from you.

These are just three options that are currently common in this quickly growing field of ministry. Each district has its own way of working through this idea of what is best for them, and there is no wrong answer. Sometimes it



requires a bit of trial and error, but I am a firm believer that with the proper amount of promotion, planning, and preparedness anything is possible.

What is most important to realize is that this is a brand new ministry and can be tailor-made to fit God's plan and implemented by your leadership. You may see the need for a Hyphen secretary or Hyphen promotions director to shoulder some of your burden to keep up with planning or promotions. From a personal standpoint (if you know me at all, you know this rings true with my personality) I say, "Go big or go home."

We never want to put any type of restrictions on what God could do throughout your situation, so we have to ask ourselves, "Have I prayed and fasted for this? Have I prepared for everything on my checklist?" God knows you have, and your team knows you have, so let's reach for our Book of Acts moment and see a modern day miracle take place in your district. I'm not trying to push you into circumstances that could set you up for disappointment, but what I am trying to push you into is a situation that says, "We are expecting 50 people to show up at this event," so you prepare your team to set up for 75 or 100. Expecting 100? Great. Let's set up for 150. Think of that lost loved one or that college roommate or that coworker and go forward praying that they will show up. It's up to us to keep asking.

Many times we run into the problem of just getting our already-existing Hyphens to show up to events/services. This is why teamwork is so important because what you think may work in that section just might go over like a lead balloon in your section. Sometimes we have to start with a bit more humbleness and share some leadership opportunities to gain an understanding of the areas and atmospheres that we are in.

The inner workings of a Hyphen ministry are not always seen on the surface. It is late nights studying the Word; it is countless emails making sure your team is ready with each specific duty; it is borrowing a truck from your pastor or an elder to haul your stage design; it is carrying a burden to see your closest friends that you grew up with come back to an altar and cry out to God.

Most people just beginning their Hyphen ministries will ask, "Where do I start?" The answer is simple: begin with growing your personal walk with God and start vision-casting where you want Hyphen to be six months from now, next year, and five years from now in your district. Successful frameworks are dependent on your situations, dedication, and sacrifice. My team will look different from your team and your team will look different from someone else's, but the measure of success isn't by how many events/services you hold; it is by the people you and your team reach.