

The

EIGHT



ESSENTIAL
SYSTEMS

for Worship Ministry

A CHECKLIST

What Are Systems?

Systems are a crucial part of growing a strong, healthy worship ministry.

Systems, simply put, are how you or your team *get something done*.

For example, the way you and your team prepare musically for Sunday is a *system*. It's a complex process that combines events and activities (*personal practice, rehearsals, warm-up/soundchecks, etc.*) with different responsibilities and expectations for the team members (*learn the songs, show up at rehearsal, etc.*) and the leader (*plan songs in advance so the team can practice, post the charts and recordings of the songs, run an efficient rehearsal, etc.*).

Here's the good (and bad) news:

You already have a system for everything. The way you plan music, the way you schedule your team, the way you run rehearsals, the way you distribute music, the way you qualify people on your team—those are all **systems**.

They might be accidental and unintentional systems, but they're still the “process by which you get something done.” And the sobering truth is this:

The systems you have in place *right now* are perfectly suited to get what you're getting *right now*.

If you have a team member who backs out at the last minute or even no-shows, that's related to a system problem. Are there heart-issues at play here? Sure, but it keeps happening because your system *allows* it to keep happening.

Systems create behavior—good or bad. And that's *good* news.

As leaders, we can't change someone's attitude or heart. But we can change the systems that allow an attitude or heart issue to continue unchecked. If you have a good system, you will, over time, create a good culture and behavior in your ministry.

And just so you know, this “system stuff” isn't all just organizational leadership tactics.

God is a God of systems.

Think about us traveling around the sun—we're a part of a solar *system*. Think about your breathing—it requires your respiratory *system*. Creation is filled with systems.

But God also used systems to help organize and lead his people.

In Exodus 18, Jethro is the first organizational consultant who helps his son-in-law, Moses, create a system of delegated leadership.

We see it again in Acts 6. The apostles appoint the seven deacons to take care of people so they could stay focused on the ministry of the Word.

We also see that Paul lays out the essential components of a leadership system to build the church in Ephesians 4. He tells us that Jesus has given us interdependent leadership gifts that work together to build up the people to do the work of ministry.

Your systems are crucial to the work of ministry.

Your Eight Essential Ministry Systems for Worship

So while there can be dozens and dozens of processes working inside of your ministry, we focus on ***eight essential systems*** that will enable you to effectively manage and grow your ministry.

This Essential Systems checklist doesn't tell you *how* to create a system for each area of your ministry. Instead, it contains ***indicators*** of an effective system.

This checklist contains three indicators (or ***checkpoints***) for each Essential System. These checkpoints aren't the only markers of a healthy system. But they will help you see what you might be missing or have yet to develop.

Each Essential System page also includes coaching questions to help you take that particular system to the next level.

At the end, there's a page to help you determine your ***next steps***. And when you're ready to take your Eight Essential Systems to the next level, sign up for a [Blueprint Session](#). It's an affordable, full-ministry assessment and coaching process that helps you get clarity and make real changes right now.

Preparation

The processes and expectations for the team to musically be ready for worship services.



I have a document (policy/guide/handbook) explaining what my expectations for preparation are. These expectations include personal practice as well as participation at both rehearsal and soundcheck.



My team members are consistently on-time at rehearsal. *And* they arrive with their parts of each song learned to a level that allows them to fully participate without being hindered.



My team members know the songs well enough by Sunday to confidently worship and engage the congregation without being preoccupied with their instrument or the chart.

Coaching Question:

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your current preparation system do you think is contributing to this?

What are one or two changes you could make to your preparation system to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Qualification Process

The process of attracting, qualifying and inviting new team members into the ministry.

- ☐ I have a clearly defined, intentional, and multi-step process for qualifying new team members. It helps both the applicant and me determine if this is a good ministry fit.
- ☐ Our interview/auditions require potential team members play/sing specific parts to demonstrate that their skill level matches the musical requirements of the worship team.
- ☐ During the qualification process, I not only look at the talent and skills of potential team members, but their heart and character, their commitment to the local church, their sense of calling, and their chemistry with current team members.

Coaching Questions

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your current qualification process do you think is contributing to this?

What are one or two changes you could make to your qualification process to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Scheduling

The process of creating your team schedule (rotation/roster), and the expectations for individual team members to respond appropriately to scheduling requests.



My scheduling process promotes ownership and commitment by requiring team members to be responsible for communicating their unavailable dates, covering their absences, and responding to schedule requests.



My team members honor their commitments to the ministry and work to replace themselves when they cannot serve on a scheduled Sunday.



I create my musician and tech schedule at least one month in advance, at a predictable time each month, and have it posted on an easy-to-use and updatable website or app that all my team members can access.

Coaching Questions

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your current scheduling process do you think is contributing to this?

What are one or two changes you could make to your scheduling process to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Service/Set Planning

The process for selecting music, planning segues and creating a flow to the sets and/or services.



I consistently plan an intentional journey of worship for every service, considering themes, flow, tempo, keys and time constraints for the service.



I plan our music after I complete the musician schedule so that I can match the songs to the scheduled team's talent and skill level. And I plan it far enough ahead so the team can practice the songs at home and have them ready for rehearsal.



I intentionally plan every transition/segue and then practice those segues at rehearsal with my team.

Coaching Questions

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your current planning process do you think is contributing to this?

What are one or two changes you could make to your planning process to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Song Management

The process of managing a healthy song rotation that promotes active participation by the church.

- ☐ I have an intentional process for rotating some songs more than others to help ensure that 1) the team and congregation are internalizing the new songs, and 2) that our established songs are not being overused.
- ☐ I have a system for introducing new songs so the team can learn them and the congregation can catch on. I also regularly cut songs from our rotation when they are no longer connecting with our church.
- ☐ I have default forms/sequences for each song to allow for more efficient practice and rehearsals, and for easier communication when I make changes to the standard form.

Coaching Questions

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your current song management system do you think is contributing to this?

What are one or two changes you could make to your song management system to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Communication

The processes for communicating vision, values, and expectations with your team, as well the logistical communication for running the team.



I have clearly documented my vision/mission, values, and expectations for my worship ministry. I routinely review those and reinforce them with my team, formally and informally.



I use a central website/app to efficiently post team member schedules and service plans, as well as distribute music. It's convenient for my volunteers, and it's updatable in real time. (Examples: Planning Center Online's Services, WorshipPlanning.com, or WorshipTrac.com)



My team members respond to worship ministry communication appropriately since I neither over-communicate (bombard them with too much information too often), or under-communicate (fail to adequately or clearly give the needed information).

Coaching Questions

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your communication system do you think is contributing to this?

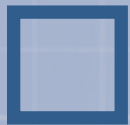
What are one or two changes you could make to your communication system to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Team Member Training/Development

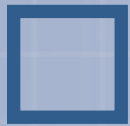
Your discipling process to teach team members the skills, knowledge, and character they need to be successful team members.



I have a consistent training track that each team member progresses through which helps develop them musically, relationally and spiritually.



I have an orientation process that prepares new team members to experience success as they begin to serve in the ministry.



My team training and development process helps my team members understand their unique gifting and strengths, as well as appreciate how they complement their fellow team members' gifting and strengths.

Coaching Questions

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your team member development system do you think is contributing to this?

What are one or two changes you could make to your team member development system to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Leadership Development

Your process for identifying, training, and deploying leaders in your ministry.



I have clarity on my strengths and weaknesses as a leader and am actively developing other leaders to complement those strengths and weaknesses as they lead alongside me.



I have a clear training pathway for developing mentors and leaders from among my team members. It's not only focused on musical/technical skill but relational leadership and spiritual depth.



I am building a ministry that focuses on the shared leadership of and goal of Ephesians 4 – that is, to equip the people to do the work of the ministry.

Coaching Questions

How close is your ministry's current reality to each of these checkpoints?

In your worship ministry, which of these three checkpoints is the "least true"? What about your leadership development system do you think is contributing to this?

What are one or two changes you could make to your leadership development system to have all these checkpoints be true of your ministry?

Next Steps

1. *STOP*. Don't try to change all eight systems at once.

After going through this checklist, you might be tempted to start renovating *all* of your ministry systems. You won't make significant progress in any system area if you try to restructure or rebuild every system at one time.

2. Decide which systems can be "purposefully neglected."

Even though you probably see areas where you can improve each area, some of your systems are "good enough"—*for now*. Decide which ministry systems can remain status quo so you can focus your energy on the ones that are causing the most issues.

3. Look for "low-hanging fruit."

As you begin to focus on improving one of your ministry systems, look for things that are easy to change/improve. Start with that—your low-hanging fruit. As you make these simple changes, you'll create momentum to tackle more significant challenges in that ministry area.

4. Look for *who*, not just *what*.

Don't just look at policies, workflows, or structures that need to change. But look for people who can help you. First, look at people in your ministry who are already embodying the kind of behavior that you want. Enlist them to help.

Also, look for people who are "process-oriented" and can help you envision and create a better system for the ministry area you want to improve.

5. Schedule a Blueprint Session

Schedule a [Blueprint Session here](#) to get clarity, focus, and even accountability on what you can do to take the next steps in building an even stronger worship team. The Blueprint Session is an affordable, full-ministry assessment and coaching process that helps you get clarity and make real changes right now.