

# A Suggested Multi-site Start-up Budget Framework

As you begin to open multiple off-site campuses for ministry and worship, it is important that you set some clear policies in what you will and will not do in the budgeting process of launching these new works. There are multi-site ministries that begin with an initial investment of as little as \$25,000 and those who begin with more than a million dollars invested in their off-site locations. Perhaps the most popular high-end multi-site launch is Andy Stanley of North Point Ministries who easily invests more than a million dollars in launching an off-site solution for multiple ministries. Costs vary from place to place in the multi-site ministries market.

Remember to keep this document within your multi-site church a living document; and do not allow it to become greater than the work you are seeking to carry out. Allow the document to guide you, not control you and your new off-site work! In the end, it is important that you launch a new off-site location in an orderly and biblically wise process so that God's purpose for you and your church is fulfilled. The following ideas are a compilation and synthesizing of best practices already used by many of the 1000+ multi-site churches across North America.

## Budgeting for the New Campus Launch

In order to successfully launch a new multi-site campus it is vital that someone coordinate the many key essentials of the launch. Remember in this process that the right thing at the wrong time is God's way of slowing you down while allowing Him time to provide the right opportunity at the right time. Far too many church planters rush out to launch a new off-site campus too quickly; thus, slowing what God ultimately wants to do through you and your church. Proper timing is essential in launching a new site. Here is a list of some key fundamentals you must consider:

- The site location
- Development of the campus leadership team
- Selection of equipment and ministry provisions
- Marketing of new site campus

## Start-up Costs

Most multi-site campuses are initially launched by the original campus. They underwrite the full cost, but set in motion procedures for the new campus to begin contributing to the general operating budget from the start. The sample suggested outlay is around \$75,000 to begin a new site launch.

Here is an example of what it would look like:

New equipment	\$35,000
Outreach marketing & promotion	\$15,000
First six months of salary for site pastor	\$20,000
Multi-site campus lease	\$ 3,000
New site band	\$ 2,000

### **Total startup costs for a new campus \$75,000**

All income and expenses after the launch are charged to the operating budget of the corporate church. The formula for this operating budget is determined by multiplying expected average attendees (250+) by expected average giving. In most cases, multi-site churches use some version of the following formula:

$$250+ \text{ attendees} \times \$650 \text{ per person (annual giving average per year)} = \$162,500$$

## Campus Growth Goals & Expectations

The new multi-site campus must set some solid growth goals for the new location. It is expected that the new site pastor clearly understands what is expected in this area. It goes without saying that all multi-site campuses are expected to grow in attendance and membership annually. Many churches already working in the multi-site model suggest that a new campus is expected to grow a minimum of 10% each year. One leader in this strategy suggests at least a 15% yearly growth. All churches I spoke with at a recent multi-site conference, put on by Leadership Network, made the important observation that the overhead of the new campus should, and must, lag behind its growth! Many even spoke to the issue and remarked that no new hires should take place within the new campus until growth in attendance has been demonstrated over a six month period.

Various churches measure growth in many ways, but most multi-site churches measure effectiveness in the following eight areas:

1. Average campus attendance
2. Average weekly life development group attendance
3. Total number of life development groups
4. Believer's baptisms
5. Newcomers attendance
6. Average number of leaders being developed weekly
7. Average number of campus volunteers enlisted, trained, and deployed
8. Per person giving at the new campus

Sea Coast Community Church in South Carolina, a leader in this new strategy for multi-site growth, suggests the following formula for new campus growth expectations:

Average campus attendance .....	250
Average life development group attendance (weekly).....	50% of total adult attendance
Total number of life development group	
Believer's baptisms.....	10% of total adult attendance
Newcomers' attendance .....	3% of total adult attendance per month
Average number of leaders being developed (weekly) .....	3% of total adult attendance per month
Average number of campus volunteers enlisted, trained, and deployed..	15% of total adult attendance per month
Per person giving at the new campus.....	\$650

It is key to be sure that when you launch a new campus site you find the right person to serve as the campus pastor, the right place to meet weekly, and launch at the right time. Today, many new church plants are launched right after school begins, a few weeks after the New Year, Palm Sunday, or Easter. One new idea that is just being noticed, is Christmas Eve! We will have more to come on Christmas Eve launches as it develops.