

Integrating Halftimers into your Ministry

December 2007

What can you do once you have matched a high capacity marketplace leader (we'll call them a Halftimer), with a significant leadership role in your organization to help them integrate into the team?

There is a vast cultural gap between the marketplace and the ministry world. But these varying approaches to "getting the job done" can compliment each other - if an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance is cultivated. In addition to cultural changes, someone making this kind of Halftime transition will need clear guidelines and processes to help them link into the infrastructure of the ministry when they begin their work. Understanding the culture gap and following the integration check lists below will greatly increase your ability to successfully on board marketplace leaders into your ministry work environment.

Marketplace leaders who are mature Christians and who show up with a servant heart will add more to a ministry if they are free to bring the best attributes from their world, than if they must strip themselves of the vestiges of the marketplace before entering ministry.

This may require significant change in your ministry culture with regard to how your staff views and relates to non-staff ministry leaders. It will include educating staff and key leaders about the needs of people in Halftime so that they help pave the way for a smooth transition.

You will want to discover ways to celebrate the successes of Halftimers, while adhering to the Lord's admonition to not be a 'respector of persons.' Avoid showing deference to those who have been successful but honor what the Lord is doing through them.

Here are a few of the major issues which define a Halftimer's world and stand in stark contrast with the culture of the ministry world:

Driven vs. Called

Most high-capacity people are hard driving, want to move fast, and are accustomed to a high degree of autonomy. They tend to be results oriented and can run over people if they are not careful. On the other hand, ministries are often cautious, waiting for clear indications of God's leading. Ministries typically want people to "pay their dues" or "wait their turn" before being willing to plug them into serving opportunities.

Effectiveness Oriented vs. Cause Oriented

Halftimers lead in the marketplace using influence gained by having better ideas, more energy, creativity, or simply capital. The ministry team, however, typically waits before they will follow a person to determine if that individual has a mature worldview, is committed to the cause, and is compassionate about the people they desire to serve.

Paid Staff vs. Volunteer Team

Marketplace leaders are accustomed to leading people who are highly motivated by financial rewards and corporate advancement. When Halftimers land in your ministry, they will find themselves leading volunteers, and even paid staff, who act more like volunteers because they are often paid less than market value.

Measuring Results/Output vs. Life Change

In the business world, it's easy to measure results, down to the last penny of profit that impacts the bottom line. However, after a year of leading in ministry, Halftimers may have a hard time measuring the impact of their investment of time and talent. Some ministry cultures are even opposed to measuring elements of ministry advancement. This lack of measurable results is compounded by the fact that the marketplace value for the time of Halftimers is extremely high, putting them under pressure to make sure they are really adding that same amount of value in ministry. There is a nagging sense that if they are not adding equivalent value, then they should instead go back to their first half careers and simply write big checks to the ministry.

Pressure to Perform vs. Counting on God to Produce the Fruit

Marketplace leaders are accustomed to working long hours with a sense of urgency, and they expect to find that same level of urgency - or a greater one - within the ministry, given that ministry work has eternal consequences. But most ministries have a softer culture, perhaps a more balanced view of life, blending healthy amounts of family and Sabbath time, which can confuse marketplace leaders who may sense the lack of urgency. Sometimes there is a much-needed but missing sense of urgency in the ministry arena, and Halftimers can bring a challenging perspective to a ministry staff.

Business Language vs. Ministry Language

Marketplace leaders use their native tongue, business language (customer, market segmentation, marketing), which can come across as cold or unspiritual in a ministry culture. At the same time, ministry people often use a language of their own that is unclear or misunderstood by marketplace leaders.

Without well-informed communication from ministry leadership, these differences set both parties up for misunderstanding. Not every aspect of the Halftimers culture needs to change, and not every aspect of ministry culture should adapt to the Halftimer, but there are some important areas where both need to change. Human nature is naturally resistant to change. Let's explore this from the perspectives of both the Halftimer and the ministry leader.

Halftimer's Point of View

A major theme of someone in Halftime is a redefinition of who they are and how they choose to spend their second half. The typical Halftimer's personal identity is linked to career achievements, and titles and accolades have played major roles. But when a Halftimer takes a major step toward significance, simple questions like "What do you do?" become difficult to answer or, at the very least, take a lot more time to respond to than a first half reply.

Add to that confusion the challenge of having to prove oneself all over again and you have a recipe for fear, uncertainty, insecurity, and doubt. In the marketplace, a Halftimer most often walks into a room "like he owns the place." But that same person might walk into a meeting at your ministry and feel like a deer caught in headlights. Some of the most powerful, confident, and secure people in the world can turn inward and retreat during this time of transition. Those that are perfectly honest with you will admit they are scared to death. If you don't first support them and then engage them in ministry opportunities that challenge their skill sets early on, they might easily throw in the towel and go back to their first-half comfort zones. When in doubt, Halftimers will retreat to what they are good at. If you discourage instead of support them at this critical time, you may lose them for years, if not forever.

Ministry Leader's Point of View

In speaking with a number of senior pastors and ministry leaders, some common themes emerge. Namely that it is hard to figure out what to do with Halftimers and, frankly, they're a bit threatening. Let's face it, high-capacity people aren't always the most patient and often can be a bit overpowering and insensitive.

This can cause issues with current staff members and volunteers. Before you know it, you have some serious relational problems on your hands. On top of this, it's not easy for a senior pastor to give control of major initiatives or ministries to another person. A pastor's own insecurities can begin to surface - along with the realization that it's often easier to figure out what to do with someone's check than it is to utilize their time and talents.

Meeting in the Middle of the Journey

When the Halftimers and ministry leaders meet halfway along this journey, some wonderful things begin to happen. The Halftimer becomes a bit more sensitive to the culture of his or her ministry and volunteer staff. He or she drives to make things happen but doesn't run people over in the process. On the other hand, the ministry leader is there to support and encourage, and when it's time, get out of the way. Imagine the work that can be accomplished for the Kingdom when these two parties come together?

As we discussed earlier, humans naturally resist change. This change can be described in two major ways; the emotional response to change and the practical response to change. The illustration below describes these aspects of change from both a pastor's and a Halftimer's point of view.

Create a Unifying Perspective

There is an emotional response to change and a practical response to change. The following illustration describes these aspects of change from a ministry leader's and a Halftimer's point of view.

	EMOTIONAL RESPONSE	PRACTICAL RESPONSE
PASTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This person is threatening • How will the staff react? • I need to know where their heart is • How do I keep them under control? • I feel personally responsible for their success • How will they represent our church (inside and out)? • What if this doesn't work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will they report to? • What is the budget impact? • Where will they sit? • How much office support will they expect/need? • How much of my time or that of my staff will they expect/require to be effective? • How do I manage their performance?
HALFTIMER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I make things happen without stepping on toes? • Will the staff and volunteers accept me? • How will I describe my role to others? • How do I break into the "inner circle?" • Should I get paid or volunteer all of my time? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where will I sit and how much office support is reasonable to ask for? • How does budgeting and expense management get done? • Who do I report to (officially and unofficially?) • How does the church run from an organizational and financial standpoint?

But when both sides (Halftimers and ministry leaders) understand what the other is going through, and recognize the stakes involved in getting this right, wonderful things begin to happen. From an emotional standpoint, we recommend that you begin with open discussion about this wide cultural gap between the marketplace and ministry. Talk about each of the issues listed above, and make it legal to have these feelings and concerns. Describe your fears and doubts. Understand the other person's points of view. Set your insecurities aside. And finally, remind yourselves of the stakes involved in getting this right.

From a practical standpoint, both parties must do their homework before they begin to work in ministry together. It will be far healthier to address these issues head on, including:

To Do's for the Ministry Leader

- Give a copy of this document to your staff as a simple way of training them in how to engage high-capacity marketplace leaders in your ministry.
- Create a formal role description for each Halftimer which outlines the major responsibilities and activities associated with the Halftimer's work.
- Determine if the Halftimer needs a full or partial salary or prefers a volunteer position.
- Clearly define reporting responsibilities and establish a formal mentor that will take responsibility for bringing the person onboard and ensuring they are successful.
- Determine the office services you can provide at the ministry and those that the Halftimer will need to be take care, including:
 - Office space
 - Administrative support
 - Computer use and e-mail

- Phone
- Office supplies
- Establish a budget for the role (salary, benefits, travel, ministry support, etc.).
- Document for the Halftimer how to link the chosen ministry in with the ministry's database, promotional processes, and financial systems.
- Create and execute a communication plan which lets the appropriate staff (paid and unpaid) know about the new role and the person filling it.
- Establish goals for the first six months and communicate how performance will be managed.
- Determine the appropriate background materials and get them into the hands of the Halftimer.
- Establish a Day 1 agenda and schedule the official start date.
- Start the work together and establish a "check in" meeting schedule (consider every three months for the first six months).
- Introduce the Halftimer to the chosen mentor and wish them well as they begin this journey together.

To Do's for the Halftimer

- Create a list of expectations and compare them to the role description created by the pastor.
- Resolve any expectation mismatches before the official start date. Review reporting responsibilities and confirm who your formal mentor will be.
- Determine the office services that will be provided at the ministry and those that you will need to take care of, including:
 - Office space
 - Administrative support
 - Computer use and e-mail
 - Phone
 - Office supplies.
- Review and make sure you understand your budget (salary, benefits, travel, ministry support, etc.), as well as ministry policies and procedures.
- Review the goals that have been established by the pastor for your first six months and compare them to your personal goals and objectives.
- Review the appropriate background materials.
- Meet your mentor and agree on meeting formats, frequency, etc.
- Begin your ministry work.

To ensure the overall success for both parties, it will be critical to keep communication lines open and active. Err on the side of over communication. Be honest with each other, making feedback direct, honest and two way. When this is working well, there should be no surprises at performance appraisal time. Both parties are equally committed to making things work and share in both the triumphs and struggles.

The Halftimer becomes a bit more sensitive to the culture of his or her ministry's ministry and volunteer staff. He or she drives to make things happen but doesn't run people over in the process. The ministry provides support and encourage, and when it's time, he gets out

of the way. In the end, the ministry leader and Halftimer share a common vision and passion for ministry, and big things will happen for the kingdom.