

Q&A: multi-site solutions

There's no one-size-fits-all solution for multi-site church expansion. A variety of options are available, from the conventional — existing church buildings and new-build facilities — to the unconventional: former car dealerships, strip malls and vacant warehouses.

To help church leaders negotiate their next steps, *Church Executive* spoke with Rodney James, director of business and finance for Churches By Daniels Construction, Inc. in Broken Arrow, OK [churchesbydaniels.com].

What are the signs that it's time to consider multi-site expansion?

Normally, there are two motives: planned and proactive, or organic and reactive. The first is usually the result of strong vision and leadership to expand the ministry.

A church construction expert weighs in on what to buy, build or renovate for maximum ministry.

The second is more of a forced move based on various factors, including growth versus space, the need to reach other demographic or geographic groups — possibly even decline and subsequent need to survive.

What are the main motivations to go multi-site?

It affords more opportunities to reach new people for Christ — opportunities that likely wouldn't happen at an existing campus or location.

It opens up better opportunities for members to serve, often closer to work or closer to home.

Meanwhile, existing members' spiritual growth is enhanced, as they're able to step out and start the new work. (Perhaps they might even join the staff.)

Finally, going multi-site opens up opportunities for different types of worship styles, or different ministries.

Option A: an existing church building

What are some common hurdles a church might face?

The cost of renovations, plus adding new audio, video and lighting equipment, and tackling existing maintenance issues. The church might also have to overcome existing perceptions about the previous occupants of the building. If the facility is still operating as a church, the merge might be extremely challenging; existing members might have a hard time giving up control, comfort, familiarity and so on.

Are there cost-based pros (and cons)?

On the up side, a church will face fewer upfront costs — no land to purchase, no infrastructure to build (site, parking, utilities), and no building costs and time delays associated with a new-build facility.

On the other hand, the church might face possible hidden costs, such as a failing HVAC system or faulty roof.

Option B: a brand-new facility

What barriers can a church expect to encounter?

Every construction process has hurdles. That's what building is — a process of solving problems. The most important component is to find a building partner who will share the church's vision, not just build its building. Too many times, churches seek out a design, not a solution. This can be very costly and drain much-needed building funds to

pursue a beautiful design the church can't afford to build.

Are there cost-based incentives (and disincentives) for brand-new buildings?

The good news is, your church controls the cost — if the facility is designed and built correctly by a good construction partner. In this approach, the church can even control future maintenance costs.

The bad news: It always costs more to build a new facility, considering site and infrastructure costs.

Option C: an outside-the-box structure

What structural cues indicate the space might work well for church use?

A church should look first at the structure. If the building has multiple columns throughout, this can be a challenge; they won't want columns in their worship space.

Next, it should consider ceiling height. Worship spaces need high



Believers Church (Tulsa, OK) — a commercial-building remodel — is praised by its ministry staff for its efficient use of space.

(Photos courtesy of Churches By Daniels Construction, Inc.)

ceilings for the best aesthetics and acoustics. False ceilings can often be raised, but many factors need to be considered to know for certain.

The building needs to have sufficient parking, and a church should keep in mind that plumbing, electrical and water requirements are much more significant for public meeting facilities than for warehouses, lumber yards, grocery stores and so on.

OK, but are there cost-based pros to this option?

Yes; there are no land development costs. And, if parking and utilities are sufficient, this is a significant savings over having to develop that infrastructure. The actual cost of building versus buying provides a savings, as well. CE

— Reporting by RaeAnn Slaybaugh

THE ANSWER TO YOUR CALLING.

Get your Master of Science in Church Management.

Villanova School of Business offers the only curriculum that addresses complex management issues from a faith-based perspective and in a convenient on-line format.

VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY
Villanova School of Business

Discover new ways to serve the church with a **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CHURCH MANAGEMENT.**
MSCM.Villanova.edu

Revenue on a downward spiral?

ems
EVENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
Reserve • Register • Promote

Better utilize space and resources while generating additional revenue with EMS.

Connect with us:
800.440.3994
-or-
www.dea.com/worship