

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

# Managing Multisite Tensions

## Episode 100

### *How to Reduce Central vs. Campus Frustration in a Multisite Matrix*

Tensions will always exist between central and campus perspectives in a multisite church, but there are some ways to reduce that tension and stay in a healthy relationship. In this episode, Tony and Amy unpack three ways to reduce frustration.

### *Tension Indicators*

You hear people asking:

- **Who do I (really) report to?** Tension gets created when team members aren't sure if they should be taking their cues from the central leaders or their campus leader.
- **Who made that decision?** This tension shows up when campus teams feel surprised about decisions the central leaders made or central leaders feel surprised about things a campus team decided to do.
- **Why didn't they ask me about that?** This tension surfaces when central acts and makes decisions without campus input.
- **Why can't we do that?** This tension appears in multisite churches that have a high value on "identical" experiences.

Clarity is key to leading a successful multisite church. We find there are three areas every multisite church must clarify to reduce tensions in the multisite matrix.

### *1. Clarify the Model*

- When churchess aren't crystal clear on their model, tensions arise.
- Define in detail where you want ministry approaches to be identical (the same at every location) and where you will allow for some independence.
- When that's not defined, leaders do what leaders do—they lead.

### *2. Clarify the Structure*

- Nothing creates more tension than lack of clarity about reporting structures.

- Every person on your staff should know the answer to these two questions:
  - Who above me has authority? (org chart **solid** line)
  - Who who has influence? (org chart **dotted** line)
- As growth happens, multisite church staff often find themselves in dual or triple roles, with responsibilities to central and campus. They need to always be able to define when they wear a “central hat” on and when they wear a “campus hat.”
- You have to continually revisit your structure to make sure roles are still clear—that everybody knows both what they are responsible for and to whom.

### 3. Clarify Decision Rights

- When people aren’t clear about who gets to make what decisions, there's tension.
- In the multisite matrix, clarifying “decision rights” means clarifying what decisions central leaders make and what decisions campus leaders make when it comes to ministry. For example: Who decides if a campus can do something fun and different for Father’s Day Weekend? Who decides when a campus can add a staff member? Who decides whether or not a campus start a Sunday night service?
- There isn’t a right or wrong answer to those questions. The only wrong thing is not defining clearly *how* decisions are made and *who* makes the call.

### Next Steps

1. **Multisite Model:** For each ministry area, define how identical or independent you are.
2. **Structure:** Draw your org chart and define where the solid lines of authority are, and where the dotted lines of influence are. See diagram to right.
3. **Decision Rights:** For each ministry area, clarify who makes what decisions (campus or central).
4. Check out the [Multisite Unstuck Course](https://theunstuckgroup.com/multisite-unstuck-course). It equips you with the tools to lead your team through the process of clarifying all three of these areas, and much more. Check it out at [theunstuckgroup.com](https://theunstuckgroup.com).

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