

Ministry Partner Development (MPD)

BEST PRACTICES

February 2013

The AE Best Practices of MPD are principles which answer the question: “What works in Western Europe?” They are “what we are working towards”. The following best practices have been found to work in various countries of Europe and are therefore given as strong suggestions for effective MPD implementation.

Leadership

- I. Best practice is that all of those training, overseeing or coaching MPD as well as all of those above the MPD Coordinator in authority would live from support.
- II. The National Leadership accepts the MPD Convictions and Best Practices.
- III. Each country needs an MPD Coordinator who lives from personal support and who oversees the area of MPD training and coaching. This person normally reports to HR.
- IV. The National Leadership should be in regular consultation with and equip the MPD coordinator to implement the MPD convictions and best practices in the country.

Policies and Legal issues

- V. Make a policy decision to have new staff reach 100% of their support goal before beginning in the department.
- VI. Where work contracts are required prior to a staff member raising 100% they should be limited for instance to 6 or 12 months, to allow a review and a decision concerning a long-term contract, especially when the MPD goal has not been reached. After the initial contract expires the next contract can be based upon the amount of monthly support coming in: for example 30%, 75% or 100%.
- VII. Expect staff to carry a healthy balance on their staff account, for instance 1-3 month salary buffer.

New Staff

- VIII. New staff during initial MPD come under the authority of HR (MPD coordinator).
- IX. MPD training needs to include the biblical and practical realities of support development with a focus on the personal aspects and should include role playing of the three core competencies: making a personal appointment, presenting the ministry, and following up to get a decision. Emphasize these three competencies.

- X. Emphasize the direct ask for financial and prayer support via a personal request. Ideally this is carried out face-to-face.
- XI. Blocking out time for MPD right after MPD training will capitalize on the point of highest motivation.
- XII. Help new staff give full attention to MPD and taking the risk of leaving their previous occupation by developing an effective limited contract system that allows the new staff member to work on MPD full-time.

Senior Staff

- XIII. Have a warning system in place which triggers consequences such as extended MPD time for senior staff with low support, and a process for ensuring that appropriate action is taken.
- XIV. For senior staff special attention needs to be given to correcting wrong attitudes such as being resigned to a low level of support and to generating new attitudes of hope and faith through biblical models.
- XV. All staff are responsible to provide financially for themselves (and their families). The team leader oversees this responsibility by monitoring the support levels of their team members and ensuring that MPD is done when necessary. The team leader and the staff member agree upon the proportion of time that should be spent in MPD activity. The NLT should define a critical level at which the next level of intervention should be applied. When this level is reached, the staff member comes under the authority of the MPD Coordinator/HR for closer supervision and possible consequences. Dealing with the issue of senior staff with low support works best when there is good communication and decision making between the team leader and the MPD coordinator.
- XVI. The percentage of missing support = % of ministry time needed to work on support development, in addition to normal 10% MPD maintenance.
- XVII. Where there is a need for a significant increase in personal support, MPD may best be done in blocks of time (as opposed to a half day or one day/week). This will help staff to stay focused and prevent MPD from getting swallowed up by other ministry activities.

Coaching

- XVIII. Continually recruit new coaches and equip and encourage existing support coaches. Most coaches are part-time coaches who have deep inner convictions about MPD. Most such coaches can coach 2 people effectively. Therefore we continually need to encourage and equip coaches and recruit new coaches for a growing ministry.
- XIX. A MPD coach should be assigned to each new staff in MPD and for each senior staff doing intensive MPD. The staff should be required to submit a weekly written report on activities and results, for example using the TNT-generated report.
- XX. Consistent MPD coaching immediately following MPD training will provide encouragement and accountability.

- XXI. Warn staff of the potential risks of having a partner who alone contributes a large portion of their support. If this partner is unable to continue, the staff will soon have a major shortage.
- XXII. Some staff need more accountability or direct help. For example, asking them to submit a detailed time schedule may help them learn to use their time more effectively.

Culture

- XXIII. The MPD coordinator and National Leadership need to communicate often and positively about MPD.
- XXIV. Celebrate making progress and reaching MPD goals.
- XXV. Encourage staff to talk openly about MPD, praying for one another and exhibiting financial solidarity with one another.
- XXVI. Staff should be spending 10% of ministry time on MPD maintenance (visits, communication, newsletter at least 4-5 times per year)
- XXVII. As in all aspects of our ministry, MPD is best done in teams. This allows the staff to learn from one another and to encourage one another.
- XXVIII. The MPD mindset must include the idea of developing true ministry partners rather than just finding donors to give money.

Technical Support

- XXIX. Linking the accounting system to the TntMPD-Dataserver enables staff to download daily (or at least weekly) gifts from the internet and thank partners in a timely way.

Finances

- XXX. Staff need to know their support goal. Develop a support goal calculator.
- XXXI. Staff need to know their own personal financial needs and should implement and follow a personal budget, which should include spending, giving and saving.
- XXXII. If financial help from central funds needs to be considered, they should only be used in connection with a clear support goal and well-defined activities that replace these central funds with regular personal support within a limited time frame (recommended 3 months, maximum 12 months).