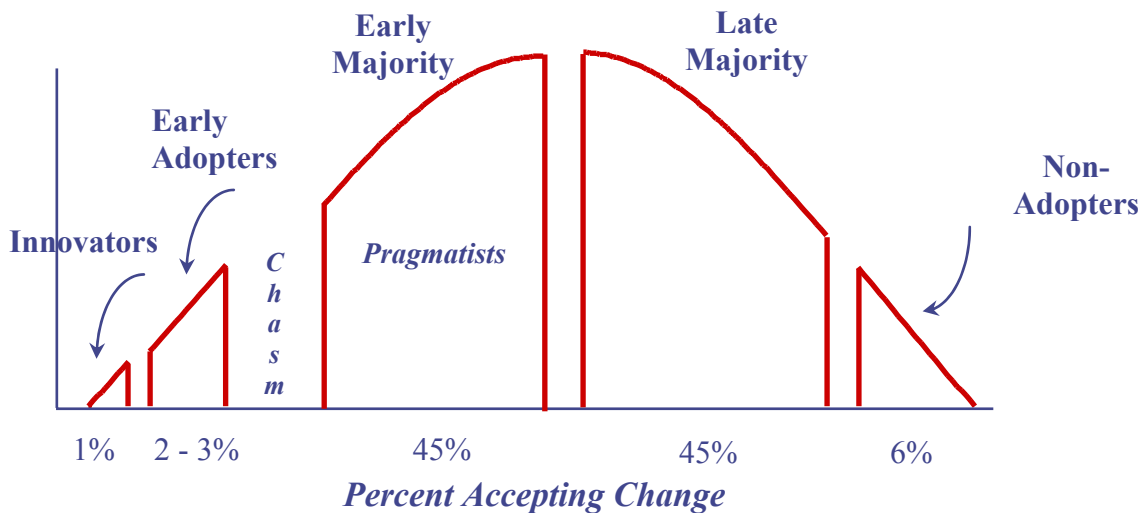


THE TRANSITION FROM LEADING TO DEVELOPING LEADERS A CHANGE OF MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY

What is Your Change Tolerance? What is Your Church's Change Tolerance? (If not the Same, Anticipate Discussions!)

In 1991 an insightful approach to assessing change tolerance within a specific population was introduced*. Perhaps you are familiar with the model that defines: Innovators – Early Adopters – Early Majority – Late Majority – Laggards (non-adopters). The graphic below represents the typical distribution of these population segments.



* Crossing the Chasm, Geoffrey Moore, 1991.

It is important to understand that the segment to which you most closely identify is NOT an evaluative measure, but a descriptive one. This model does not intend to suggest that one group is somehow 'better' than another. The segment to which you belong simply demonstrates how you are 'hard wired'. Each segment brings value to the entire change-continuum (with the possible exception of the Non-Adopters).

Segment Definitions:

Innovators – Innovators enjoy change. Innovators like to experiment with new initiatives to explore their potential. At root they are intrigued with any new thing and are frequently the first to 'step out in faith' simply for the pleasure of exploring the possibilities. Endorsement by innovators is critical to assure Early Adopters that the new idea 'really does work'.

Early Adopters – Typically not the 'first kid on the block' to try something completely new, Early Adopters are able to imagine, understand, and appreciate the benefits of a new program, and can relate these potential benefits to their own context. They do not depend on well established references before making a decision. Early Adopters are looking for the context benefit the new program or new idea brings. Early Adopters envision how innovative change will look and be implemented in their own church context. Support from Early Adopters is essential to the next segment. Without their support, the Early Majority will never seriously consider a change.

Early Majority (Pragmatists) – Driven by a strong sense of the practical, the Early Majority want to see established references, e.g. Early Adopters, before investing their time and resources in new programs. Initiatives need to be in fairly finished form – “It’s not my job to do the developers work for them”, an Early Majority person might be heard to say. They are looking for a finished product.

The Pragmatist may not give much credence to the Innovator, thinking that those in this segment are too extreme in their thinking, way too change-tolerant for the Pragmatist to even consider their input. Innovators often ‘speak another language’ that Pragmatists can not relate to. Early Majority ministers/churches represent the *critical mass needed to move new ideas into the churches, associations and denominations on a larger scale.*

Late Majority – Pastors and congregations in this segment are typically comfortable with new programs, but only adopt the idea once the program is well established. They wait for standards to develop. They look for strong support and want a relationship with well established organizations that have good reputations. Reputation is key to those in the Late Majority!

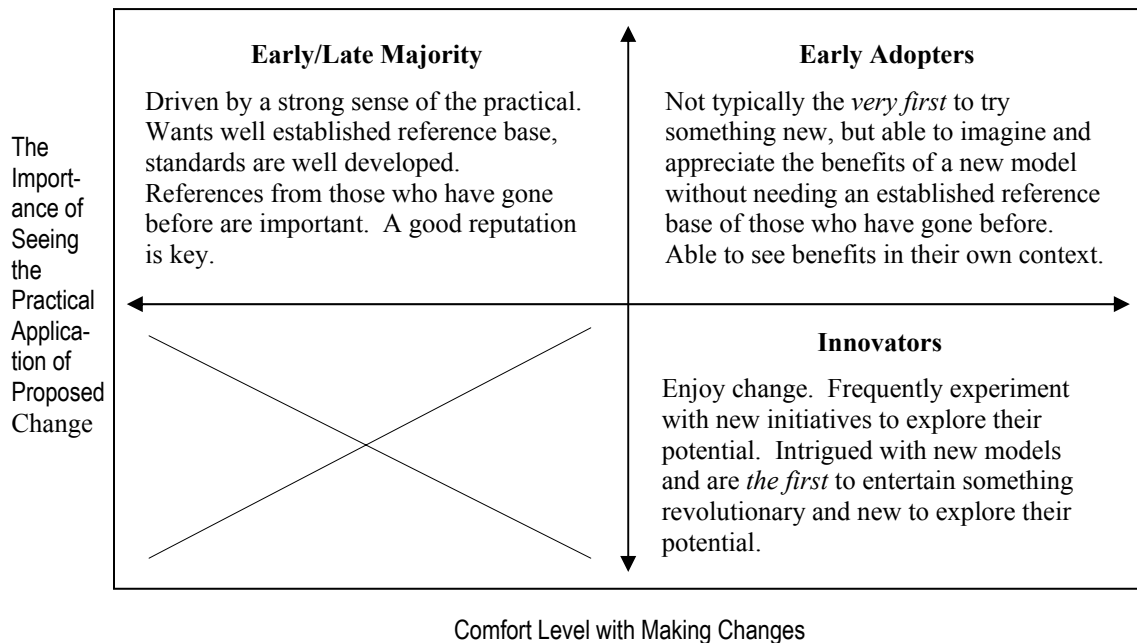
Without the demands of the Early and Late Majority, new initiatives would never receive the fine tuning and polish needed to make them reproducible on a large scale. The Majority segments drive the new model to a more professional level.

Non-Adopters – Non-Adopters only accept a new approach when it is buried deep inside another program with which they are already familiar. In this case the new model is transparent to the Non-Adopter and at best, will appear as a simple enhancement to an existing program.

The Chasm – Culture changes within the church may sometimes be *evolutionary* and sometimes *revolutionary*. An evolutionary change (like adding teflon to a frying pan) is easier for pastors and churches to accept than revolutionary change (like changing from a traditional convection oven to a micro-wave oven, which represented an entirely new way of cooking).

The Leadership Center initiative with its focus on leadership development, represents a revolutionary change for most churches, thus it is expected to have a slower acceptance rate than a more easily accepted evolutionary change to an existing program. And therein lays the CHASM as pastors, boards and congregations struggle with adopting innovative new philosophies of ministry. The traditional role of *leading* versus focusing on *developing leaders* may represent a chasm crossing for many churches.

How Open to Change Are You?



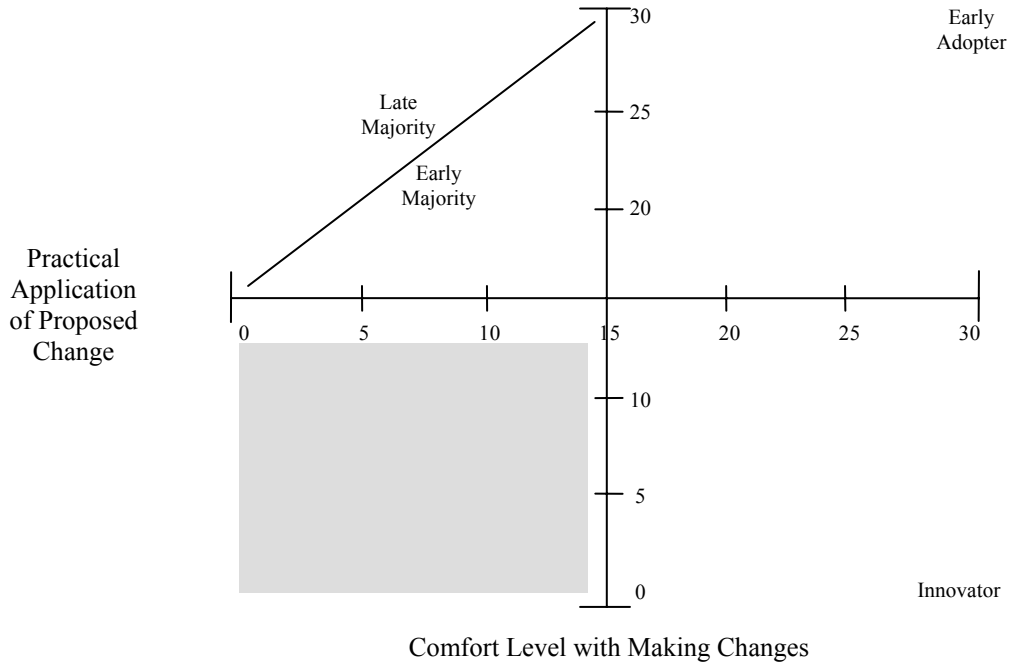
Assessment

The following Leadership Development Assessment* tool may be useful in helping you to identify how open to innovative change you, your church board and your congregation may be. Circle the number that reflects *your* openness to change and your sense of *your church's* level of openness to consider the Practical Application of Proposed Changes and their Comfort Level with Making Changes. Keep in mind that you, your governing board, and your congregation may all score differently, which would no doubt lead to lively discussions.

* This tool is loosely based on the model presented in Crossing the Chasm, Geoffrey Moore, 1991.

Importance of Seeing a Practical Application for the Change:	Disagree -----	Agree
1. Without seeing a practical application for a new method or model of ministry, there is not much point in investigating it.	1 2 3 4 5	
2. I may be open to evaluating a new program, but I prefer to discuss the pro's and con's with peers before investing much time or energy.	1 2 3 4 5	
3. My radar is always up, looking for ideas to enhance my ministry, but I would likely want to speak with knowledgeable pastors and/or lay leaders before I would seriously consider implementation in my church.	1 2 3 4 5	
4. New models stimulate my thinking toward new applications in my own context, so at the very least I am open to reading about new ministry approaches being tried elsewhere.	1 2 3 4 5	
5. It is personally challenging and stimulating to investigate new concepts in ministry, even when there is little information on practical application.	1 2 3 4 5	
6. A well documented program is of little concern. Just throw ideas at me and I'll figure out whether there is an application in my church.	1 2 3 4 5	
Grand Total Score	_____	

Comfort Level with Making Changes (change tolerance):	Disagree -----	Agree
1. I enjoy experimenting with new ministry initiatives (even when they have significant budgetary impact) and typically do not seek much peer input before implementing them.	1 2 3 4 5	
2. It is not critical to me to see a practical application within my own context before investing my time in seriously researching a new idea.	1 2 3 4 5	
3. I typically do not ask for references before I implement a new initiative that has significant budgetary impact.	1 2 3 4 5	
4. There have been programs that I have implemented in my church that were incomplete in their development – still 'under construction' – yet I did not hesitate to implement them if I saw a potential benefit.	1 2 3 4 5	
5. When looking for new programs I pay special attention and practice caution if there is not a clear integration path with existing ministries.	1 2 3 4 5	
6. Even if outcomes are not perfectly articulated by the author, nor specified in the program material, if I sense a <i>significant potential</i> in the new program, I am likely to implement it in my church.	1 2 3 4 5	
Grand Total Score	_____	



Create a hash-mark on each axis reflecting your score then, using lines at right angles to each other, draw a horizontal and vertical line to intersection. This will identify the quadrant into which you and/or your church falls with respect to change tolerance, e.g. openness to a change in approach toward ministry with a greater focus on leadership development.

Review the quadrant definitions to see where you might best invest your time and attention to address your church culture with respect to it's openness to considering change.

COMMENT: By definition, the *majority* will likely be where your greatest challenge will lie if you want to apply an innovative new ministry approach in your church. HOWEVER, (and this is important – it has proven to be true time and again) by definition, the Innovators and Early Adopters in your congregation should be the first people you approach with the Leadership Center Training Model, as they will be the most receptive, and by definition, will also be influential. The Early and Late Majority will count on the input from these more change-tolerant groups to feel comfortable that placing greater emphasis on leadership development is practical, achievable, beneficial, and worth the investment in time and resources.