

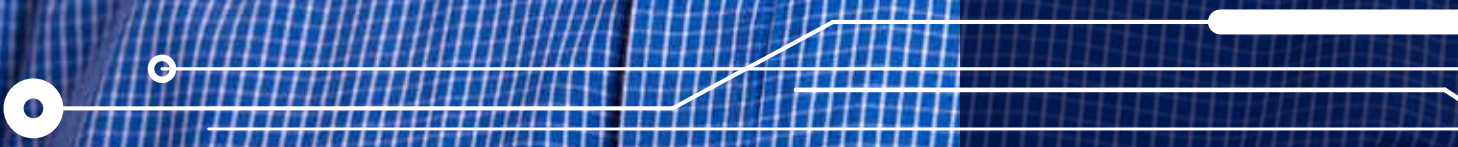
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FORWARD THINKING

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Game On, 2020!

Did you know you can train your brain to be a forward thinker? Our TMC 2020 Keynote Speaker shares three intentional strategies you can easily implement to improve the quality of your thinking.



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Editor's Note: For submitting articles, artwork or comments about this publication, please contact: Patti Malott at 832.478.5131 | patti@churchco-op.org

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From the Director

I love the story of an elderly man who went to the park every day and sat on the end of a bench where he read the daily newspaper. One day a young man in a suit came and sat on the other end of the bench. The young man looked at the elderly man and said, "Sir, could you tell me what time it is?" Nothing. So, the young man asked again, "Sir, could you please tell me what time it is?" No response. With urgency, the young man spoke up again and said, "Sir, is there a reason why you won't tell me the time?"

The elderly man put the paper down and responded, "I could tell you the time, but if I did, then we would strike up a conversation. We would end up liking each other, and I would want to invite you to our home. We would become friends. Then, you would meet my daughter and end up liking her so much, you would start dating and end up getting married. And, I'll be darned if I will let my daughter marry someone who doesn't have a watch."

Now that is forward thinking! The elderly man was looking far ahead to see how his actions today could affect his future. Whether in our personal lives or in business, forward thinking can benefit us, those around us, and our organizations.

This issue is filled with articles built around Forward Thinking. We have also included a thank you to our 2020 Texas Ministry ConferenceSM sponsors, recognition of the many TMC door prizes and recipients, photos taken throughout the day, and fantastic testimonies from TMC attendees and CO+OP members.

Don't miss reading about our newest approved CO+OP vendor, High Access Solutions, on page 38. High Access Solutions provides the tools and expertise you need to facilitate the safe installation and maintenance of lighting, windows, signs, seasonal decorations, fire safety systems and other hard-to-reach spaces in your facility.

Grab your favorite cup of coffee, find a quiet place to relax, enjoy catching up on the 2020 Texas Ministry ConferenceSM, and learn how forward thinking can benefit you!

Together We...Forward Think,

Patti Malott
Executive Director



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- Providing educational opportunities at a reduced rate through our annual Texas Ministry ConferenceSM using relevant national and local speakers
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Learn more about the CO+OP at churchco-op.org or call **832.478.5131**.



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The purpose of the Texas Ministry ConferenceSM is to provide tools and resources for those who serve in churches, schools and nonprofit organizations. This includes both people in leadership who drive the vision and those who support them such as employees; committee, lay, council, and session members; elders and volunteers.

We do this at our annual conference by offering affordable training, educational workshops, quality vendors and sponsors, networking, fellowship and encouragement.

The Texas Ministry ConferenceSM is held the third Thursday of each February.

Learn more about how you can benefit from attending this conference at TexasMinistryConference.org or by calling **832.478.5131**.



cleansweep

by Elena Gonzalez

This Too Shall Pass: Preparing Your Space for the Return of Your Congregation

The global health crisis of COVID-19 has brought attention sharply to matters of cleaning and facilities maintenance. Churches have always been communities to their congregants, serving as gathering places not just for worship, but also for connecting with one another. Now more than ever, deep cleaning and decontamination are critical for churches looking to welcome back their staff and guests.

Protecting those most at risk

COVID-19 has spread exponentially throughout the United States. A respiratory virus that spreads by human contact, it is spread from person to person when human contact transfers tiny droplets that invade the respiratory system. It can also live on some surfaces for days, so even if you are not in personal contact with others, it's possible to get infected by touching surfaces an infected person has touched.

The virus has proved significantly more fatal to elderly populations—up to 10 times more so for patients 80 or older. With a 2018 Gallup poll finding 68% of churchgoers were born in 1945 or earlier, this is a significant concern for places of worship. Communities must also be mindful of anyone of any age with a compromised immune system or chronic disease such as diabetes, who are more likely to get sick and experience complications.

Serving our community one space at a time

Ambassador Services has been serving local markets in the greater Houston area for more than 12 years, along with business throughout the South and Northeast regions of the US. Although COVID-19 presents unique constraints and complexities, we are ready to serve our community.

While we offer comprehensive facilities and ground maintenance services, we are also one of a select few facilities maintenance providers to offer pandemic disinfecting certification for all our crew members. This special certification from the Cleaning Management Institute enables us to disinfect and sanitize surfaces and help slow and prevent the spread of viruses and germs.

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Now more than ever, deep cleaning and decontamination are critical for churches looking to welcome back their staff and guests.

Serving you so you can serve others

Our professional, resourceful associates are trained to be proactive in their service while ensuring proper safety guidelines are always followed. We have strong relationships with church communities as a facilities maintenance provider, and we are here for you during this time of unprecedented social distancing. Ambassador understands that your church or ministry is so much more than a building or space—it's a way for people to connect to each other and to a higher power.

Whether you are preparing for live-streaming or reopening your doors, Ambassador Services can restore your peace of mind with our specialized decontamination and sanitization services. We use these same cleaning processes at our facilities to ensure a safe environment for our own employees. Nothing is more important to us than your safety and well-being.

Our hope is that by the time you read this article, your organization or place of worship will be back to gathering together and serving others. We, at Ambassador, are grateful for the opportunity to make sure your facilities are clean and germ-free. Serving you, and our communities at large, is at the heart of everything we do. +

Elena Gonzalez



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morepowertoyou

By John Blunt

The concept of planning for the future or “forward thinking” has been around a long time. Since the beginning of humanity, we have valued solid planning and preparation. In history, we have seen this evident in the physical architecture and development of great empires. When the pyramids were built, the Egyptians had to spend a lot of time envisioning the final result, then working on the practical steps to get there. The pyramids were such an impressive feat that one is still showcased on our dollar bill today.

We have also seen evidence of forward thinking in medicine. There is always someone at the forefront trying to find better, more efficient ways to treat patients. An example of this was the invention of laparoscopic surgery. The benefits have been overwhelming, offering less chance of infection, faster recovery time and smaller scars.

We also see forward thinking in action when working with the government. An example of this is in wildlife conservation. Proponents to save endangered species realized they needed the public on their side to spur politicians to act. Once the grassroots support was established and organizations began their campaigns, then began the long process of creating legislation to satisfy all parties. This kind of forward thinking required a long term vision, but will hopefully yield extraordinary results.

The concept of forward thinking requires considerable time to generate actionable solutions. The problem is we don't live in a world that values spending time thinking. Because of the speed of technology and the connections of social media, we live in a world where everyone wants everything now. The satisfaction of instant access to information has superseded the importance of planning.

Our society's fascination with instant access is also our albatross. Consider travel planning. It used to require a lot of time. We would hire an agent and discuss all our preferences for the trip before anything was booked. They would work to get us the best deals. Now we make immediate arrangements by phone. We can buy a plane ticket on the same day we plan to fly and book the room hours before we arrive. But with the ability to spontaneously buy, there is a consequence. We will pay a premium for that last minute flight and that spur of the moment hotel. With a little forward thinking, we could have taken the same flight and stayed in the same hotel at a significantly lower rate.

This translates to other industries such as energy. We live in a day and age when many people don't think about energy use until their rates are high. They decide to take care of it themselves, driven by urgency to find something simple and cheap. There are many websites that pander to this sense of urgency with “easy sign ups”. The problem is just like the travel example. Without advance planning, these folks will pay a premium for an immediate solution.

Just as a travel agent knows the ins and outs of the trip planning industry, TES Energy Services, LP (TES) knows the ins and outs of the energy planning industry. That is why TES created a unique electricity price structure called a “TES Power Buy”. We have been offering “Under Market” low cost electricity rates to our clients for a long time using this advance purchasing best practice. The process is based on the wholesale buy of electricity with the aggregated buying pool power of many of our clients, including churches, schools and nonprofits.

Because of our “TES Power Buy,” we have been able to offer record low pricing to thousands of customers. Our most recent “Power Buy” offers a great opportunity

We live in a day and age when many people don't think about energy use until their rates are high.

to our current and potential customers. By using forward thinking about the market and potential changes, TES has completed a special buy of electricity out until 2030. The best of two events occurred to make this happen: A special rate offered for power and a group electricity purchase well in advance of contract end dates. This may be the lowest pricing we have ever contracted!

There are a lot of things in this world to do spontaneously, but buying electricity is not one of them. As the electricity market is volatile, please consider TES and our process. We believe that implementing forward thinking with our "TES Power Buy" will be the model for buying electricity in the future.

We would love the opportunity to help you to capture savings for your next electricity contract. ✦



John Blunt

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John has over 10 years of experience in electricity procurement and highly-developed relationships within the retail electric provider community. He is skilled at finding the lowest cost by offering the best strategy for each ministry customer.



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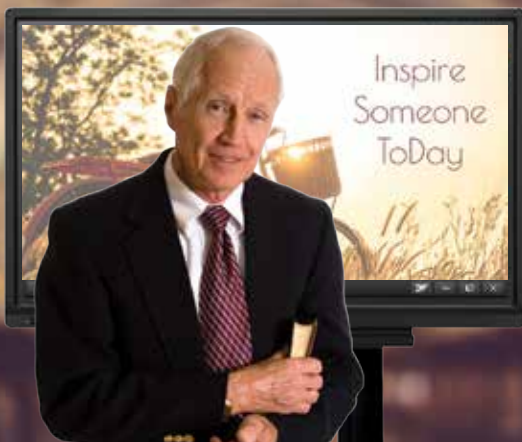
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by Gary Benson & Paula Burns

The Church Is Not Backward, But Forward

It is as inevitable as the passing of time—change!

Most of us who grew up in church remember the singing of hymns—“Turn to page 95 and we’ll sing the first and last verses.”—oh, the memories of those days!

Many churches don’t use hymnals any longer, and the existence of songs with four to five verses is a thing of the past, so what will the next 10 years look like? The next 20? What major challenges should we anticipate? How will they impact the way we do ministry? How will we best protect ourselves in the future by what we do today?

These questions matter, not only to help us anticipate and aptly handle change, but also to help us more effectively reach our world for Christ. Clearly, we must force ourselves to look forward at the ever-changing landscape of risks and not settle for what we’ve done in the past as satisfactory and sufficient. We cannot be reactionary, but rather proactive in preventing risks and protecting ministry. We must prepare for the unexpected (can you say coronavirus) and look ahead to realize the true ramifications if proper precautions are not taken.

Here are a few of today’s concerns which could impact your church moving forward:

- **You should have an effective, written and updated Sexual Abuse Prevention Plan.**

It may surprise you to learn that the majority of churches fail in this area. Most have some program, but few can tell you its content, where a written copy is located, or the last time it was reviewed or updated. This is the number one reason churches go to court and should garner your full attention and scrutiny.

- **Unlimited access to youth via cell phones is asking for trouble.**

We are not discouraging the use of cellular devices by your youth pastor to communicate with his/her students, but doing so without rules and guidelines is a major oversight. If you don’t have a written policy for staff and volunteers that clearly defines the parameters for texting and other electronic communication with students, you should!

- **Embezzlement is a common occurrence in churches.**

As much as we’d like to believe otherwise, people do steal from the church, typically as a result of a lack of internal control. If you have the same person receiving your funds, making the deposits, and writing the checks without any or much oversight, you’re very much at risk or at the very least, open to criticism and distrust from your members. Review your procedures and consider embezzlement protection.

- **Churches being targeted by hackers is a growing threat.**

Talk about new risks—none could be as challenging and intimidating as the need for cybersecurity. Susceptibility to social media litigation may put a church at risk. Churches should consider investing in cyber liability insurance which can save them money in the long run if they are ever attacked.

- **It’s time to reconsider the use of 15-passenger vans.**

No one likes to talk about this one, but with the National Traffic Safety Administration warning that these are dangerous vehicles, the deck is stacked against you if there is an accident with serious injuries.

I heard it said recently that we should “**Let Our Adversity Be Our University**”. The church that looks ahead and moves forward will be the one that grasps this ever-changing landscape and adapts to it, while maintaining focus on the true mission to which we are called. ✚



Gary Benson and Paula Burns

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The Insurance One team assembled to service CO+OP members is led by experienced agents with close to 100 years of combined experience. The Woodlands (Texas) office is led by agency owners, Gary Benson and Paula Burns.



by Dr. Julie Bell

GAME ON, 2020!

One of the most frequently used sports quotes is from Wayne Gretzky's father, "Skate to where the puck is going to be." It is used to draw you into forward thinking. Before we become forward thinkers, we first need to understand our thinking brain.

Researchers tell us we have approximately 50,000 to 80,000 thoughts per day. Some studies suggest that number is closer to 150,000. With that many thoughts on a daily basis, how do we become forward thinkers?

The simple answer is that we have to make time to think on purpose. Did you know that approximately 80% of your thoughts are repetitive? You have had that thought before. What time do I need to be at the meeting? What should I wear today? What's for dinner? Without conscious effort at thinking on purpose, our brain defaults to habits.

You may have experienced this on your drive home from work. You put the dry cleaning in the front seat so you would be reminded to stop by the cleaners on the way home. However, your brain went on auto pilot, and as you pulled into the driveway, you remembered you were supposed to stop by the cleaners.

When faced with bigger decisions, we can find ourselves making emotionally-based decisions instead of thoughtful, value-based decisions when we are not forward thinking. I have had a long-term coaching relationship with a client, and we have shared a lot of life together. When her daughter was in 1st grade, we talked about a tradition in her community for after prom parties to be held at a nearby ranch or lake house and kids spend the night. She made a forward thinking, value-based decision that there would be no boy/girl sleepovers. Fast forward 10 years and her now-junior in high school wants to go to a prom after party. She knew this day would come and said "yes" to the party but "no" to spending the night. She even offered to get a hotel room near the party where her daughter could stay the night and go back in the morning. Her daughter pressed with all the reasons it was safe to stay at the ranch until my client said, "Sweet girl, this is not an emotional decision for me. We made this decision 10 years ago so it wouldn't be hard in the moment."

Scripture encourages forward thinking. Repentance is all about forward thinking. We are commanded to turn from sin (what is behind us) and turn to a new creation in Christ (what is in front of us). Unfortunately, many believers repent by asking for forgiveness without turning. It is like keeping your mind on the sin while backing away. In the New Testament, metanoia is a key term for repentance meaning "a change of mind."

Three Strategies to Becoming a Forward Thinker:

1. Triggers, Cues and Reminders
2. Turn "What If" Into "If Then"
3. Leadership Thinking Time

Triggers, Cues and Reminders

In sports, we use triggers, cues and reminders to be intentional in our thinking. A golfer tugs on his pant leg before starting his pre-shot routine to remember to think about the shot he wants to create rather than what not to do. A basketball player snaps a rubber band on his wrist every time he turns to defense to remember to have intensity. Triggers, cues and reminders help you remember to think in a way that was planned ahead of

time. In the book of Numbers, the Lord tells Moses to have the Israelites put tassels on their clothes to remember they are set apart. When one sees the tassel, he is to think on purpose. Forward thinking.

The best triggers, cues and reminders are something naturally occurring like seeing your reflection, pushing start on the coffee pot, or the sound of a car door closing. Pair this natural occurrence with a specific thought or thinking strategy. For example, "When I hear a car door, I will think of myself as a leader."

Turn "What If" Into "If Then"

"What if" thinking is often tied to worry. What if we only have three people in Sunday School? What if we don't hit our budget? What if this meeting is confrontational? As a forward thinker, you turn your "what if" statements into "if then" statements. If only three people show up for Sunday School, I will honor the people who show up. I will teach with the same enthusiasm as I teach when we have 25 people. If three people show up for Sunday School, I will adjust my lesson to make it more discussion-based. If we do not make the budget, then we will make a 5% cut to all program expenses. "If then" statements allow you to think ahead rather than make emotional decisions in the moment.

Leadership Thinking Time

When coaching leaders, we recommend setting aside Leadership Thinking Time (LTT). This can be a short amount of time a few days a week or a longer period of time. Each leader chooses an amount of time that works. This time goes on the calendar as flexible, but not negotiable. It can be moved, just not deleted. Leadership Thinking Time is less about a to-do list and more about a blank sheet of paper and time to think. What comes to mind about people, projects and possibilities?

Forward thinking requires practice. Start small by turning your "what ifs" into "if then" statements. Set aside time for leadership thinking time today. Determine specific thoughts or patterns of thinking that keep you thinking forward. Pair with a trigger, cue or reminder. Where is your puck going to be? How will you skate to that moment? ✨

Julie Bell, PhD



Julie Bell, PhD is the President and Founder of The Mind of a Champion. Her team coaches individuals, teams and organizations to be their best through Keynotes, Workshops, Team and Individual Coaching. As a forward thinker, Dr. Julie and her team created virtual offerings before there was high demand. Find out all the ways you can be a champion at TheMindofaChampion.com.

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FOCUSING FORWARD

by Chris Todd

Perhaps more than any other time in history, our lives are busy. We are consumed daily by endless information and data. For example, in 2019, users watched in excess of 4,300,000 videos every minute on YouTube. There are more than 470,000 tweets every minute on Twitter. People post over 69,000 times per minute on Instagram and conduct over 3.5 billion searches a minute on Google. All that traffic is generated by 4.4 billion internet-connected users. It is said that 90% of the world's recorded information was generated in the last two years. Somewhere around 2.5 quintillion bytes of data are produced every day. With this much information created per second, it's only natural that we can feel overwhelmed. At every turn, we face more things we have to process. How could we possibly be thinking about the future when there is so much coming at us right now?

It's easy for us to gravitate to the urgent and forget about the important, mainly because the important is often harder and requires more mental energy. This is especially true in the area of forward thinking. Forward thinking takes attention to detail. It takes time, quiet and deliberate action. So, how do we look to the future from the information storm of today? Here are seven things that help me look to the future and execute my plans.

1) Create Margin

With so much information bombarding us daily, conversations, to-do lists and fires are everywhere. The truth is that all of these things are obstacles to forward thinking. Take a moment to look at your calendar right now and schedule an appointment for nothing but "think time." If you are like me, that feels like a real waste of time—I mean, I have things to do! The truth is that "think time" will yield exponential dividends, if you genuinely take time to ignore the noise, think and pray about what God is doing and wants to do in your life. If you make a point to build margin in your life, you will be amazed at what God begins to reveal to you during your unhurried time.

2) Determine a Vision for the Future

The Bible says without vision, the people perish, yet so often we try to go through life without direction. Leading a team, church, school, or just yourself without a vision for the future is a dangerous thing. Without vision, you're susceptible to the tyranny of the urgent. It's impossible to focus on what really matters, so you simply focus on the immediate. Those you lead need to know where they're headed. Without vision, you can't direct them. You can't even drive yourself. You can't be forward thinking because it's impossible to look to the future when you don't know where you're going.

3) Set Common Goals

Once you have a shared vision, it's time to create common goals. These allow us to move in a consistent direction and focus on the same things. For example, It's not enough to say we're all going to Austin. How are we getting to Austin? Are we taking a plane, a car or maybe the new Vonlane service? Are we going via 290, I-10 or backroads through LaGrange? Common goals ensure everyone is moving to the same place in the same way.

Being forward thinking is not just about ideas. It's also about giving your team, and yourself, tools to accomplish your vision. A goal has to be something that inspires you, something that motivates you to achieve more than would be possible otherwise. With common goals, your team will rally together, focus together, and look to the future. You will find that common goals allow you and your team to cast aside the unimportant and look further into the future.

4) Build a Plan

This is the step many folks focus on when they think about forward thinking—just build a plan and execute it. The truth is, you can do that. But, without the other steps, it's like building a house on sand. There is no foundation and nothing to hold firm when the urgent of the day attempts to distract you. After all, there are those 470,000 new tweets every minute filled with ideas, calls to action and admonishments—all of which are trying to pull you off mission. Here are four ways I execute my plan in the hustle of daily life.

• Solidify your spiritual walk

The things you spend your time on today will affect your eternity. Are you connected to God in a direct and meaningful way? Are you taking time for God to speak into your life? This one step, more than any other, is the key to forward thinking. More importantly, it's the key to living a full and meaningful life. If you stay connected personally and intimately with God, he will reveal your direction, next steps and path as you look to the future.

• Pay attention to your finances

We live in an instant gratification world, a world that expects to “get it now.” My experience is that the most lasting and meaningful things take planning, preparation and patience. If you are going to execute your plan successfully, you must ask yourself:

- How will my vision impact my finances? Can I afford this now?
- What do I need to change or keep doing to sustain this in the future?
- Is it wise to do this now, or should I prepare fiscally first?

• Be aware of your physical and emotional health

I tend to be a power-through-it kind of guy. What’s a little 103 fever or a few days without sleep? I’m sad to say that it’s taken me almost 50 years to realize that powering-through-it is just a myth. Sooner or later, your body gets what’s coming to it. So, if you can’t power-through-it, what can you do? I’ve learned that if I take a few specific actions, I feel better, my mind is more precise, and the folks I work with like me better:

Eat right – Take it from me (a partially reformed, no vegetable eating, sugar-a-holic)—eating right and putting proper fuel into your body is the number one thing you can do to feel better. And feeling better means you will be better.

Exercise regularly – Even if it’s just a brisk walk, you will be amazed at the physical and emotional benefits of regular and systematic activity.

Sleep well – It’s incredible how much clearer your mind is after a good night’s rest. It’s easier to solve problems after a good night’s sleep, not to mention the incredible health benefits. If you want proof, Google “health risks from lack of sleep.”

Pay attention to your emotional health – Emotional health is often ignored and hidden. The stigma of mental health is beginning to be broken down, and I continue to

advocate for it. If you have an issue with your heart, you go immediately to the heart doctor without question. Unfortunately, when folks struggle with their mental health (the brain—the most complex object in the known universe), we often ignore the problem. The bottom line is, don’t be afraid to share your emotional state—it doesn’t make you weak. God gives us emotion for a reason, and it’s a good thing. Pay attention to your emotional health. If you need help, ask for help.

• Master your task list

As a great friend and colleague of mine likes to say, “You have to tell your time where to go.” It’s not enough to just want to look to the future—you must have a plan. My plan takes the form of wrangling my task list. This is how I can make sure I’m moving forward in tangible ways—both macro (big) and micro (small). I take a few minutes each morning to determine what the non-negotiables for the day will be. I do this before I get to the office, so my day doesn’t get hijacked before I even start. Having a clear plan helps me say yes to the right things. Additionally, about once a month, I take time to evaluate the macro picture and the bigger goals. I find that rising above the daily tasks helps me make sure I’m still on target and executing towards my goal.

5) Evaluate Progress

Sometimes in the ministry world, metrics (measurements) are seen as unnecessary, but the truth is that metrics are how we know whether we’re reaching our goals or not—whether we’re advancing the ship or drifting backward. Without metrics, we can tend to think we’re doing great without real proof. Or, if you’re a glass-half-empty kind of person, you may think you are doing worse than reality. Metrics squelch the noise and provide an objective view of whether we are moving forward. When considering which metrics to track, ask if they are significant, accurately trackable, directly tied to the goal, and comparable to other or historical metrics.



Once your metrics are in place, schedule a regular time to review them and assess your progress. Finally, consider whether your metric is micro or macro in nature. If your metric is macro (big picture) allow more time between reviews. Reviewing macro metrics at short intervals can lead to inaccurate conclusions.

6) Allow for “Forward Failure”

Being forward thinking is innately risky. After all, you’re looking into the future, one you cannot control. To really be forward thinking, you have to be willing to risk failure. Too often, we are afraid to fail personally. And as leaders, we’re afraid to allow our team to fail. It’s an interesting conundrum—practically every highly successful person you talk to will tell you failure was a massive part of their success. For example:

- Steve Jobs famously lost Apple (for a while) due to his failures.
- Walt Disney was fired from the Kansas City Star because he “lacked imagination”.
- Ty Cobb, the greatest baseball hitter of all time, hit just 36.6 out of every 100 pitches he saw.

So, the key isn’t lack of failure, but rather what to do when you do fail. As a leader, we have to let our team and ourselves “fail forward”. Failing forward is the notion of learning from your failures and moving forward. As a child, I spent a lot of time with my grandfather, a period that I now know was pivotal in my personal growth. He instilled in me from a young age the importance of being a forever learner. Failure is just an opportunity to learn. When you fail, do these four things to fail forward:

- 1) Evaluate the past and learn from your mistakes.
- 2) Imagine a new reality and how it could be better. Ask yourself, “What if...”
- 3) Be optimistic. Nothing kills a goal like negativity.
- 4) Try again.

7) Celebrate

So, now you’ve created margin in your life, determined your vision, established goals, built a plan, executed the plan, evaluated the progress, and allowed for failure. What’s next? It’s time to celebrate! As a type who loves change, I tend to skip the celebration. I’ve had to learn to stop and celebrate the win. Celebration is a time to reflect on what God is doing in and through you and your team.

Celebration is easy when your outcome is as expected, but it’s most vital when it’s not. Before I go further, don’t confuse the concept of celebration with not being realistic about your outcome. If something didn’t go well, you need to be real about it—action has to be taken. But while you are addressing reality, you can still celebrate. There is always a bright side to every situation, if you’re willing to look and be honest. I’ve found that if I’m ready to be vulnerable, it’s in these situations that God is trying to teach me the most important lessons. It’s when I’ve given it my all but missed “my” target that God does his best work in me. It’s in these celebrations that God often reveals my next forward thinking idea. After all, isn’t that precisely what the Bible says? “The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.” - Proverbs 16:9. Now that you’ve celebrated, go back to step one and start your next forward thinking adventure! ✦

Chris Todd



Chris Todd has served on staff at Champion Forest Baptist Church since 2001 and is the current Executive Pastor of Finance & Administration and COO. He leads the Administrative Global Support Team, which is responsible for Finance, HR, Communications, Data Services and Facilities. During his time at CFBC, the church has grown from one campus to four, with over 8,000 in weekly attendance. Chris also serves as a publicly elected trustee for the Klein Independent School District and on the CO+OP Board of Directors. Chris is married to his best friend, Katie, and they have two children, daughter Madison and son Joshua. They feel genuinely humbled to serve God through the local church and community.



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Texas Ministry ConferenceSM

2020 Recap

Learning Together
Networking Together
Visiting CO+OP Alley Together



I have attended the TMC for three years now, and of all the continuing education conferences I attend as a CPA, this is my favorite. I work in a faith-based school, not a church, and the TMC is the perfect balance of mission and skills. The presenters are always informative and inspiring. I am impressed with the variety of vendors. They are never pushy, but always friendly and generous in their support of the conference.

Thank you for an awesome day. I came with work burdens and left uplifted, blessed and encouraged.

I felt overwhelmed in my position as Business Manager and have been trying to get things back on track. As the conference approached, I was so busy at work I was on the verge of not attending. I prayed and felt God nudging me to go. Thank heavens I listened, as the day was life-changing! I feel empowered, have a new outlook on my job, and am very grateful for the opportunity to attend.





Best Tweeter of the Day winners

Christian Penalzo
Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)
\$75 DoorDash Gift Card

Merissa Cabrera
Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)
\$50 DoorDash Gift Card



From the street to the seat, the TMC/CO+OP volunteers were great. There was never a dull moment. I was excited to speak to vendors and gain knowledge of resources. I am head of the welcome ministry at my church and will definitely see if I can bring them to the next conference.





As a pastor's wife, I have always felt the need to prove my worth within the church, causing me to overwork and overcompensate to increase my value. Today has been enlightening and refreshing. I feel refueled and encouraged to make positive changes.

We have been participating since the conference began and our entire staff goes every year. We have never attended that we didn't leave with immediate ideas we could implement to streamline systems or save resources.



I'm both a CO+OP member and a TMC attendee, and my experience at TMC was amazing. I can't wait to go back to my church and implement what I learned on my financial reports. I'm excited to be part of a great organization like the CO+OP.

I have been attending the TMC for over 10 years and it gets better each year. I love networking with others in the same field of ministry. It is a great way to see there are others out there experiencing the same things you are.



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Congratulations to our 2020 Promotional Prize Winners!

Winner	Category	Prize	Given By
Beth Waguespack - Duchesne Academy (Houston, TX)	Best Testimonial	\$50 DoorDash Gift Card	CO+OP
Bonnie Shows - John Wesley United Methodist Church (Houston, TX)	Overall Conference Evaluation	\$100 Cheesecake Factory Gift Card	CO+OP
Christian Penalosa - Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)	Best Tweeter	\$75 DoorDash Gift Card	CO+OP
Cindy Jaramillo - Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)	Exhibitor Game	\$100 Bill	BEMA Information Technologies, LLC
Donna Viramontes - St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church (Houston, TX)	Best Testimonial	\$50 DoorDash Gift Card	CO+OP
Dot Huntsman - Graceview Baptist Church (Tomball, TX)	Person Bringing Most First Time Attendees	Free Admission to 2021 TMC, Office Depot TUL Kit, and Custom Texas Box by John Malott	CO+OP
Faithbridge Church (Spring, TX)	Organization Bringing Most Attendees	10% Off 2020 TMC Registrations and \$200 Nothing Bundt Cakes Gift Card	CO+OP
		Free Training for 5 Staff Members and Medical Kit	Guard The Flock
Jessica Legan - Grace Crossing Church (Conroe, TX)	Overall Conference Evaluation	\$100 Visa Gift Card	CO+OP
Kevin Haley - Bellevue Baptist Church (Cordova, TN)	Person Traveling the Farthest	Office Depot TUL Kit and \$50 Starbucks Gift Card	CO+OP
Kristina Warner - St. James Baptist Church (Houston, TX)	Early Bird Drawing	Free Admission to 2021 TMC	CO+OP
		Custom Texas Box by John Malott	Shield Bearer
Lorrie Castle - St. Philip Presbyterian Church (Houston, TX)	Workshop Evaluation	\$100 Bill	The Church Network
	Best Testimonial	\$50 DoorDash Gift Card	CO+OP
Martie Belt - Northwest District Office (Tyler, TX)	Workshop Evaluation	\$100 Bill	The Church Network
Merissa Cabrera - Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)	Best Tweeter	\$50 DoorDash Gift Card	CO+OP
Neighborhood Kidz Club (Houston, TX)	Organization Attending for the First Time	\$200 Nothing Bundt Cakes Gift Card	GoodBooks
		\$2,500 Advertising Certificate	Salem Media/KKHT
Nelda Griffin - Volunteer (Houston, TX)	Conference Volunteers	\$50 Starbucks Gift Card	CO+OP
Ruth Smith - St. James Baptist Church (Houston, TX)	First 100 Attendees Registered	\$100 Visa Gift Card	CO+OP
		(4) \$50 Coaching Gift Cards	Mayanah Financial Coaching
Sarah Quiroga - St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church (Houston, TX)	Workshop Evaluation	\$100 Bill	The Church Network
Scott T. Lewis - The Pentecostals of West Houston (Houston, TX)	Exhibitor Game	\$100 Bill	BEMA Information Technologies, LLC
Theeann Main - Highland Park Presbyterian Church (Dallas, TX)	Person Attending for the First Time	Free Admission to 2021 TMC plus 1/2 Off Registration for a Friend	CO+OP
Thelma Scruggs - Volunteer (Spring, TX)	Conference Volunteers	Custom Texas Box by John Malott	CO+OP

Congratulations to our 2020 Door Prize Winners!

Winner	Organization	Prize	Given By
Adam Looney	Greenville Oaks Church of Christ (Allen, TX)	(2) YETI Cups	LENSEC
Audrey Sanders	Carverdale Community Fellowship (Houston, TX)	Ring Doorbell	Imperial Utilities and Sustainability, Inc.
Betty Kimbrough	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Parish (Plano, TX)	\$100 Cabela's Gift Card	I-35 Roofing
Brad Dorsey	Lone Star Cowboy Church (Montgomery, TX)	\$50 Best Buy Gift Card	Sharp Business Systems - Houston
Cameron McKenzie	Live Oak Church (Denham Spring, LA)	\$100 Nike Gift Card	Online Giving
Cara Williamson	KSBJ Radio (Humble, TX)	(4) \$25 Restaurant Gift Cards	Integrity Furniture Solutions
Carol Gillespie	Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)	25 Free Custom T-Shirts	Educational Products, Inc. (EPI)
Caroline Crider	Trinity Baptist Church (San Antonio, TX)	(2) \$50 Bloomin' Brands Gift Cards	Health Insurance Solutions, Inc.
Carson Smith	West Conroe Baptist Church (Conroe, TX)	AirPods, Complete Church Software Bundle, Background Check Fee Waived and \$100 Credit, and Free Year of the Church App	Ministry Brands
Chris Rincon	John Wesley United Methodist Church (Houston, TX)	Ring Doorbell and Promotional Products	Beyond
Chris Stanley	West Conroe Baptist Church (Conroe, TX)	Ring Doorbell	TouchPoint Software
Christian Penaloza	Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)	Dyson Vacuum Cleaner	Buckeye Cleaning Centers
Crystal McCartney	Cypress Christian School (Cypress, TX)	\$200 Visa Gift Card	Ridley's Vacuum & Janitorial Supply
Danny Domingo	Love is Ministry (Houston, TX)	American Ninja Warrior Set and \$50 Academy Gift Card	Total Recreation Products (TRP)
Daphne McCoy	Northside Christian Church (Spring, TX)	Wireless Keyboard and Mouse	Ann E. Williams, PC
Deborah Benton	Gloryland Baptist Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Pappas Gift Card	Ratliff & Associates, PC
Don Barnhart	Rosehill Christian School (Tomball, TX)	Altuve Jersey and Astros Gear	Core Benefit Services, Inc.
Donna Rhodes	Cypress Christian School (Cypress, TX)	4-Pack of Folding Chairs	MITY, Inc.
Donna Viramontes	St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church (Houston, TX)	Apple 4K TV	MBS, Inc.
Earl Grant Jr.	Covenant Community Church (San Antonio, TX)	\$100 Amazon Gift Card	Ben E. Keith Co.
Elizabeth Henson	-	\$100 Amazon Gift Card	Zenith Insurance Company
Fidela Tobias	Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)	BOSE Headphones	Sommerville & Associates, PC
Gilbert Hernandez	San Antonio Youth for Christ (San Antonio, TX)	(2) Amazon Fire Sticks	RightNow Media
Ginger Jensen	New Hope Baptist Church (Cedar Hill, TX)	\$100 Visa Gift Card	ServiceMaster
Guadalupe Saiz	St. Luke the Evangelist Catholic Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Pappas Gift Card	APS Building Services
Heidi Fenn	Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)	Gift Basket with \$50 Gift Card	Ambassador Services, LLC
Jackie Collins	The Church of St. John the Divine (Houston, TX)	\$50 Applebee's Gift Card	Sharp Business Systems - Houston
Jeremy Morris	First Baptist Church (College Station, TX)	\$100 Starbucks Gift Card	Goff Companies
Joel Eisenbraun	Trinity Klein Lutheran Church (Spring, TX)	(2) Tickets to Dallas Mavericks vs. Houston Rockets and a Lexus Parking Pass	Pogue Construction
Jon Allen	Trinity Church of the Assemblies of God (Cedar Hill, TX)	Promotional Package and \$50 Starbucks Gift Card	Christianity Today
Jonathan Cofer	West Conroe Baptist Church (Conroe, TX)	Philip Hues Lighting Set	Voss Lighting

Winner	Organization	Prize	Given By
Jorida Vakiari	Lone Star Cowboy Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Visa Gift Card	Professional Janitorial Service (PJS)
Karen Odizor	Glorious Way Church (Houston, TX)	Gift Basket with Gift Cards	Insurance One Agency
Katie Willard	Lakewood United Methodist Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Amazon Gift Card	Studio RED Architects
Linnie Baird	Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)	\$100 Lowe's Gift Card	NACFM
Lisa Wells	Heritage Park Baptist Church (Webster, TX)	Kindle with Case	APS Payroll
Liz Toribio	Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)	(2) Tickets to Houston Rockets vs. Orlando Magic (Lower Bowl Seating)	CFAC Mechanical
Marianne Larson	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Parish (Plano, TX)	Exterior/Interior Office Sign	National Signs
Mark England	Kinsmen Lutheran Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Chick-fil-A Gift Card	Kirksey Architecture
Martha Melchor	Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)	JBL Bluetooth Speaker	Modern System Concepts, Inc.
Meaghan Barton	Woodridge Baptist Church (Kingwood, TX)	\$100 Visa Gift Card	Naomi's Village
Merissa Cabrera	Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)	YETI Cooler	Sherwin-Williams Co.
Michael Lyons	Faith Lutheran Church (Sugarland, TX)	\$100 Visa Gift Card	Payroll Partners
Michaela Fuentas	Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)	40-Inch TV	HH Architects
Michiel deWit	Trinity Church of the Assemblies of God (Cedar Hill, TX)	Coffee Press and 3 Months of Free Coffee	Cool Solutions Group
Natalie Morales	John Wesley United Methodist Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Starbucks Gift Card	Stoller Foundation
Pat Scott	Master's Plan World Outreach (Houston, TX)	K-Cup Brewer	First Choice Coffee Services
Patti Franklin	First Baptist Church of Cypress (Cypress, TX)	Stovetop Nespresso and 4 Bags of Fresh Coffee	Daily Java
Peggy Norwood	Neighborhood Kidz Club (Houston, TX)	MILEE Cooler	AcctTwo
Peter Chou	West Houston Chinese Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Best Buy Gift Card	TES Energy Services, LP
Rebecca Royall	Clay Road Baptist Church (Houston, TX)	Armodilo Sphere Tablet Enclosure	Armodilo
Robin Lesly	Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (Houston, TX)	\$100 Barnes & Noble Gift Card	Daikin Applied
Ross Shelton	Brenham's First Baptist Church School (Brenham, TX)	\$100 Visa Gift Card	Frost Bank
Shirley Thompson	Gloryland Baptist Church (Houston, TX)	Texas Rangers Gift Basket	Air Performance Service, Inc.
Stacey Strickland	Brenham's First Baptist Church School (Brenham, TX)	\$50 AMC Gift Card, Cheesecake Factory Gift Card and Bluetooth Speaker	Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing
Steve Ewing	Westbury United Methodist Church (Houston, TX)	(3) Laser Tape Measures	High Access Solutions
Stewart Martin	Church of the Harvest (Manvel, TX)	Chair, Hydro Flask, Lantern and Backpack	NW Digital Works, LLC
Tammy Machart	New Hope Baptist Church (Cedar Park, TX)	Manufacture and Installation of Fabricated Interior Aluminum Logo with Company Name (\$1,000)	State Sign
Tracey Hooper	First Baptist Church (McKinney, TX)	\$100 Visa Gift Card	ECFA
Will Henry	Boys and Girls Country (Hockley, TX)	Chair and Desk Set	Office Depot Business Solutions Division
Yvonne Howington	Emmaus Catholic Parish (Lakeway, TX)	\$100 Visa Gift Card	Care Providers

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ANTICIPATING THE NEEDS OF YOUR CUSTOMERS



by David Reed

Most of us, if we are honest, would say that we typically wait to get a request from our customers before we take any action. That is what I describe as a reactive customer service model and is what our customer service industry is built upon. We wait for a customer to call one of our call centers asking for help, or we wait to receive an email with a request. Often the feedback we receive is from someone who has had a bad experience and is already an upset customer.

Unless you are in sales and always trying to secure the next purchase, most of us do not reach out to our customers as frequently as we should. The exception may be an occasional customer feedback survey. What is the problem with that model? Our customers' needs change! Unless we are intimately familiar with our customer's business, we would not detect a shift in what

they need from us. This could be a slight change in the design of a product or a major adjustment in how they want to communicate with us.

Those of us who are involved in a local church have seen a lot of changes in the past decade. Some churches have dug their heels in and refused to do anything differently than they have done for the past 50 years. This could be the style of music that is used in worship or the method of communicating with the members of their congregation. I am all for respecting tradition, but there needs to be a balance. These churches are struggling to survive.

Others have been open to the changing needs and preferences of their membership by offering the option to view services online and initiating

text communication. One word of caution: Not everyone is ready to make a change, so we must still serve our customers in their preferred manner whenever possible. Just don't feel you must compromise the values and beliefs at the core of your organization.

So how do you move from a reactive to a proactive model of customer service? The first part of the equation is to create a mechanism that allows you to hear from your customers. This is where an occasional survey may come in handy, as long as you have a process in place to analyze and respond to the feedback. Another way to listen to your customers is to form small focus groups who will agree to meet with you on occasion and give you open, honest feedback. The two keys to any feedback program are: 1) Make it very easy for your customers to provide feedback. They will not take the time to complete a multi-page survey, and 2) You must demonstrate that you heard the feedback and will take action where appropriate.

This does not mean that you must agree with everything your customers say. Sometimes you just thank them for the feedback and store it away for consideration at a later date. When you do receive feedback that makes sense and results in you making a change to your product or service, make sure you close the loop with the customer and let them know that you heard their feedback and have made a change as requested.

Another way to stay on top of your customers' changing needs is to listen to your front-line team members. I often tell the executives I am coaching or training: "Not all great ideas have to come from the executive suite." A great leader understands the importance of listening to those who have regular contact with the end customer. Actively solicit the opinions of every level in your organization. Listen openly without judging what they are saying.

Employees will shut down and stop giving you feedback if you criticize or make fun of what they are saying. Again, that does not mean you have to agree with everything they say, but show them respect by listening and considering their opinions.

One more tool to stay in touch with your customers is to use a customer relationship management (CRM) tool to track your communication. You can then ensure you are reaching out and communicating with each customer based on a defined schedule. Not all customers need the same frequency of contact. For some, once or twice a year may be fine. For others—especially your key customers or those who are likely to influence others—a monthly call would be warranted. No matter what frequency you choose for outbound communication, it is important that you make it easy for your customers to reach out when they need something in between your calls or emails. Is your contact information on all your emails? Can they easily find your main contact phone number on your website?

If you are successful at moving towards a proactive organization that anticipates the needs of your customers, you will be more likely to keep them and enjoy long term success. +

David Reed



David Reed is the President of Customer Centered Consulting Group (www.cccginc.com) which he started over 20 years ago. David is a published author of four customer service books, and his career passion has been to assist organizations in creating a culture of excellent customer service, servant leadership, and effective operations.

He also is the President of Remote Office Consulting (www.RemoteOfficeConsulting.com) which was founded in 2008 to assist organizations in the development of their remote workforce strategy. Previously, David worked for Anderson Consulting, Exxon, and Disney and earned degrees in Computer Science and Chemical Engineering from Texas A&M University.

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COVID-19 Encourages Forward Thinking IT

If you are not thinking forward in IT, you are quickly falling behind. The challenge of COVID-19 has been a clear and bold reminder that thinking ahead has significant financial benefits, especially in the realm of information technology. Utilizing the Cloud, tightening security measures, and adopting remote workforce plans are three key ways your organization can benefit from advanced planning.

Cloud Efficiency

Experts agree the future of IT is moving to the Cloud. Those who transitioned to the Cloud months ago are experiencing efficiencies now as workers perform their duties remotely with ease. Running applications and files from the Cloud saves budget dollars previously spent on onsite equipment.

It is not too late to prepare for what lies ahead. Files, applications and processing are all available via the internet. There will continue to be a need for certain hardware such as firewalls, switches, wireless networks, printers and workstations. An opportune time to move to the Cloud is when existing warranties and contracts expire; however, in the wake of this pandemic, many organizations may find their legacy solutions have hampered them so much, they need to take corrective action sooner.

Security

Scams are at an all-time high. While hardware and software protection has increased dramatically, scams still get through from time to time. Many steps can be taken to make an environment more secure, but few are as important as MFA (Multi-Factor Authentication). MFA is customary and expected when performing banking transactions. When I give to churches, I receive a six-digit code via text to verify my identity before sending funds electronically.

Organizations that move to the Cloud gain the flexibility to work almost anywhere in the world. This agility needs to go hand in hand with authentication measures to ensure the person accessing your data from a coffee shop, or even another country, is indeed who they say they are. MFA is one of the easiest ways to add an additional layer of security.

Remote Collaboration

The large number of workers performing their duties remotely has created an urgent need for collaboration tools so team members can communicate effectively. Forward thinking organizations have made video meetings a natural, everyday occurrence. Many organizations are already licensed for Microsoft Teams, which can provide anything from instant messaging to acting as a full-scale phone system and communication platform. Tools such as this enable real-time collaboration on documents through shared file storage, chat and real-time coauthoring of documents.

Prior to COVID-19, many organizations were hesitant to pursue remote work arrangements because they felt ill-prepared or even distrustful. Having been forced to do so, many organizations are now better equipped for remote work. Employees recognize the advantages of better work-life balance and the ability to focus on tasks without constant interruption. It will be possible to retain great staff members who need to relocate or remain home. It also opens the door to hiring individuals who live elsewhere. While most organizations will return to onsite activities, remote work is here to stay.

In conclusion, what a great time to start planning for the future! We are currently living through the most compelling reason in our lifetime to plan ahead. Use this experience to encourage your team to make decisions that will carry you effectively through the next unanticipated challenge. ✦

Doug Reed



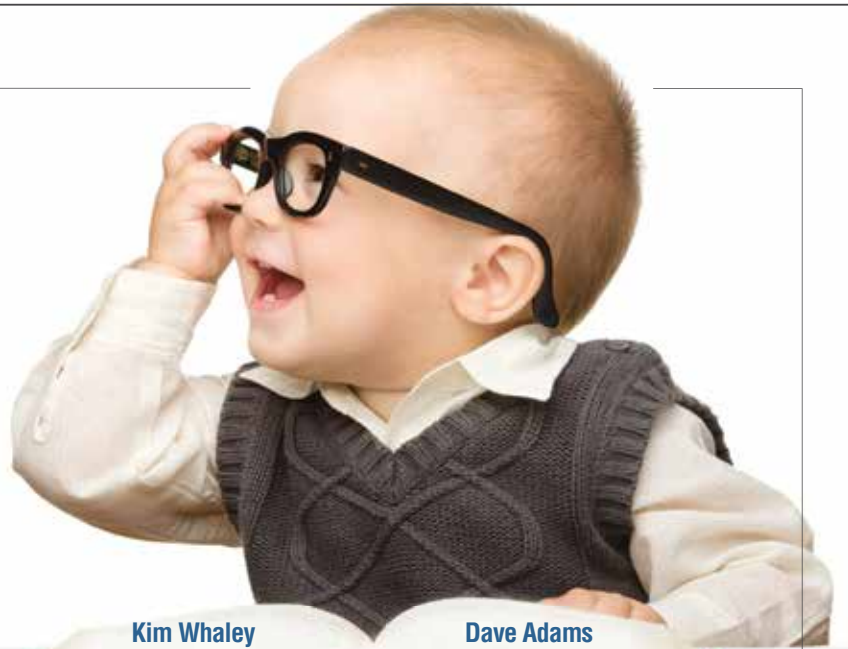
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