

Organizational Health Audit for Mobilization Effectiveness

Executive Summary | Paper #14 — Missionary Mobilization Research Project

Core Finding

"Mobilization flows out of organizational health—and stops at the door of your agency's dysfunction."

This statement, echoed by mobilization leaders across 18+ organizations, captures the central insight of this research: organizational health is not a peripheral concern for mission agencies. It is the prerequisite for mobilization effectiveness. No mobilizer technique, communication platform, or recruiting strategy can fully compensate for organizational dysfunction. Conversely, organizations with genuine health find that mobilization effectiveness follows.

Why This Matters Now

Two converging forces have elevated organizational health from background condition to front-and-center mobilization factor:

- **Gen Z candidates** are the most research-active generation in history. They look under the hood. They contact multiple organizations (68% of Gen Z respondents in the 2025 Launch Survey had contact with a different organization before the one they joined, vs. 40% of Gen X). They ask about member care, leadership, succession planning, and burnout support—in initial conversations.
- **Information transparency** means that what field missionaries say about an organization circulates in candidate communities whether the organization controls it or not. Organizations cannot present one image and sustain another; the gap will be discovered.

What the 2025 Launch Survey Revealed

- Missionaries consistently reported wanting: better member care on the field (not just pre-field), continued coaching after initial deployment, honest organizational communication, and preparation that didn't romanticize field realities.
 - Many noted the gap between what organizations presented and what they experienced: "My organization needs serious internal overhaul, especially in support raising training and on-field care."
 - The consistent pattern: organizational promises not matched by organizational reality produce attrition—before departure and in the field.
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The Ten-Dimension Assessment Framework

Organizational health as it relates to mobilization effectiveness operates across ten dimensions. Organizations should assess each dimension through honest questions—not to produce a score but to surface conversations that are often avoided.

1. Team Health & Field Dynamics	2. Transparency & Communication Culture
3. Decision-Making & Agility	4. Member Care Systems
5. Leadership Health & Succession	6. Financial Sustainability
7. Theological Clarity & Focus	8. Cultural Relevance & Adaptability
9. Diversity & Intercultural Competence	10. Technology & Systems Functionality

Three Dimensions Receiving Particular Emphasis in Research

- **Member Care (Dimension 4):** The most frequently cited gap. Missionaries consistently report that support drops off after field deployment. Gen Z candidates now ask explicitly about on-field member care, mental health support, and what the "off-ramp" looks like if they burn out. Organizations that cannot answer these questions well lose candidates.
- **Transparency (Dimension 2):** Top-performing organizations train mobilizers to acknowledge organizational weaknesses in initial conversations—not just strengths. This organizational humility builds trust faster than any technique. One organization provides candidates access to internal policies and procedures as a trust-building practice: "Let them under the hood. There's a level of respect that comes from that."
- **Team Health (Dimension 1):** Candidates are joining specific field teams, not organizations in the abstract. Organizations that facilitate survey trips or virtual team meetings before formal application experience better retention and less field conflict. As one leader put it: "I think it's crazy to ask a team to accept a new team member without them having first invited them."

Conducting the Audit: Key Principles

- **Gather multiple perspectives:** Leadership teams have blind spots. Effective audits include input from mobilizers, active field missionaries, recently returned missionaries, candidates who didn't proceed, and where possible candidates who joined other organizations.
- **Protect anonymity:** Staff who fear reprisal won't provide honest assessments. Anonymous instruments yield more accurate data.
- **Build in accountability:** The most common failure mode is assessments producing reports that are filed away. Establish in advance how findings will be used and who holds authority to act on them.
- **Prioritize realistically:** Technology systems can improve quickly. Cultural shifts require years. Distinguish quick wins from medium-term investments from long-term commitments—and resource accordingly.

Representative Findings from Organizational Interviews

"Gen Z doesn't have the loyalty to a sending agency that previous generations have. They're going to find a team they want to join and find a way to get there with whatever organization supports them. We need to not be scared of that—let them under the hood."

"If the organization appears old and irrelevant, even the best mobilization department can't overcome it. I've seen it time and time again."

"We want candidates to look under the hood—understand the health of the organization and the health of leadership. Those are the questions I'd be asking if I were joining."

Closing Perspective

Organizational health is ultimately a matter of faithful stewardship. Mission organizations exist to glorify God by sending missionaries to the nations. An organization's health is not merely a competitive advantage—it is a dimension of faithfulness. Healthy organizations honor God, serve candidates well, and send missionaries who endure. Organizations that invite honest examination of their health—from God, from their constituents, and from their own leadership—are best positioned to fulfill the mission they were formed to advance.

The full paper (10-12 pages) provides detailed assessment questions for all ten dimensions, principles for conducting multi-constituency audits, a prioritization framework for improvement planning, and patterns from organizations that improved health and saw mobilization impact.