

Is your church suffering from Titanic Syndrome?

According to Nadya Zhexembayeva, www.chiefreinventionofficer.com, Titanic Syndrome is a corporate disease in which organizations facing disruption bring about their own downfall through arrogance, excessive attachment to past success, or an inability to recognize the new and emerging reality. Using the three pillars of reinvention, (anticipating change, designing change, and implementing change) churches can address Titanic Syndrome.

Read each statement below. On the scale from 0 to 5, zero being “This is nothing like our church” and 5 being “This is 100% like our church, assess the relevance of each statement for your church and discover to what extent your church is infected with Titanic Syndrome.

Anticipating Change	Designing Change	Implementing Change
<p>Our church gets insights and warnings from the same sources (for example, church experts, members, church leaders, publishing companies, etc.) and rarely goes out of its comfort zone in soliciting information from unusual sources.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>I regularly hear “We have always done it this way” and “That’s just the way we do it here” and “We’ve tried that, and it will never work” when discussing change at church meetings.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>The way our church is organized makes it difficult to react to change quickly. (For example, our budgeting process is very bureaucratic, making it hard to introduce change in the middle of the year, or our program structures “lock” us into a program for years with no easy way to change.)</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>We don’t take enough time for reflection, strategizing, creative thinking and proactive action.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>In our church, we guess about why things succeed or fail rather than test our assumptions with formal evaluation tools.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>During the process of change, we rarely stop to celebrate small or short-term wins. We often feel demotivated and cannot see the progress we are making.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>In our church we usually start reacting when we are pressed by an unfolding crisis, rather than anticipate possible threats or opportunities and act proactively.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>When we fail, our church often places blame on somebody on the outside (other churches, parents, government, youth sports, culture, etc.). In other words, we are blaming the iceberg.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>In our church, we do not do “practice rounds” or experimentations. Instead, we implement prematurely and experience mistakes and failures.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>When our church gets insights and warnings about potential disruptions, they are shared only with a small group of people.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Most people in our church get angry and frustrated with the need to do something differently, even if it is for the better.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>There are significant gaps between what we say about our church’s commitment to change and how we actually work, allocate our resources, spend our time at meetings, reward change efforts, etc.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>Other leaders (volunteer and paid) and I are rarely asked to share insights and reflections on potential threats to, disruptions of, or opportunities for our church.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Our church decisions are more often influenced by spontaneous, poorly-thought-through ideas rather than by team processes such as brainstorming and teamwork.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>Our church is good at coming up with ideas, but we don’t have good follow-through, and we leave meetings without clarity about next steps and who is responsible for doing what by when.</p> <p>0 1 2 3 4 5</p>

How is your church doing?

Add up all the numbers and put your total here: _____

Guide to scoring:

56-75 – Man the lifeboats! You have Titanic Syndrome!

36-55 – Significant signs of Titanic Syndrome.

16-35 – You are reasonably open to change and have some reinvention skills with a risk for Titanic Syndrome.

0-15 – You are open to change and have excellent reinvention skills.

What do you need to work on the most?

Reinvention Pillar	Score
Anticipating Change	
Designing Change	
Implementing Change	

What are some processes or programs that need to be reinvented in small or big ways to address Titanic Syndrome in your church? List your ideas below: