

# Networks benefit by bringing together practitioners from a variety of approaches

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Networks, partnerships and alliances are strengthened when they welcome practitioners from a variety of approaches widely associated with the general thrust or aim of the network.

The interchange between those using different approaches can be quite stimulating and helps keep the network from getting bogged down in any one approach. In other words, variety inspires creativity and ingenuity and the spread of the same throughout the network.

Here is a short list to illustrate the varying streams, or approaches, that might be present in a Christian network or partnership focused, in this illustration, on evangelism. Note how many of these would be: Some practitioners work quite aggressively to dismantle opposing forces, pointing out fallacies, weaknesses and theological bankruptcy. These are the Challengers. Others prefer not to attack opponents and instead present more simply an exposure to Jesus as winsomely as possible. These are the Inviters. Some will use classic formulas for evangelism, with variations on the classic ?Four Spiritual Laws? approach pioneered by Campus Crusade for Christ. These are the Gospel Presenters. Others have adopted topical ?Bridge strategy? approaches as their preferred method, designed to address felt needs such as marriage and family enrichment, suicide and depression, and sexual issues as an avenue to present the gospel. These are the Bridge-Strategists. In a network might be a few who have large public media personas such as a TV personality hosting a weekly call-in show. These are Evangelism Personalities. Others will have approaches that focus exclusively on reaching into a specific language community. These are the Language-Specific Advocates. Some approach evangelism via a kind of Question-and-Answer website or encyclopedia on all things about Jesus and Christianity. They are the Information-Approach Evangelists. Some within a network will do all their outreach within FaceBook, YouTube, MySpace, Twitter and other social media networks. They are the Social Network Evangelists. And finally, but not least importantly, some will attach themselves to a network because they have the means and are willing and ready to fund innovative and promising evangelistic initiatives. They are the Kingdom Funders.

Clearly, with this range of interests and approaches, some in a network or partnership will be daunted by others? approaches because they will differ substantially in approach from their own. Some differences are driven by theology, others by temperament or technology. Those from one stream may believe theirs is the only or most worthy approach and will choose to convey that to others in the network either overtly or indirectly.

However, we have seen that in ministry, nearly every approach (even those we may have some disagreement with!) has its share of successes and fruitfulness. God inspires people to use a great variety of means to accomplish his goals.

A collaborative environment is enriched by including a wide spectrum of practitioners. In fact, a network operates most effectively when it intentionally preserves an inclusive spirit attracting the widest possible cadre of those who support the main vision of the network.