So, what *is* a Traffic Manager anyway?
This question is one I hear often when I tell people my title! No, it doesn't have anything to do with overflow parking or rush hour. Rather the "traffic" being managed is *project* traffic, especially that of a creative nature, for example mailers, brochures, slides, videos, web materials, etc.

A Traffic Manager is a position typically found at advertising agencies, operating behind the scenes to regulate the project workflow of the Creative Team. Essentially a type of project manager, this individual will often receive and process project requests, collect pertinent information to eliminate false starts, manage schedules, assign tasks and track a project's progress to insure it's completed on time and within budget. At a church with it's own Creative Team, the Traffic Manager holds a similar role, but receives project requests from various ministries (viewed as "clients") instead of account executives, like an agency would. Ultimately, adding a Traffic Manager to a church's creative process will increase the artists' efficiency and productivity, allowing more opportunities for them to serve the church's ministries.

1) What is a challenge that being a multisite church brings to your role that you believe would be different than if we were a monosite?

Of course the most obvious answer is an increase in project workflow. More campuses mean more staff and larger ministries which translate into more project requests across the board. However, before this challenge is addressed, an even bigger one exists: the importance of planning.

Proper Planning Prevents Poor Production
Going multisite really forces a church to evaluate the health of its systems. Are your systems complex, or streamlined? Are they simple to understand and easily reproducible? Will they allow for growth? These are some of the questions that had to be asked at Liquid Church with regard to the creative project and delivery systems.

Although the culture at each Liquid Church campus is slightly different, we still needed to distribute churchwide information in a uniform way. While a quick-turn on last minute projects may have had moderate success with a monosite, it was now a disaster to reproduce at that level for a multisite, increasing costs and creating unnecessary stress among staff and volunteers. To insure a timely delivery of materials at Liquid, we needed to plan for an increase in production, especially for printed materials and assembly projects (for example Sunday bulletins or mailings). By keeping a running project list, I'm able to anticipate most needs two and three weeks out and plan ahead accordingly. An example of this might be that we design bulletin art a week early so it's ready to print and assemble by the following Monday for a Wednesday delivery to all of our campuses.

Additionally, when preparing for a special service or event at multiple campuses, for example baptisms, I need to anticipate the different needs each campus may have, while working with the Creative Team and other ministries to insure we're creating and able to deliver the same

type of experience across the board. With this approach we recognize the uniqueness of each of our campuses, yet remind them they are part of a larger church body. Planning meetings for these types of events will start 6 weeks out or more, depending on the size of the event, so there is ample time to produce deliverables for each site.

Working in a multisite environment also increases the opportunity for collaboration. The projects a staff member at one campus may request could spark similar requests from other campuses. Part of my job is to integrate those requests and refine the project before funneling it into the Creative Team pipeline. Additional front-end planning on these jobs allows for a more integrated churchwide communication.

2) What would you say to other church leaders who are looking to go multisite about your area of service here?

Invest in a Traffic Manager!
Most churches don't have anyone to fill this type of role, but I guarantee it will increase the church's organization and productivity. From a creative standpoint, since introducing a Traffic Manager position, Liquid Church was able to *double* the number of projects our video and graphic artists churned out. That meant not only were we providing content for Sunday services, but we were able to start adding creative support for our Kids and Youth Ministries, as well as package content for Life Groups and Classes for churchwide distribution. Whereas previously these ministries had to handle their own creative materials, the addition of traffic management allowed the Creative Team to lift that burden so they could focus on their areas of specialty, leading to more overall productivity.

Additionally, a Traffic Manager can provide essential support for event planning or special services as she anticipates a project's demands. She should possess the skills to organize and manage the deliverables, delegate project responsibilities, track ordering, manage vendor relations and anticipate risks or "red flags" that need to be addressed. She will keep the budget in check, preserve the timeline and update planning progress so you can be confident that what you need for your event will be where you need it when you need it.

Lastly, a Traffic Manager is the perfect person to track weekly service needs for each campus. As a church grows, so will these demands - the Traffic Manager will receive those requests each week and make sure they are met, so when Sunday rolls around, you don't have to worry about the details!