

Staffing

One of the most difficult questions I have had to face in my ministry, is when to add staff to the team, either in a part time or full-time capacity. Many pastors recoil at the thought of adding staff and respond often by saying that they would like to but cannot afford it.

When it comes to staffing, very few churches at the time can afford the cost, but this is where faith comes to the fore. I have found that at least half of the new recruit's wage should be available when they are taken on, while the remainder is more than likely to be made up because of faith and obedience, if the vision has been sold to the church.

Timing is important. If we do not staff at the right time, then the local church may go into decline. Iacocca in his autobiography in talking about the car industry deals with the right timing for introducing new model cars and indicates how crucial the right timing to capture the market is. A new staff member needs to be introduced when the climate of the church is right, not when it is declining, but as it moves forward strong in vision.

How do we know when to add a new staff member? Make sure that your motives in adding staff to the church are pure. If it is to gain the reputation of being a *live church* because several are on the staff, then the motive is wrong. It is important to plan for growth where obvious areas of need are apparent, for example, among the young people or in administration or pastoral care. For myself, sometimes there is a growing pressure upon me, that if I do not staff soon to cover that need, then my wider ministry throughout the church will start to deteriorate. It is most useful to employ someone who can complement your own giftings. One on the staff like me is usually enough!

A question sometimes raised in the matter of staffing is, 'is the job to fit the person, or is the person to fit the job?' Neither extreme is ideal. It is better to have the right blend of both views, and it is only as a person settles into the job that right adjustments are made. To have that person work within the area of their main giftings is essential if they are to do their task well, feel fulfilled and have harmonious relationships. Do not put a round peg in a square hole. It does not work for long. On the other hand, we all must adjust to some tasks that we would rather not do.

A trend apparent today is to have home grown staff. That way they know the philosophy of the church and leadership can gauge the effectiveness of their ministry before being appointed to the job. Imported people, although it will take longer for them to settle down, can nevertheless add a freshness and breadth of experience to the Local Church.

Often it will take up to six to nine months before an outside staff member really settles down and has a good confident relationship.

The interview

Do not take anything for granted. It is better to discover weakness and to ask awkward questions now than to discover deficiencies later.

Be honest about your own church's strengths and weaknesses. Too often pastors and leaders find out too late as to what they have got themselves into.

Look for the potential in a worker and do not be restricted simply by what you observe. God by His grace has not given up on us and we likewise must not brush people aside too lightly.

A servant-hearted attitude is essential in a staff member. Many people today focus on their own rights and can be difficult to motivate unless a task directly interests them. Jesus modelled a different way by setting aside His rights to serve others. Pay close attention to a candidate's heart and attitude; if this is unclear, referees may provide helpful insight.

One senior minister I know insists that he will not employ any person who will not only do the job very well but will also make it their business to train up someone else to take their place when they eventually leave. That is good advice, as far too often when a staff member terminates their employment it leaves a gap which is sometimes very hard to fill.

Ask open ended questions where the candidate is free to express their opinion rather than give the answers you desire. Look out for legalistic, unhealthy attitudes that may arise.

Some suggested questions for the job interview

1. Have you read the Philosophies of the Church? agree/disagree?
2. Have you read the Constitution and Statement of Faith of the Church? agree/disagree?
3. Do you believe in tithing?
4. How do you see divorce and remarriage?
5. How do you see the Women's role in the Church?
6. What do you believe is the function of the Senior Pastor?
7. Are you prepared to come on full-time if necessary?
8. What do you think of large or small Churches?
9. Questions regarding attitude to drink, dancing, LGBT etc. - looking for unhealthy attitudes yet maintaining a suitable standard.
10. Gifts of the Spirit - how do they flow themselves in this area?
11. Worshippers - are they worshippers?

12. Attitude to Second coming teaching.
13. Can they teach others - pass on their skill?
14. Attitude to denomination and other Churches?
15. Find out what they understand about deliverance of the demonised.
16. How do they see their emphasis on faith? - looking for hyper faith tendencies.

Staff meetings

The success of a team is not so much dependent upon individual gifting, but on relationships. For that reason, I spend considerable time with my leaders, not just in meetings, but in enjoyable social occasions so that when heavy issues arise confrontations are not inevitable.

Weekly staff meetings, with spouses welcome at times, can foster a healthy atmosphere of interaction. It is helpful for staff members to take turns sharing a short devotion. These meetings can include updates on upcoming events, concerns, answers to prayer, and time to pray together. I have often found that strong, focused prayer for one another becomes a highlight of the week. Build genuine friendships with your staff, and they will stand by you through difficult times. Also, show appreciation for their work both privately and publicly before the church; it means a great deal to them.

Staff retreats

These can be special times in the life of the church. It enhances relationships and gives an opportunity to give training where weaknesses may appear. Get staff to help you run these and obtain videos and import guest speakers if necessary. Above all, do make sure you have times to laugh together and enjoy God. These can be wonderful times of refreshment.

Accountability

If accountability is essential for the success of secular organisations, it is surely essential for the church as well. Some people find working within a clear framework stressful because of their more open-ended personality, while others thrive in it. Those who find structure difficult often bring strengths in other areas, such as flexibility and a more easy-going manner. People who have long been their own boss may also struggle to work within a team unless they are leading it, and they can be more inclined to act autocratically or independently.

It is helpful to review each person against their job description at least once a year, so any concerns can be addressed without unnecessary tension. I have found Iacocca's observation to be true: staff members will often raise their own areas of weakness and are willing to discuss them without it becoming a major confrontation. Moving beyond a 'them versus us' mindset and working together as partners brings strength and unity to the team. We provide

job descriptions for every major role in the church, whether paid or voluntary, because they give clear, non-legalistic guidance on how each role should function.

At the beginning of the year every staff member should set measurable goals that can then be reviewed later. As the saying goes, 'if you aim at nothing, then you are bound to hit it.'

Some weekly report sheets can also be useful for ascertaining where each person is at. For example, our pastoral worker and I fill in a weekly chart of the people we have visited or had an interview with over the past week, so that people are cared for effectively. It can also be a guide for us, to make sure we are working well.

Salaries

The subject of money is always an emotive one, but although I may give guidelines as to the salary level staff should be placed on, I normally withdraw from all discussion at this level. It is helpful in some situations for leadership outside the staff to decide that.

It is helpful to use a salary scale when setting pay, as this can prevent the emotional discussions that sometimes lead to resentment and bitterness.

Suggested job description for a youth Pastor

1. Position **Youth Pastor**
2. Personnel
 - 2.1 To be responsible to the Senior Pastor, Elders and Church Council for the co-ordinating and running of the Youth Department.
 - 2.2 To be responsible for Youth Leadership and Youth development.
3. Duties
 - 3.1 To set aside one day per week for personal study and training in conjunction with a Bible College.
 - 3.2 To be responsible for arranging regular Youth activities on Saturday evenings.
 - 3.3 To develop a pastoral relationship with all young people.
 - 3.4 To be involved in a weekly teaching session.
 - 3.5 To run a College outreach programme..
 - 3.6 To give a monthly report to the Senior Pastor.
 - 3.7 To work in consultation with the Pastor and Elders in the training of prospective Youth Leadership.
 - 3.8 To organise Youth Services on Sundays when arranged.
 - 3.9 To attend all important Church functions.
 - 3.10 To commence work at 8:30am, with one hour for lunch. To finish in the afternoon at 4:30pm, bearing in mind that night work is often required.
 - 3.11 To be involved in limited office administration e.g. general church administration and Follow up Department.
 - 3.12 To relate on a day to day basis to the Senior Pastor when necessary.
4. Liaison
 - 4.1 To keep the Pastor and Elders fully informed on all events and liaise on ideas, plans and developments that will progress the objectives of the Youth Work.
 - 4.2 To liaise with Youth leadership within the Church.
 - 4.3 To liaise with Youth leadership within the town.