

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

10 Church Staff Hiring Tips from the Front Line



Gary Lamb, is the church planting pastor of [Ridge Stone Church in Canton, GA](#). Gary writes at his blog...

One of the areas that I felt very unprepared for in planting a church that has grown rather quickly was in the area of hiring staff. Matter of fact I would go as far to say I have done a very lousy job at it. God has blessed us with some great hires but I have made my share of mistakes. I currently have 2 full time staff and 2 part time staff (25+ hours) and myself on our staff. However since we have started I have parted ways with three staff people due to bad decisions on my part. Hiring staff is a great blessing and I believe is wonderful for a church. I am a believer in being overstaffed. However the wrong hire can hurt you in many ways. I have learned this valuable lesson: ***No matter how bad the staff person you hire, there will be people who love them and are loyal to them.*** I have never lost a staff person where I didn't loss a family in the church. So with that in mind, I thought I would share with you some random thoughts I have learned when it comes to hiring staff.

1.) Ask Questions!

There is no such thing as asking too many questions. Ask about doctrine, ask about standards, ask about philosophy, ask about their spiritual life, ask about their family life, ask, ask, and ask! My lack of asking questions has hurt me in the past.

2.) Ask their references for references

No one is going to give you a bad reference. So they only question I ask a reference is if they can give me another reference. I have found if you go two and three deep, you being to find out the truth about people

3.) Lay out clear expectations

Make it very clear what you expect of them. Let them know goals, leadership style, ministry style, etc. Don't be afraid to scare them off. It is better for them to be scared and not take the job, then take it and quit later.

4.) Talk to the spouse

We expect no more of our staff spouses then we do of our regular church members. However we make sure their vision is the same as the staff person and that they are supportive of going into the ministry.

5.) When possible, hire people you know

I have only made one hire of someone I didn't know. The rest of our staff I knew firsthand or knew someone who knew them. This has been a huge help.

6.) When hiring friends, let them know things are about to change

I have hired friends and it was hard for them and me to become the boss. It was hard to turn the friendship on and off. Let them know beforehand that there will be times when you have to be the boss and not their friend.

7.) Only give someone their first chance if they are from your church and already doing the job

I am all for giving people their first shot at ministry. However in the future I will only do that if they are in our church and already doing the job as a lay person.

8.) Burst their bubble about ministry

Those who have never been in ministry before think it is something that it isn't. I want them to know beforehand that when they come to work there will not be angels standing at the entrance singing "Amazing Grace." They need to know there will be conflicts, arguments, and disagreements. There is a huge myth about being in ministry.

9.) Share your vision

God gave you the vision as the pastor or planter. Make sure they line up with the vision you have for your church. We have a certain vision at [RSC](#) and we don't think you are wrong if you have another type of vision, however we aren't compromising on ours.

10.) Learn from your mistakes

You are going to make bad choices. Learn from them.

Any thoughts? What would you add to the list?

By the way, you can visit [Gary's blog site here...](#)

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