

## Why churches hire poorly and how to change that

Are you hiring the right person for that position? How do you know if the person is the right candidate? Do you have a formalized process that identifies the unique capabilities and talents of your prospective candidates?

Often churches hire the best servant ministers since they have served the church, they have the right servant's heart and they know the church business already. This may seem to be the correct avenue, but utilizing these criteria as the decision factor leads to higher turn-over, decreased employee morale and lower productivity. Churches, more often than the business community, experience negative repercussions from not having an established process because congregants will leave the church and possibly the entire church community, if they do not feel they were given the right response in applying for a position.

Last year Mission Community Church in Gilbert, AZ implemented a formalized hiring process. Executive Pastor Mike Work says that "by implementing a formal process of candidate selection, behavioral assessments and formalized interviewing, we've been able to find staff members (employees) who have a heart for the mission of our church as well as a true giftedness in the work they are hired to do."

There is an equation to successful candidate hiring. Are you using all components of this equation or just pieces of it?



**Competence:** This is the initial review of the position and the candidates. Ensure you have an appropriate job description that identifies the top three to six competencies and skills required for the position. This is not a job listing of every responsibility the employee will have; these are the essential functions and experiences only.

Once the job description is clearly written, then all candidates need to submit a resume against that particular job description.

**Character:** In this second phase of the hiring process, each position goes through a job assessment to ensure that the position is clearly identified, scoped and understood. Without a third-party assessment, it is difficult to understand what candidate behaviors are expected from the position. A "best guess" gets you just that – a best guess employee (someone who might do the job right but also likely will not).

**Chemistry:** By the third phase of the candidate selection

process, your candidate pool may be quite small. The candidates left are the only ones who go through the formal interview process. In this phase and to ensure that you hire the right person, implement a process of structured interviews for at least one round of interviews. Ask the candidates the same questions, interview them in the same style and have the same people do the interviews.

Once the three phases of your process have been completed, the entire interview team meets to discuss the candidates. Each interviewer, including the initial consultant, will review their notes and score each candidate in every area, include a score for each phase of the process. To ensure fairness in your hiring processes, each interviewer score should be calculated. The person with the highest overall score is the one to whom you should make your offer.

As Mike Work sees it, "The new process has decreased our turnover, enabled happier employees and increased productivity since we are now hiring the right candidates for the right positions. To our surprise, it has also helped us better disposition volunteers who applied for these paid ministry positions but were not the right fit."

**Jessica Pierce is founder and president of Accelerated Team Dynamics, LLC, Phoenix, AZ, and is a certified behavior coach. She is executive director of Career Connectors, a community outreach program. [ www.atdsuccess.com ]**

### CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Wopodo is a candidate assessment tool [ [www.wopodo.com/cc](http://www.wopodo.com/cc) ] that matches job seekers to specific openings by using a screening process on more than 80 dimensions of workplace compatibility. A program such as this pre-screens candidates using the DISC assessment and guarantees that applicant for the same price as a typical job board posting.

Essentially, it moves phase two into the pre-screening process saving time, money and resources. Wopodo founder and chairman, Richard Swenson, says that "the patent-pending process will enable almost anyone to make the "perfect hire" the first time because all applicants are pre-screened on more than 80 dimensions of workplace compatibility before you even look at their resume."