

Staffing for Missional impact

The challenge is to faithfully lead a church with a combination of paid staff and unpaid volunteers. The work of the staff and key lay leaders must:

- **Meet the needs of the mission and ministry strategies**
- **Fully utilize the volunteer gifts, passions, and capabilities**
- **Fit within the financial resources the church allots for staffing costs**
- **Have clearly defined job descriptions and annual goals**

Mission & Ministry Strategies/Volunteer Assessment/Budget Alignment

These three foundational criteria need to be in place in order to successfully design the present and future staffing model of a local church:

1. The mission and strategic priorities must be clearly articulated, with measurable (2-5 year) goals.
2. The gifts, passions, and capabilities of the members must be assessed and accessible in a workable database.
3. A solid one-year budget, based on the mission and strategic priorities of the church must be in place. In addition, a high-level budget projection for 2-3 years should also be in place.

The above is true, whether you are growing and looking to add staff or whether you are experiencing decline and need to reduce staff. If you do not have those in place, these would be your first steps. These are critically important and should not be assumed and/or skipped over.

Job Descriptions & Annual Goals

Job Descriptions are designed to articulate the main responsibilities and duties of a paid or unpaid (volunteer) staff positions. They list the tasks to be carried out and high-level ends to be accomplished. They may include behavioral expectations that relate to the core values of the organization or position. In most cases, they do not include the measurable goals.

Annual Goals are designed to put measurable and time-sensitive expectations/targets that are to be accomplished. They often relate directly to the duties, responsibilities, and behavioral expectations of the job description.

Job Description

1. Title
1. Reports to _____
1. Overview or general purpose of the position:
 - In one paragraph describe what the position is expected to achieve, including what contribution the position will make to the mission and/or ministries of the church.
1. Main duties:
 - This is a list of the main tasks to be carried out.
 - Describe each task, starting with an action verb (develop, create, oversee, recruit, provide, . . .).
 - Each should be a complete sentence that states the “what,” “why/purpose,” and the high-level “result” of the task.
 - Example: “Recruit and train Youth Small Group leaders so that they are fully resourced and supported as they lead their small groups each week.”
 - These are high-level tasks that may require the person in the position to do other tasks. Do not list all of the detailed tasks.

- Example: “Create and publish the monthly church newsletter.” There are many tasks related to this including, coordinating and communicating with leaders who will be providing content, utilizing computer skills, etc. These do not need to be listed.
1. Expectations & Competencies:
 - These may include behavioral expectations such as
 - Have an active and growing faith in Jesus Christ
 - Worship regularly
 - Support the church’s radical inclusivity, especially related to the LGBTQIA+ community
 - Be proficient with Microsoft 365, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Annual Goals

Most often, annual goals are written by the supervising staff person in collaboration with the person in the position:

1. They often relate directly to many, if not all, of the items in the job description.
2. They are always measurable.
3. They are always time-sensitive.

Annual goals are used to:

1. Clarify the detailed expectations related to the job description.
2. Focus and motivate the person to accomplish things that will meet the expectations of the job description and the larger strategic goals of the church.
3. Be the foundation for evaluation purposes each year to determine areas of success and areas for improvement or change.

Process for “right-sizing” a staff in a church that has experienced

decline (assuming that the foundational criteria have been developed and are in place):

- I. Based on the foundational items above, what are the top priorities that are essential for ministry impact (fulfillment of the mission)?
 - a. These should be in alignment with the foundational items and should show the key goals to be accomplished short-term and long-term.
 - i. With a church that is declining, what often happens is that it tries to accomplish all of the ministries and ministry goals that they had when they were larger. Thus, part of this important foundational step will be to stop doing so much. In this case, less will truly be more as you get focused and leaner as you stop trying to do so much.
- II. Based on the assessment of the church’s volunteer gifts, passions, and capabilities, have a usable list of people and their talents to draw from.
- III. Based on the budget figures allocated for staffing,
 - a. What are you presently spending on staffing? Create a detailed list of the total costs (taxes and benefits included) of each staff position as well as the total cost for all your staff.
 - b. What are the total dollars available for staffing?
 - c. What is the difference? In other words, how much less are you going to be allocating for staffing moving forward?
- IV. Evaluate the present staff positions (positions, not people).
 - a. Gather the job descriptions (if you have them) for ALL staff positions (even the positions you are sure you are going to keep). Create them if you do not already have them.
 - b. Interview each staff person, with the goal of finding out what each staff person actually does and where they put most of their time. Some sample questions are:

- i. Tell me what you spend time on in a typical week/month. How much time in each?
 - ii. What gets prioritized by other's demands on you?
 - iii. What do you presently prioritize and why?
 - iv. What most often gets pushed to the side? Why?
 - v. If you were designing this position, what would you prioritize and why?
- V. Assess what additional volunteer/volunteer hours could be utilized moving forward. *(Even in church where "the same few people always do 80% of the volunteering, there is room for improvement).*
- VI. Create at least 2-3 different draft staffing models (configurations). This will be trial and error. Ask yourself, "if we eliminated position A and combined positions B & C, and moved whatever we could to volunteers, it would be Model #1." Create 2-3 options and try them out on paper. For each model:
 - a. Write new jobs descriptions that will best fit the mission and the strategic priorities of the church.
 - i. What are the hours?
 - ii. Compensation?
 - iii. Benefits?
 - iv. Total cost to the budget?
 - b. Make a list of things that you are removing from the job description that could be done by volunteers (knowing that you will be providing training and support for these new volunteer responsibilities).
 - i. Each model will not only need staffing job descriptions but volunteer job descriptions. Thus, take this list and combine what you can and move what you can to volunteers.
 - ii. How you will recruit, train, and support these volunteers.

- c. Compare the models and their viability and projected effectiveness in aligning with your mission, ministry priorities, volunteer capabilities, and financial realities.

- VII. There will be some staff whom you want to stay on, whose position is not being eliminated but only modified (job description, hours, compensation, etc.).
 - a. Presenting these modifications to them, assuring them that you want them to stay on. They can choose to remain under the modified position or choose to move on.

- VIII. In many cases, you will be eliminating some positions and you may even be creating a new position(s). At this point determine how you will move forward. In many cases, the people in the positions that are being eliminated end up losing their jobs. To move forward:
 - a. It is often best to post any new positions and let the staff who lost their position apply for them. Please let them know that they will be considered for the new position but that no promises are being made. They will be interviewed and considered along with other candidates for the position.
 - b. If you have a particularly great employee whose position was eliminated that you want in a new position, depending on the culture and past hiring practices, you may be able to simply offer the position to that person directly without posting and interviewing.