

FUNDAMENTALS OF... YOUR CHURCH'S COUNCIL

MEMBER RECRUITMENT STRATEGY



Recruiting new members for your Church Council is a BIG deal so why not give it the attention it deserves! You gotta make a plan and then STICK to it year after year to ensure you're finding the right people at the right time for the right roles.

1. **Have a Timeline** – This one sounds like a no-brainer but it's amazing how often boards and committees put off recruitment until the last minute. Having an appropriate 'timeline' is essential. As most of us will agree, recruitment can take longer than we think and the sooner you begin looking and asking, the longer your nominees have to carefully and prayerfully consider the ask. But truth be told, recruitment should be an ON-GOING process. Your current council and Nominating Committee should always be on the lookout for potential candidates.
2. **Create a Nominating Committee to get the job done right** – In short, this committee would oversee most of the recruitment process. Ideally this committee would consist of retiring office bearers, the Vice Chair of Council and the Senior Pastor. A clear and comprehensive mandate should be drawn up so that your Council AND congregation are fully informed and know its role.
3. **Have a Clear and Fair Vetting Process for Nominees** – This tends to be where things get tricky (and sometimes controversial), so the best way to avoid confusion, hurt feelings or suspicion is to set out your criteria for a council member and communicate it clearly to your congregation. Also, it's important to keep your 'screening' process up-to-date as new and unique situations can come up that may offer new perspectives. Here are some tips when crafting your process:
 - a. **Step 1: PRAY, PRAY, PRAY!** – Ask God for wisdom and ask Him what HE wants in a deacon or elder. He may surprise you!
 - b. **Step 2: Define your church's criteria for a Council Member** – This can start with the practical/objective things like how long each person has been a member of your church, to noting other ministries they've been involved in, to listing the gifts and passions of the nominee. Then move on to the more complex or subjective criteria, like demonstrated evidence of Christ's rule in each person's life (*what is their prayer life like? do they read the bible and attend worship regularly? do they contribute financially to the church and/or other ministries, etc.*), to consideration of any pastoral care issues that may exist. As you can see, the second list is one where much wisdom and careful consideration is needed so if needed, go back to Step 1! ☺
 - c. **Step 3: Figure out what your strategic priorities are** – *What skills or expertise do you need on your council to help you achieve those priorities? Who is your church now and who do you want to be in the community in the next five years or so? What Elders or Deacons are finishing up their terms and what gaps will be created once they are done?* This will help the Nominating Committee immensely in their work of finding the right people at the right time.
 - d. **Step 4: Schedule visits with each nominee** – While this one may appear way too time-consuming, it just may prove to be a valuable tool for the Nominating Committee in their vetting process. An "interview" will help the Committee get a sense for who this person is and if he/she will be a good fit for the office they

have been nominated for. Part of the 'Interview' process could be asking the Nominee to answer some appropriate questions *before* you meet with him/her. Things like: *When and how did you become a Christian? What does it mean to be Reformed? Where have you seen God at work in your life? How has God prepared you for the office of Elder or Deacon? What is your vision for our church?* These questions dig a bit deeper and require a bit more time for reflection. And perhaps some of these 'answers' could be shared in the final document supplied to the congregation before voting occurs so members can get a better sense of who a person is and why they would make a good addition to your Church's Council.

- e. **Step 4: Never, EVER, compromise!** While it can happen from time-to-time that not enough 'qualified' persons will allow their name to appear on the ballot, it's important to hold fast to your Recruitment Strategy as well as what your church holds as the irrefutable qualities needed in a Council Member. Remember it's far better to pick the right person over the available one. God ALWAYS provides *what* we need exactly *when* we need it. And if it means being short 1 or 2 Council Members for a time, so be it. Your church's Mission – GOD'S MISSION – will still move forward despite an empty chair or two around the Council Table.
4. **And the TRUTH... shall set them free!** – Sometimes people say "No" to a nomination because they don't really understand what they are being asked to do. Create ways and then carve out time to *educate* your members, and especially nominees, on what the 'job descriptions' are for an Elder or Deacon. Here are some ideas:
 - a. **Invite the congregation to check out a meeting** – Why not invite members to see your team in action! Help them see that the work that you do MATTERS and is moving your church's mission and vision along. (And while you're at it, make sure to have some fun at the meeting!) A note of caution: Be sure to plan it during a meeting when there's not likely to be contentious or sensitive material discussed;
 - b. **Have written Job Descriptions for Elder and Deacon** (and each position within Council) – Have this on hand to share with those considering or interested in more information. These should be kept current and included in your church's "Council Handbook" (assuming you have one!). There are some great resources [here](#) and [here](#);
 - c. **Hold an Information Session and/or have an Info Table set-up** – Some churches hold an Information Session for members and nominees. It's important to keep it clear, concise and interesting. Throw in a little bit of fun and include some light refreshments. Get creative and think about what would work for your church. Or, at a minimum, set-up a table in the back of your church for people to visit on a Sunday morning.

Did you find these tips helpful? Did we miss anything? Does your church have a clear Recruitment Strategy? Are you willing to share it?