



# THE CHURCH'S FIRST CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

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# Introduction

As our society and churches change, there will be expanding roles for church administrators. When a church hires, they need to have a complete understanding of the purpose of a church administrator and what they expect. God has called many people to the work of the church. Marvin Myers has interpreted I Cor. 12:28, RSV to say, "God has appointed in the church... administrators (Myers: 5)." He also states, "The Apostle Paul lists administration as one of the spiritual gifts,

as Jesus knew his redemptive purpose would fail without an organized, functioning body (Myers: 5)."

It is clear that administrators have a significant role in the church. But how has that role developed and what shape will it take in preparing the church for the 21st century? Whom will you call to be at the helm of your church (Powers:11)? How do you decide what a church administrator should do? Let us take a closer look at these questions as we journey together down the path of hiring a new church administrator.

## What is a Church Administrator? Does Your Church Need One?

Church Administration is described by Robert D. Dale (Powers:11) as "a science[and] an art... As a science, church administration involves procedures and techniques that can be learned by study and by practice. As an art, administration calls for relational sensitivity, intuition and timing. These artistic people skills are largely natural talents but can be enhanced to some degree by experience and training (Powers: 11)."

Marvin Myers quotes Ordway Tead from a book Tead wrote in 1951 saying that administration "is the function within an organization which is responsible for establishing its objectives, purposes, aims, or ends for implementing the necessary organizing and operating steps, and for assuming adequate performance toward the desired end (Myers:6)."

These are all good definitions of what church administration can be, but church leaders will ultimately be responsible for deciding what role the administrator will play. These definitions also do not give you a clear understanding of the exact tasks an administrator is expected to accomplish.

Let us take a look first at what administrative duties you will expect your new administrator to do, who is currently doing them, and how you will make the necessary transition once your new administrator has come on board.

No matter what your current situation, someone in your church is doing the work of a church administrator. It may be a paid staff person, such as a pastor or a secretary; it may be a committee member, or it may be a volunteer. Why do you even need to bother changing your current situation? The primary response from churches who are hiring administrators for the first time is they want to shift the workload from one staff person, who was brought into the church for another primary role. By hiring an administrator, the first staff member can return to his primary role. Many times, this involves one or more pastors.

Traditionally, the pastor of a church is the leader of the church, the shepherd of the flock. His primary responsibility is seen as ministering to the needs of the congregation, preparing for worship, and seeking spiritual leadership from God. He is not expected to be bogged down in the day-to-day operation of the church. Luecke and Southard state that pastors and congregational members see the administrator role in too narrow a view of the function in the body of Christ. Some pastors are prone to see those functions as obstacles to the real ministry they are called to do (Luecke:13).

To support this view, there is little administrative preparation that pastors receive in their formal training in school (specifically in the Presbyterian tradition). It is no wonder that many pastors see church administration as "busywork" that does not contribute to their ministry. Consequently, church administration is usually a lower priority of the pastor and is often not effectively accomplished.

Another reason to hire a church administrator is to "centralize" administrative responsibilities. During my early days as a church administrator, one of the first questions I asked members of other churches was "Does your church have a church administrator?" After a time, I began to realize the inappropriateness of this question. I really meant to ask, "Who does the administration in your church?" I came to realize that whether a church had a specific person called a CBA (church business administrator) or not, someone or a combination of people were responsible for how the church was actually getting its administrative tasks accomplished.

In other churches I researched, administrative duties were split between other paid staff, both full and part-time, and volunteers. Almost every church I spoke with had a different mix of responsibilities and duties spread over endless combinations of staff. In most of these churches the workload was just too much and too diverse for these different people to handle effectively. In addition, many times these

administrative duties took priority over the primary purpose these individuals were hired to accomplish.

This type of management in a church is "decentralized." The coordination of this type of effort is difficult and requires constant oversight by the pastor or other leadership in the church. There are also varying levels of education, expertise, and commitment when multiple people do the church administration work. In addition, as government rules and regulations towards churches increase and there is a greater need for oversight, it is important to have staff with competence to administer the tasks. The need for "centralization" of information and the burden on the church to provide information to both members and government increases.

There are other good reasons why your church should consider hiring an administrator. Has the mission of the church been redefined recently? When focus of the mission has changed, the potential for staff changes is higher. Is the ministry of the church expanding to the point that another staff person needs to be hired? When the nature of the work or the quality of the work changes significantly, it is time to re-evaluate your current staff, and may be a good time to bring in an administrator.

There are many benefits that a church can derive from having a church business administrator:

1. An administrator can provide professional, technical, and managerial expertise in the areas of finance, facilities, legal and tax issues.
2. An administrator can be the link in organization and management of the resources (people and material) that are entrusted to the church.
3. An administrator is trained to problem solve staff communication through staff development and effective compliance with employment law, strengthening the church staff.
4. An administrator can provide creative approaches to managing resources effectively and efficiently, resulting in savings for the congregation.
5. An administrator can be a listening ear to members' needs and problems, as well as their joys, thus providing pastoral care and support.
6. An administrator with a keen sense of organization can assist in bridging the work of other staff, committees, and teams.

The following criteria may signal when a church should be considering a CBA:

1. A church whose worship attendance is 300-500
2. A church with an annual budget of \$400,000 to \$600,000

3. A church whose staff members express frustration because their primary job function is not being met due to administrative demands
4. A church who is experiencing major growth in facilities expansion and is planning to conduct major capital campaigns
5. A church whose financial management needs clearer controls and accountability

Even with these criteria, your church will ultimately be responsible for evaluating your current mission, staff work load, and efficiency to determine when the time is right for your church to add a CBA to its staff.

Now that we have looked at several of the reasons to hire a church administrator, you need to evaluate the expense and change that will occur in your organization by hiring an additional staff member. The bottom line for most churches today is financial. You have to be able to justify the expense against the perceived reward. How do you do this? Let us begin by looking at your church and doing an organizational analysis by asking the following questions:

1. What administrative tasks do you expect to be done in the church? (Refer to section on *Developing the Job Responsibilities*.)
2. Who is doing these tasks now? Is it the Pastor, other staff, volunteers? Can more volunteers be used. Can you restructure current job responsibilities effectively? Will this structure be long-term? Have administration tasks been shifted to individuals who are unable to complete their primary task as a result?
3. How well are these tasks being performed? How do you evaluate your current staff? Are they doing their jobs properly? Have they been assigned too much work? Are they able to accomplish their work accurately and in a timely manner? One of the early symptoms of work overload is the poor performance of staff in doing their work. Another is a constant turnover of staff caused by frustration and poor job performance. It may not just be the employee; it may be because of the unrealistic workload.
4. Will the reassignment of tasks allow them to be done more efficiently? Removing and reassigning responsibilities is often an effective method of improving efficiency for both parties involved. The staff that are relieved of responsibility for certain tasks improve their efficiency in the work with which they have been left. The re-assigned tasks are done more efficiently when they are given to a new person with specialized skills to perform the tasks.

5. What will the church gain by taking certain administrative responsibilities away from a particular individual? What will it lose?

There are instances when certain changes in the church can lead to conflict among staff and/or volunteers who are doing the tasks you plan to reassign. As an example: A church had a volunteer treasurer who did much of the work that the new business administrator was now being asked to do. He was a long-time member of the church with many relatives who were members. Even though he had served the church with distinction for a good many years in this capacity, there was a period of conflict when most of his responsibilities were reassigned to the new CBA. Situations like this need to be anticipated and handled with care as change occurs. Ultimately, you will have to make the change that is for greatest good of the church and not for the benefit of just a few of its members.

6. What would be the ideal structure for your church to meet the needs of your congregation for the next five years?

As your church looks to its future and how it will carry out its mission, you have to put into place an organizational structure that will be able to carry out this mission with the absence of staff turmoil and turn-over, thus, maximizing your return on a good staff organization. What limits are placed on your

church by finances? We would all like to have the ideal staff, but can your church afford it? Can you afford not to have it?

Once you have answered these questions, you will be in a better position to analyze how the administrative tasks in your church are being accomplished. You can then decide whether the need for a single person to coordinate the church's administrative activities is warranted or whether the people doing the administrative work can handle these tasks with additional training and resources. The key is to know the answers to these questions:

- What are the expectations for effective church administration?
- Who is currently performing these functions?
- Is your staff given enough time and training to accomplish their work effectively?
- Is there a positive attitude in accomplishing the tasks?

If your conclusion is that your church could benefit from having one person function as the administrator for the church, you are ready to develop a comprehensive job description and conduct a search.

## Developing the Job Responsibilities

Job descriptions are the foundation for expectation in any work environment, but they are especially important in the multiple staff ministry. The tendency in making up job descriptions, particularly for administrators, is to take all of the things that people do not like to do and give them to the new administrator. Depending on how your church arrived at its decision to hire an administrator, you may or may not have a sense of what you expect your administrator to do. As you develop the job description, remember this person is part of a team of people who have been called to respond to the mission of the church.

A job description should contain a brief description of the major areas of responsibility that the administrator will supervise and not a detailed methodology of how to get the task accomplished.

Example:

[Right] Responsible for the security, counting, and posting of all church offerings.

[Wrong] Select a money counting team of four persons, count the money, make the deposit, post contributions to individual's records, etc.

Procedural policies and manuals can be developed and approved to carry out the areas of responsibility of the administrator, but the actual job description should be kept broad responsibilities.

Job descriptions can also include measurable standards and timelines to convey expectations.

Examples:

Provide a financial statement **monthly**.

Custody and safekeeping of all church records including an **annual** inventory of assets to be presented to the church insurance committee

Considering those parameters, here are some of the key duties with summary information on typical areas in many churches. You may use this list as a guide of responsibilities for your

administrator. This list is not meant to serve the purposes of all churches, nor should you expect one person to be responsible singularly for all of these areas. In many congregations, the administrator will supervise other staff who perform some of these functions.

### **Financial Accounting**

This is probably the most significant area of responsibility for church administrators. Developing a good detailed chart of accounts for tracking income and expenses, monitoring all the church checking accounts, reconciling accounts monthly, and providing monthly financial reports are just a few of the tasks that CBAs cover. Seeing that financial controls are in place eliminates the possibility of fraud and provides balance of labor.

### **Personnel Supervision, Including Interviewing, Hiring, Firing, and Evaluation**

The administrator in your church can be the first line supervisor of your church's non-ministerial employees. This position can take the place of an office manager in the small to medium size church. Having the administrator supervise the support staff also gives the administrator a specific understanding of the daily job requirements of support staff as well as first hand analysis of job performance. The administrator should also evaluate the personnel that he supervises. Many administrators oversee the employee evaluation system.

### **Legal Matters and Tax Matters**

Even though most administrators are not lawyers, they should be expected to be informed about legal matters affecting the church. Their responsibility should be to provide information to church leadership about potential legal and tax problems affecting the church as well as coordinating any legal activities involving the church.

### **Accounts Payable**

A key to saving the church money is through intelligent and competitive purchasing, ensuring that all purchases are approved and within the budget, reviewing all shipments to make sure that merchandise ordered is actually received, and providing a method of record-keeping to track all purchases made by the church.

### **Office Management**

By planning, directing, and coordinating all of the work in the church office, the administrator is able to ensure that the needs of leaders and members are served in the most efficient manner while monitoring the workload on church personnel. Setting priorities for workloads can be a daily activity in the church office and the administrator needs to be involved in making these types of decisions.

## **Budget Development**

The administrator is very helpful to committees or church leaders in developing a budget by providing resource and historical information. New developments in tax laws, clergy compensation, and other benefit plans affect their decisions. Having one person who oversees the budget allows that person to be knowledgeable about how changes in one budget area could potentially affect another budget item. As an example, when one church added six thousand dollars to the budget for a special family program that would meet every Wednesday night, a night not normally used by the church, the administrator reminded them of the additional utility cost to run the facility. Had this item been overlooked, the church could very well have found that their budget for the next year would not have been adequate for their programs.

## **Supervision of Plant and Property**

Another common responsibility of administrators is the supervision of property and facilities management. Operational and preventive maintenance of all church property should be of paramount importance to any organization and particularly to a church. Having one person responsible for determining what the maintenance needs of the facility are and planning for the resources for maintenance done is extremely important.

## **Wills And Bequests Development**

The long-term financial health of a church can be greatly affected by the successful development and promotion of a wills and bequest program. The administrator can play a valuable role in such ventures. In many congregations, the administrator plays a vital role in managing a church's foundation.

## **Stewardship Development**

As a church develops planned giving, the administrator can be a valuable asset by providing historical trends and information regarding giving patterns in your church. Such research can show trends previously unrecognized by the church.

## **Computer Hardware and Software Administration**

The selection, installation, and administration of your church's information management system are common tasks assigned to an administrator. The expanded use of web communication has greatly increased the need for technological expertise. The administrator should be familiar with all the requirements of staff and members in order to recommend the most appropriate applications. Having a person who can do the day-to-day upkeep of your computer system will save the church in repairs and consultation fees. Keeping the information management systems current and able to meet the demands of both staff and members is an important asset.

## **Volunteer Training and Development**

Most churches depend very heavily on the use of volunteers to accomplish tasks in the church that are usually done by employees in secular organizations. As a cost saving feature, the use of volunteers can help your church to keep its personnel cost to a minimum while giving your members a chance to serve. However, for a church to keep these volunteers and to make them effective, it must train and nurture them. Developing policies and procedures for volunteers is just as important as having policies for the paid staff. This can be a very important and productive role for the administrator.

## **Supervision of Records**

The importance of safeguarding church records cannot be underestimated. Having one person who knows where all of the records are and who is responsible for the safekeeping and ultimate disposition of these records is very important.

## **Supervision of the Building Program**

The daily supervision of events that occur during the construction of a building program is enormous. Even with a site supervisor, the church needs to have someone to protect its own interests. With the intimate knowledge of all aspects of a building program, the administrator is in a unique position to protect the church's interest by monitoring the progress of building programs before, during, and after actual construction phases. Administrators also are important liaisons to the architects during the development and building stages.

## **Supervision of the Food Service Programs**

Administrators often find themselves helping to develop policies and procedures for the efficient and economical operation of the church's food service program, as well as supervising food service personnel. They may also supervise the purchasing of food and supplies or give supervision to staff assigned these responsibilities..

## **Oversight of Insurance Programs**

Ensuring that the church has proper insurance coverage is extremely important for the church. Having inadequate insurance coverage on your facilities, personnel, and property can compound a major tragedy. The administrator should be able to determine the value of the plant and property and check for adequate coverage. He can also shop for the best insurance value and make recommendations for coverage to the appropriate leaders in the church.

## **Risk Management**

Developing a plan that makes your facility accessible while providing for the security of your members should also be a priority to the church. Looking for areas in the church that can cause injury and correcting those areas should also be a priority. The administrator, in conjunction with his

responsibility with facility maintenance, should actively look for potential hazardous areas and make recommendations for their correction. In addition, insuring the safety of children is a vital part of risk management.

## **Supervision of the Church Investments and Cash Accounts**

Having someone who can provide an immediate analysis and oversight of the church's investments and cash accounts can ensure that the church is receiving the best return and least cost on its accounts. The administrator can make recommendations to the leaders in the church regarding the best way to maximize the return on its investments and help keep the cost to a bare minimum. Some administrators are given major responsibility to manage church accounts, endowment funds, and foundation assets.

## **Communication and Marketing**

Coordinating the church's publications through the administrator can help to reduce duplication of information and to make sure information is communicated properly. Administrators can serve as directors of communication and marketing.

The oversight and development of advertising through local newspapers, yellow pages advertising, and local community announcements via television and cable suppliers can be beneficial.

The public's perception of what your church is doing within your community is very important. Statements to the press and other media should be coordinated, well thought out, and intentional, not responsive. Producing a public relations plan is important to the church.

## **Vendor Selection and Competition**

When purchasing materials and supplies, it is important to stay informed about the best prices and quality of materials. An aggressive policy towards finding the best suppliers can save the church money. These funds can be redirected to meet other ministry needs.

## **Advisement to Various Committees and Staff**

As a resource person, the administrator can usually provide detailed information and guidance to committees and ministry teams such as finance, personnel, property, and building. In addition, the administration should work with other committees on how they can use the church's information management and how that system can help each committee or ministry accomplish its mission more effectively.

## **Oversight of Contribution Records and Statements**

One of the most important functions of an administrator's responsibilities is the accounting of gifts to the church. This

should be of paramount importance. No church should settle for less than 100 percent accuracy in the recording of gifts to the church by its members. Inaccurate record keeping can lead to frustration and possible withdrawal of support by your members. In addition, IRS guidelines must be followed to avoid the risk of the church losing its tax-exempt status.

## **Supervision of Purchasing and Accountability**

The recording of major purchases and vendor information is important. Knowing what was purchased, from whom it was purchased, how much it cost, and where it is located within the church is essential. This information can reduce the potential for lost material and can provide necessary information on repair and replacement. It also helps if planned budget is for major replacement, i.e., copiers, musical instruments, etc.

### **Asset Inventory**

Being responsible for a complete inventory helps with making insurance evaluations, assigning rooms for use, and determining potential repair and replacement of church equipment.

A competent administrator will clearly understand that he must respond to various and numerous responsibilities that occur but may not have been specifically included in the job description. You will want to communicate to candidates that this description is not intended to cover every detail, and from time to time, the administrator may be assigned additional responsibilities by his supervisor or governing body.

Use the previous categories and define the specific tasks you expect your administrator to do. Other areas that were not listed may also be suitable for an administrator. After you have completed your job description, you are now ready to begin the process of finding someone to fill the position.

# **Selecting Your CBA**

You should have a good idea now about the types of duties the CBA will do. But, how do you find the person who is an expert in all the areas of responsibility? How will he interact with others on the staff and members of the congregation? What kind of education should she have? Should he be an ordained pastor or a layperson? How much should you pay her? Should he be a member or non-member of your own church? The answers to all of these questions are entirely up to your church. However, some important guidelines and reference materials could be useful to you in this process.

Employment guidelines will be useful. These will attract the people with the talent and experience that will most likely meet the requirements you have established in your job description. It will also discourage those who are not qualified from applying. Remember, however, that you are working in a church, and the spirit has an unusual way of motivating many types of people with varied backgrounds and experiences to apply for positions you may offer. Your church should develop general guidelines to help the selection process move quickly. Guidelines will ensure that you are fair and equitable to all those who apply. These guidelines can be made part of the job description and should direct, not control. They should include the following areas:

## **1. Educational requirements**

(A minimum of an undergraduate degree should be required and ideally a B.A. in Business Administration). Some congregations who are seeking an ordained minister will require seminary training. Sometime, however, circumstances may call for consideration outside your requirements. For example, although an undergraduate degree is a requirement, a candidate who has other outstanding qualifications may have only two years of college. By waiving the degree requirement,

your church may find that selecting that candidate may result in a positive outcome for both the candidate and the congregation.

## **2. Certification and skill training**

A number of credentials are available that will give you some assurance of the skill level of a candidate.

- NACBA has a certification program that leads to the designation, Fellow in Church Business Administration (FCBA)
- Church Ministry Resources has developed a significant study program in Risk Management that leads to a certificate through the University of Cambridge's Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES).
- a number of certifications in computer technology may be helpful in determining skill levels of candidates.

## **3. Minimum skill levels**

If your job description calls for supervision of specialized areas, which most will, the applicant needs to have certain skill levels in these areas. As an example, my expertise and experience with setting up and managing computer systems, along with my knowledge of a multitude of computer software, fit nicely into the need in the church for an information systems administrator. You may be able to train people in certain areas, but a basic knowledge and understanding of a specific area will demonstrate an applicant's aptitude for success in a particular area as well as save the church a potentially large sum in training expense.

## **4. Theological understanding and participation**

Let us be honest here. This is not a secular environment. The applicant must, as a minimum, have a clear understanding of

the role and mission of the church within the local community and be able to support this mission. You do not want to get your church in a position where you have someone working in the church who neither agrees with nor understands the mission and function of your church. However, churches may also fall into the trap of hiring a church member because they believe this person at least meets this particular requirement. There are also problems with hiring church members for staff positions. Regardless, a commitment to the unique vision of your congregation is important.

## 5. Multiple staff and congregational relationships

Your new administrator must be able to integrate and work with other staff and members of your congregation. When asked how many bosses I have, I look at the latest membership of my church and give our total membership count, currently 1062. The ability to respond to the many different situations presented to your administrator can be the number one challenge.

Many congregations use personality inventory instruments to aid in building a staff team. One is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) that measures personality types in four major areas. This test is a valuable tool for analyzing your current staff personality types and what types will work best with them. Secure a professional consultant to perform and analyze the MBTI for you.

Another method is contained in the book *Please Understand Me* by David Keirse and Marilyn Bates, distributed by Prometheus Nemesis Book Company. This is a condensed version of the Myers-Briggs test and can be done by your own staff. (Available through NACBA's reading section)

## 6. Compensation levels

This can be one of the most important decisions in this process. Compensation can affect the quality and experience of the person you hire. Consider these things:

- Conduct your own survey of what like-size churches in your area pay their administrators. Most churches will readily give you this information, particularly if they know why you are requesting it. Consider these areas when using other churches for comparison: total church membership, average worship attendance, total church budget, and similarity of job responsibilities.
- As non-profit organizations, churches will not typically pay a person at the same level that his counterpart may be receiving in a similar position in a secular organization. However, the disparity in salaries should not cause you to lose your administrator to the secular work world.
- **The NACBA National Church Staff Compensation Survey** is also an excellent resource. This publication provides information on twenty-five major staff positions normally found within a church by church size, geographical area, denomination, worship attendance, and

annual budget This book will give you specific, actual information about what other administrators are being paid within your area and denomination. You may contact NACBA at (800) 898-8085 or visit [www.nacba.net](http://www.nacba.net) for the latest edition. In addition, other surveys of this type are available through denominational and service providers.

## ADVERTISING

How long will it take to find the right person for your church? How much time can your church spend on the selection process? How do you attract the most qualified people? There are several methods to use, based upon the time limitations that are available in your church. You can use local newspapers, local professional associations (NACBA has 70 local chapters across the country), national professional associations such as NACBA, which is a non-denominational association, or other denominationally specific organizations such as PCBAA (Presbyterian Church Business Administrators Association). Contact your denomination headquarters for further information about the professional associations that you may have.

Other options include local employment agencies and internet job services. NACBA will list your position on the job section of their website at no charge.

If your church has made the decision that it may hire someone within your own congregation, advertise the position in your church newsletter. When putting together your advertisement, there are several basic areas to cover no matter what medium you use to advertise the position:

### 1. State the title of the position.

This will clearly establish the position to be filled and will convey certain standards that the applicant must have.

### 2. State the size, budget, name, physical and web address of the church.

This will give a general understanding to a knowledgeable applicant of what the expectations might be. Some ads do not give the name of the church. I believe this is an error on the church's part and will fail to attract people that might be interested. You have nothing to hide - name your church.

### 3. State any minimum qualifications.

Be specific! You will save time by attracting applicants that only meet these minimum skills if you list qualifications such as educational levels, technical expertise in computer software and hardware, previous experience in other churches, a commitment to Jesus Christ.

**4. State a contact person to whom the applicant should respond.**

Depending on your specific situation, you may or may not want applications to come through the church office. When applications come through the church and the address is not specific, applications tend to become lost or misplaced. State specifically the name of the person to whom the application should be sent, along with an appropriate address. Specify if fax and e-mail attachments are appropriate ways to apply.

**5. State the application deadline.**

Let the potential applicant know the cut-off date for applications to be received. This will allow your selection process to move along in a timely and effective manner. It is often difficult to organize and coordinate the activities of all the members of a selection committee. Do not upset that process by continually having to retrace your steps with applications that are received months after you have advertised the position.

## **INTERVIEWING**

Interviewing is a multiple stage process. There are several steps that you should take to make sure this process smooth and complete. If a search committee is used, make sure the committee is made up of a good cross-section of the leadership of the church. You should never interview an applicant without the involvement of the applicant's potential supervisor, who is usually the pastor of the church. Here are some steps that you can take to make the interview process happen smoothly:

**1. Review all applications for completeness and accuracy. Ask for additional information and references if necessary.**

The appearance of the application or resume itself will give you some indication of the capabilities of the person applying for the job. If an application is incomplete or contains gross inaccuracies, it is a good indication that this person will not function well in your organization.

**2. Do a preliminary review and eliminate the obviously under qualified applicants.**

Stick to the qualifications that you set for this position. Use them to eliminate applicants who obviously do not meet these qualifications.

**3. Select applicants who appear to fit the job description the best.**

You will want to narrow your choice at this point to those individuals who appeal to you and members of your

committee. Do not set a predetermined number of finalists that you will continue to work with. This limitation can disqualify someone who might work out as an excellent choice as your CBA.

**4. Let the others know they were not selected.**

Keeping the applicants informed eliminates many phone calls and e-mails concerning the status of the selection process. It is also a professional courtesy. Applicants presume that you will contact the applicants you wish to work with further, but this is not always the case. Keep in mind that applicants for a position are hopeful that they are being considered for a position. Treat them as you would want to be treated.

**5. Get references.**

After you have decided on the people that you want to continue to interview, CHECK THEIR REFERENCES! Eliminating those applicants who do not live up to claims they have included in their resumes can save a majority of your time. It is not that applicants want to mislead you, but there are times when their own vision of themselves can be quite different from others where they have worked. Save yourself, your committee, and your church a multitude of headaches in the future by asking for and checking references now. Many congregations will want to conduct a criminal background check. Since this person will be managing the church's money, perhaps you will want to do a credit check .

**6. Narrow the field to those you would like to interview.**

You should be at the point now where it has become clear that there are a few applicants you want to interview. Select these individuals, let the others know they were considered for the position but were not selected, and arrange to interview your applicants. You should pick a time that is convenient for you, your committee, and the applicant. If the applicant has to travel more than sixty miles or so, you should offer to reimburse the applicant for expenses. Over-night accommodations and meal reimbursement may be in order. If you have not provided a complete job description to the applicant by this point, you should definitely send one before the interview.

**7. Conduct first interviews.**

The first interview you conduct may or may not define a clear candidate for the position in your church. If not, you can proceed to the next step. Make every attempt to have the applicant feel comfortable during the interview, but be prepared to ask both general and specific questions regarding his experience, methods, and views on church administration. Ask situational or "what if" questions that will give you a good idea of how the applicant will react to specific situations within your church. You can also ask how the applicant has responded to specific situations in his previous work settings. During the interview, you

should also note the applicant's appearance and demeanor. Your new administrator will represent your church in a variety of ways, and you want someone who is most capable of conveying a positive image of your church. If the applicant has not previously stated a salary range, now would be a good time to review his requirements and needs as well as his availability to start if selected.

adaptable to most situations which present themselves. Once you have made your decision, again, please inform the others that you appreciate their applying, but someone else has been chosen to fill the position.

## MAKING THE OFFER

### 8. Select top candidates and re-interview.

If you have not been able to pick out an individual who you feel is ideally suited for your position, you will have to conduct another interview. Try to narrow the field as much as possible at this point to the top candidates. You may also want to consult with a few other people to review the applications and give you another perspective on the applicant. It is even a good idea to ask additional people to sit in on the actual interview. Remember that the interview process will be your best opportunity to learn about each applicant and his potential for doing the job at your church. Again, as a matter of courtesy, inform those who have not been selected of the status of the search.

Once you have decided on the person you want to hire, you should make a personal visit or call. Based on her experience, you want to offer a specific salary package that may in line with the expectations of the applicant. You may also want to review the job description once again to ensure that the individual you selected will be capable of doing everything you expect. When making an offer, anticipate that the candidate will want to take some time to confer with close family members or significant others regarding the decision. Do not expect an answer immediately. However, you should establish a timeframe within which you expect a response. The applicant may make a counter-offer regarding moving expenses, salary, vacation time, professional expenses, etc., that you both must mutually find agreeable. Do not be moved by this negotiation. Your goal is to hire a qualified administrator with a mutually agreeable compensation package.

### 9. Select the most suitable candidate.

Once the final interviews have been conducted, you are now faced with the decision of whom to hire for your position. Use the guidelines you established earlier to choose the individual who most suits those qualifications. No one individual is likely to have all of the expertise and qualifications in all areas of the job description you have put together, but you will hopefully have the opportunity to choose someone who is reasonably well rounded and is

These insights will be helpful as you add this critical staff position. If you need additional help for resources, please contact NACBA through the Website, [www.nacba.net](http://www.nacba.net) or at 1.800.898.8085.

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