



Three Questions Every Ministry Search Committee Needs to Answer (<http://faithsearchpartners.com/three-questions-every-ministry-search-committee-needs-to-answer/>)

Procuring the right leader for a ministry is about more than simple qualifications on paper. Aside from the obvious necessities like relevant skills and experience, there are other factors that shape whether or not an individual will be an excellent fit for the leadership role and the ministry itself. Additionally, a committee must be mindful of the best way to facilitate a smooth transition into the position after the leader is selected.

One of the best ways for a search committee to achieve these standards is by asking itself questions, which will help determine priorities for the organization and the existing leadership to ensure not only that the right person is chosen but that he or she has a successful on-boarding experience.

Three questions should be a priority when a ministry committee embarks on an executive search:

- Is the ministry organization ready for change?
- What does success look like?
- What is the cost of failure?

Is the ministry organization ready for change?

First, it is important to determine the ministry's preparedness to deal with the impending change. This is largely to do with recognizing its past history with change and what other organizational changes or consequences will be brought on by adding the new executive: If there have been

organizational changes in the preceding five years which of these required the most planning, had the greatest sense of urgency, required the most stockholder support, had the greatest leadership focus, and produced the largest results? How do the answers to these questions inform the preparation you may need for this search? Similarly, if the group is experiencing change fatigue, it is important to address any concerns before selecting a new leader.

Other questions to consider are those concerning the search committee and process itself. What will the roles be on the committee? Who will lead the committee's efforts and communicate back to the ministry? The committee should also understand that their involvement will likely require additional time commitments on their plates on top of their day-to-day duties. These questions and considerations will clearly identify each person's role in the search, minimize conflict and enhance communication surrounding the transition. Other relevant questions include:

- Do stakeholders outside of the committee need to contribute to the decision?
- Are there organizational consequences if the leadership change is unsuccessful?
- How will progress and success be measured?

What does success look like?

Success is not simply the hiring of an executive. Success is having the right person in the right role — and for ministries, this is even more crucial. Qualities like [1] character and personal values are just as important as technical skills and experience. Often organizations create a timeline and a job description but do not take the time to put together a profile of desired traits for the new leader. Creating a profile of the ideal leader is helpful in determining just what kind of criteria the committee is looking for.

Taking into consideration the qualities laid out by Aspects of a Well-Formed Leader, the following are characteristics to look for in candidates regarding examples of their leadership:

- Someone who can influence others to act for the benefit of others
- Someone who can maintain strategic perspective without losing situational awareness
- Someone who inspires people to genuinely follow
- Someone willing to sacrifice personal ambition or safety for the hope, healing, and health of the Body.
- Someone who has been spiritually forged and formed with clear calling and anointing

What is the cost of failure?

Before determining the financial and time investment for the search, a ministry organization must first discern the cost of failure. Rather than simply coming up with an arbitrary amount of what the organization would consider investing, recognizing the importance of success and ramifications of failure will put value — financial and otherwise — on the process and emphasize the necessity to get it right the first time. How much effort is the organization willing to expend to ensure the right person ends up in the role?

There are several questions an organization can ask itself to identify these cost factors, including:

- Should the organization consider hiring professionals at a search firm to ensure a top-quality candidate pool?
- Should the organization consider interviewing the candidate's spouse and family prior to hiring to determine any potential anchors impacting his or her success in the role and further assess the candidate's personal characteristics and values?
- Should the organization invest in a personality or psychometric assessment for the candidate to determine spiritual gifts, relevant talents, skills and natural strengths to augment the interview process? Can characteristics like ambition be evaluated in some way to determine, for example, if they desire that the light of Christ be greater in them than the spotlight on them?

Without considering the above questions, a ministry runs the risk of unintentionally sabotaging an otherwise well-executed search. Any one of these factors can negatively affect the process if not taken into account, even with apparently ideal candidates who may simply not be the right fit for the organization. Putting in the time and effort on the front end to assess the ministry's readiness for the change, establish a solid candidate profile and determine the cost of failure will make all the difference in selecting the right person for the job.

[1] © 2002 Hidden Value Group, Jeffrey T. Jernigan; © 2010, Tilt: Small Shifts in Leadership That Make a Big Difference, Abingdon Press



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