

Hiring, Firing, and Creating a Great Staff Culture

JASON WILSON

Opened with thanks for coming and followed with prayer. Jason began with his journey from youth volunteer working at Michelin to how God brought him on board at New Spring in 2003. He also gave a brief history of the other church leaders: Jason Moorehead, Shane Duffy and Paul Marshall; how they came on board as well, and their current positions. (Example Paul Marshall, successful businessman that was a member and after a couple of years of prayer and encouragement sold his company and became the CFO of New Spring overseeing our 13.7 million dollar budget of which 42.6% is staffing salaries/ benefits that include health insurance and up to 3% employees salary for retirement.) Facility fees and cleaning management are not included in the 42.6%. The goal is to keep staffing salaries below 50% of the budget and the highest level in the past has been 48.6%. There is currently 109 staff members total for all campuses. We also have internships, part time and full time. An ideal staff ratio is to have 1 staff employee per 100 members. We place a huge importance on our volunteers. We cast the church's vision to the volunteers. There are even volunteers that work through the week at the offices, as well as on Sundays. Ephesians 4:1 was read challenging them to live a life worthy of the calling they have received. New Spring has a monthly staff meeting joining all campus leaders. This is a time to be unified with the same vision and to align our hearts and minds. It is open for sharing and communicating. We have a staff member of the month award for the person who has gone over and above and is rewarded a cool gift. Each campus holds its own weekly staff meeting.

New Spring hires from within its membership whenever possible. We feel your members know your church's DNA, vision, and are familiar with your heartbeat already so they are looked at first. We understand there are times when it is not possible to fill a position with a member so outsiders are then brought in. You are wrong if you think there is not inside people to step up to ministry positions. Refer back to (Jonah) Paul Marshall's story. Be sensitive and watch for gifted people to step up to ministering positions by challenging them.

One of my favorite passages from Bill Hybel's book *Courageous Leadership* is the Three C's: Character, Competency, and Chemistry. What do you see in people? We feel competency often is a hidden quality that if you are sensitive and notice can be nurtured and brought out in a lot of people; especially young people so we often fill positions from internships.. Chemistry is important to be able to work with your staff. Ask the question, Are they the kind of person you want to come in and sit down or do you wish would keep moving when they stop at your door to speak?

It should not be easy to get a job in your church. Our hiring procedure consist of 3 rounds. 1.) Posting the position on our web site or Perry's blog, 2.) An interview with the team with the position opening, 3.) A larger scale interview, involving multiple people that would be involved with working with this individual. When this level is completed a formal offer would then be made. Tithing records are checked on applicants and also checked after they are hired. We believe this is a good way to measure their heart. Matthew 6:21 is our basis. Our staff should sacrifice more than anyone because where your treasure is there will be where your heart will be. We have an evaluation every six months for staff, a one page form, in which the supervisor rates attitude and ability. There is feedback from both employee and supervisor. There is a 90 day probation period for new employees. Discipline is for two reasons:

1.) Underperformance; a) lazy/ living in sin and needs correction. If they are lazy but have a good attitude documentation on a formal basis then we sit down and talk about what is going on. Is there a need or something we can help with? They are encouraged to take off a brief time, with pay, and get on their face prayer to resolve the issues. After they return if it doesn't change then they will be let go.

If there is a moral sin issues and they are in a leadership position they will be let go. (Example given of youth leader with influence and the youth and parents were addressed as a group because of the staff member's influence with them before they were terminated.)

2.) Not gifted in their ministry area where they are serving. We try to find them a position that better suits their gifts. Something they are passionate about and not just good at, but the best at. Our last resort is to terminate. Hire slow and fire fast concept could be avoided by better leadership. Protect your employees. We are closed on Fridays to give employees a break to prevent burn out. We work Monday through Thursday 9 -5 and of course Sunday. Number of paid vacation weeks depend on the number years of service.

Questions:

1. What is turnover rate at New Spring? In 2009 there were nine or ten that left so around 10%. We try to look at each situation to see if it was a healthy decision.
2. Who evaluates Perry? A.) Senior Management; informally B.) Internal Board, both by setting his salary and encouragement.
3. Who picks the Internal Board? Perry and Senior Management. Also we have church By Laws.
4. Are the band members paid? Yes, they are contract labor with some staff.
5. Organizational Chart was discussed with numbers of people at different campuses.
6. All the employees that are terminated are they required to leave immediately or stay for a grace period? Challenge them to leave immediately; however there are sometimes exceptions. Do not get benevolence confused with ministry. New Spring is a staff led church and South Carolina is an at will state so Labor Laws are not a issue with us. We also believe in an all male elder leadership team.
7. What are your hiring procedures for family members? I noticed a lot of people with the same last name? What if one works out and the other doesn't? That doesn't usually happen because they are not in the same ministry area so. If it did the situation would be isolated and leadership discussion would be offered.

At our membership class we have a covenant to commit to tithe and/or serve. As long as they do one of the other currently they are considered members. If they do neither they will be taken off as active members. All volunteers have to be members. Volunteer leader's tithes are checked as well since they are in leadership.

8. How do you decide to hire if you are small; your church is huge? According to vision. If it is children, then a children's minister etc.

9. Have you had any lawsuits? A couple minor ones. One concerning a noise ordinance; another over a building lease where the company that owned the building we were leasing went bankrupt.

Be Positive. Keep involved, share stories of life changing events. Encourage each other. Our campus pastors encourage one another to stay connected. Always have open communication.

Final closing challenge: Keep a crystal clear vision and make sure the vision is working.